

GENESIS

PART TWO: PATRIARCHS

ABRAHAM

ISAAC

JACOB

JOSEPH

In contrast with Part 1 of Genesis, Part 2 covers only
4 generations and less than 200 years.

ABRAHAM IS A MODEL OF FAITH - Heb. 11:8-12

· “8 By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. 9 By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. 10 For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. 11 By faith Abraham, even though he was past age--and Sarah herself was barren--was enabled to become a father because he considered him faithful who had made the promise. 12 And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore.”

ABRAHAM IS AN EXAMPLE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH - Rom. Chpt. 4

· “2 If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about--but not before God. 3 What does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." [Gen. 15:6; also in verse 22] 4 Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. 5 However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.”

· “9 Is this blessedness only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We have been saying that Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness. 10 Under what circumstances was it credited? Was it after he was circumcised, or before? It was not after, but before! 11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them. “

· “16 Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring--not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. 17 As it is written: "I have made you a father of many nations." [Gen. 17:5] He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed--the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were.”

· “22 This is why "it was credited to him as righteousness." 23 The words "it was credited to him" were written not for him alone, 24 but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness--for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. 25 He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.”

ABRAHAM IS THE FATHER OF ALL WHO BELIEVE - Gal. 3:6-9,26-29

· “6 Consider Abraham: "He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." 7 Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham. 8 The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you." [Gen. 12:3; 18:18; 22:18] 9 So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.”

· “26 You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, 27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.”

· By faith anyone can become Abraham's 'seed' and inherit the 'Blessing'.

I. GENESIS 12 - GOD'S CALL OF ABRAM; ABRAM IN EGYPT

- What are some of the things you have left in order to follow Jesus?
- What are some of the blessings you've received by following Him?

A. GOD'S PROMISE TO ABRAM

1. (1-3) God's previous covenant with Abram - *"1 Now the LORD had said to Abram: 'Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. 2 I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'"*

a) The events of [v.1] are referred to in 11:27-32 [Scofield]

(1) Abram will certainly become a giant of faith, yet he does not start there.

Abram is an example of one who grows in faith and obedience

b) After calling Abram to leave his country and relatives, God promises him a land.

(1) Notice how often God says "I will" in these verses.

c) God promises to make of Abram a nation - he'll have enough descendants to populate a nation - in spite of the fact that Sarai was barren [11:30]

d) God promises to make Abram's name great - today he is honored by Jews, Muslims, and Christians

e) God promises to bless those who bless Abram and curse those who curse him;

(1) Others will be judged by their relationship to Abraham.

(2) This is true today, and a reason for the decline of many empires

(a) "When the Greeks overran Palestine and desecrated the altar in the Jewish temple, they were soon conquered by Rome. When Rome killed Paul and many others, and destroyed Jerusalem under Titus, Rome soon fell. Spain was reduced to a fifth-rate nation after the Inquisition against the Jews; Poland fell after the pogroms; Hitler's Germany went down after its orgies of anti-Semitism; Britain lost her empire when she broke her faith with Israel." (Barnhouse)

(b) This is also one reason why the United States has been so blessed; we were one of the first modern nations to grant full citizenship and protection to Jewish people

f) Not only would Abram be blessed, but God would also make him a blessing - even to the point that all families of the earth would be blessed in Abram

(1) "And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, 'In you all the nations shall be blessed.' So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham." - Gal. 3:8-9

(2) [see 'Blessed to be a Blessing' in appendix]

2. (4-6) Abram's departure from Haran and arrival in Canaan - *"4 So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. 5 Then Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people whom they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. So they came to the land of Canaan. 6 Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem, as far as the terebinth tree of Moreh. And the Canaanites were then in the land."*

a) Was this partial obedience? - God told him to go out from family, yet he brings his nephew Lot, who brings nothing but trouble and inconvenience.

3.(7-9) God appears to Abram in Canaan - *"7 Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." And there [Shechem] he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him. 8 And he moved from there to the mountain east of Bethel, and he pitched his tent with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; there [Bethel 13:3] he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD. 9 So Abram journeyed, going on still toward the South."*

a) God repeats His promise - the land belongs to Abram and his descendants.

(1) note: Abram never actually owned any of this land except his burial plot (Genesis 23:14-20).

(2) also: Abram lived in a tent - never a house - just passing through.

(a) We too are tent-dwellers and pilgrims. *"Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To God's elect, strangers in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia," (1 Pet. 1:1)*

(b) A pilgrim is someone who has left home and is traveling to a specific destination. Not a drifter; a pilgrim has a goal - Abram's goal, and our goal, is God's heavenly city (Heb. 11:8-10, 14-16)

(c) "Too many Christians want to build mansions on earth and are happy with tents in heaven!"

b) Abram built an altar to the Lord - a place to meet with God, offer sacrifices and worship.

(1) It's interesting to note when altars are built (and when they aren't).

(a) We have an altar also - *"We have an altar from which those who minister at the tabernacle have no right to eat."* (Heb. 13:10)

(b) We meet with God as we remember the sacrifice Jesus made for sin (Ephesians 5:2), as we come to God as living sacrifices (Romans 12:1), and as we offer the sacrifice of praise (Hebrews 13:15)

B. ABRAM IN EGYPT

- Egypt = A type of the World
- When we meet with difficulties we too often revert to worldly methods of coping instead of trusting God. But God can turn our failings into blessings.

1. (10) Abram's faith is tested by famine - *"10 Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to dwell there, for the famine was severe in the land."*

a) Abram isn't wrong for being concerned about feeding his family; but in thinking God wouldn't provide for his needs in the place where He had called him. God called Abram to Canaan, not to Egypt!

(1) Like most of us, Abram found it easier to trust God for the far off future than for present needs.

2. (11-13) Sensing potential danger in Egypt, Abram persuades Sarai to lie on his behalf and say she was his sister. - *"11 And it came to pass, when he was close to entering Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife, "Indeed I know that you are a woman of beautiful countenance. 12 "Therefore it will happen, when the Egyptians see you, that they will say, 'This is his wife'; and they will kill me, but they will let you live. 13 "Please say you are my sister, that it may be well with me for your sake, and that I may live because of you."*

a) This was a half-truth; She was Abram's half sister (20:12). Yet Abram's intent was clearly to deceive - he was trusting in his deception instead of the Lord.

b) He should've said, "God promised me children. I don't have them yet. Therefore, I know I am indestructible until God's promise is fulfilled."

(1) He demonstrates this kind of faith later re Isaac in Chpt. 22.

3.(14-16) Sarai is taken into Pharaoh's house and Abram treated well - *"14 So it was, when Abram came into Egypt, that the Egyptians saw the woman, that she was very beautiful. 15 The princes of Pharaoh also saw her and commended her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken to Pharaoh's house. 16 He treated Abram well for her sake. He had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male and female servants, female donkeys, and camels."*

a) Sarai was over 60 years old at the time.

4.(17-20) Abram leaves Egypt after being rebuked by a heathen king - *"17 But the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife. 18 And Pharaoh called Abram and said, "What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? 19 "Why did you say, 'She is my sister'? I might have taken her as my wife. Now therefore, here is your wife; take her and go your way." 20 So Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him; and they sent him away, with his wife and all that he had."*

a) Even though Abram was being a liar, God did not revoke His promise, because the promise depended on God Himself, not on Abram.

II. GENESIS 13 - GOD PROMISES ABRAM THE LAND AGAIN

· BACK TO BETHEL

· God continually calls us back to our first love for Him. When and where did you first commit your life to Him? Do you need to renew your commitment?

A. ABRAM AND LOT SEPARATE

1.(1-4) Abram returns to the land promised to him - *"1 Then Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot with him, to the South. 2 Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold. 3 And he went on his journey from the South as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, 4 to the place of the altar which he had made there at first. And there Abram called on the name of the LORD."*

a) Even though Abram came back from Egypt with riches, spiritually he is right back where he started before he went.

(1) He may have been asking forgiveness for going to Egypt.

(2) The church has always had the challenge of what to do with believers who have been in sin, and want to come back into the church. For example, in the third century, the heroes of the faith were the martyrs and the confessors, but there were also many "lapsed" believers, who had buckled under the threat of persecution. Some churches were too lax (admitting them back as if nothing had happened); some were too harsh (saying they could never come back and be used of God); but most churches did the right thing: they allowed the lapsed back, but as beginners again - not pretending as if nothing had happened

(3) cf. Revelation 2:5 - *"Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place."*

b) Yet, Abram also does what he must do: instead of torturing himself about his past sin, he gets busy doing what he needs to do - continuing the pilgrimage.

(1) Here, Abram is back in the promised land as a beginner again - back at Bethel, back with the tent and the altar, and back doing what he should

2.(5-7) Contention between herdsmen - *"5 Lot also, who went with Abram, had flocks and herds and tents. 6 Now the land was not able to support them, that they might dwell together, for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together. 7 And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. The Canaanites and the Perizzites then dwelt in the land."*

a) Blown Witness? When the Canaanites and the Perizzites saw the herdsmen of Abram and Lot fighting, they may have thought, "They say they worship another God, the true God, but I see that they are really just like us."

(1) "Many people will never listen to what *any* believer says because of what *some* believers are." (Barnhouse)

b) Note: This conflict comes when Abram is doing the right thing. Often, when we get right with God, there comes an attack from the Devil.

3.(8-9) Abram's generous offer - *"8 So Abram said to Lot, "Please let there be no strife between you and me, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen; for we are brethren. 9 "Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me. If you take the left, then I will go to the right; or, if you go to the right, then I will go to the left."*

a) Since Abram was the eldest, and God had given the land to Abram (not Lot), it was pure generosity to make this offer.

(1) Abram fulfills the New Testament principle of love: "Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others." (Phil 2:4)

(2) A few acres of grazing land aren't worth fighting for to the man of eternal perspective

b) Abram's faith in God gave him security to let Lot choose.

(1) Because he trusted in God, Abram did not have to be obsessed with his own "rights" and neither do we.

4.(10-13) Lot chooses - *"10 And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere (before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go toward Zoar. 11 Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east. And they separated from each other. 12 Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain and pitched his tent even as far as Sodom. 13 But the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinful against the LORD."*

a) Abram was walking by faith, Lot only by sight

(1) Faith means that we do not walk by what we see, but by what we know to be true in God - *"For we walk by faith, not by sight"* (2 Cor. 5:7).

(2) By faith, Abram let God choose for him. Then God rewarded him by letting him see with his eyes what he gained by faith - *"lift up your eyes... all the land that you see I will give to you..."* [vs. 14-17]

b) Lot chose for himself - by sight - *"Lot lifted his eyes and saw"*.

(1) He based his choice on the material abundance of the land, rather than how it might impact he and his family spiritually.

c) Lot began living *near*, then *in*, and finally *sitting in the gateway* of Sodom.

(1) He probably thought, "I can serve God as well there as here. They probably need a witness." But he was deceiving himself. Beware ability to deceive ourselves! *"The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?"* (Jer. 17:9)

(2) Too often, we discount the end results of a seemingly small spiritual compromise until the damage is already done.

(3) Most likely, it wasn't Lot's choice that led his heart astray. His choice demonstrated that his heart was already astray.

B. GOD CONFIRMS HIS PROMISE TO ABRAM

1. (14-15) God promises the land to Abram and to his descendants forever - ***"14 And the LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him: "Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are--northward, southward, eastward, and westward; 15 "for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever."***

- a) After Lot separated from him, God talked to Abram alone.
- b) Note: Even though Abram had "given" some of the land to Lot, God still considered that the land belonged to Abram.

2. (16) God reminds Abram of His promise to give Abram many descendants - ***"16 And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, then your descendants also could be numbered."***

- a) To assure Abram, God repeats the promise He made earlier.
- b) Quite a promise to make to a childless man in his seventies or eighties.

3. (17-18) Abram walks through the land God has given him - ***"17 "Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you." 18 Then Abram moved his tent, and went and dwelt by the terebinth trees of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and built an altar there to the LORD."***

- a) As a token of Abram's reception of the land by faith, God wants Abram to explore the land of promise; to walk through it as if it were his, though he does not have "title deed" to it yet.
- b) Likewise, God wants us to explore our "land" - His Word, where God has given to us exceedingly great and precious promises (2 Peter 1:4), where He has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3).
- c) Abram once again builds an altar to the LORD.
 - (1) Mamre means "vision"; Hebron means "communion." Abram is again walking in the Lord's vision for him, and in communion with the Lord.

III. GENESIS 14 - ABRAM RESCUES LOT AND MEETS MELCHIZEDEK

A. ABRAM RESCUES LOT FROM THE CONFEDERACY OF KINGS

1.1. (1-10) The four kings of the cities in the region of Sodom and Gomorrah rebel against the confederacy of five kings of nations that ruled over them - "1 And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of nations, 2 that they made war with Bera king of Sodom, Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar). 3 All these joined together in the Valley of Siddim (that is, the Salt Sea). 4 Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled. 5 In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings that were with him came and attacked the Rephaim in Ashteroth Karnaim, the Zuzim in Ham, the Emim in Shaveh Kiriathaim, 6 and the Horites in their mountain of Seir, as far as El Paran, which is by the wilderness. 7 Then they turned back and came to En Mishpat (that is, Kadesh), and attacked all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites who dwelt in Hazezon Tamar. 8 And the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) went out and joined together in battle in the Valley of Siddim 9 against Chedorlaomer king of Elam, Tidal king of nations, Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar--four kings against five. 10 Now the Valley of Siddim was full of asphalt pits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled; some fell there, and the remainder fled to the mountains."

2. they made war - First appearance of war in Bible.

a) Archaeologist Nelson Glueck: "I found that every village in their path had been plundered and left in ruins, and the countryside was laid waste. The population had been wiped out or led away into captivity. For hundreds of years thereafter, the entire area was like an abandoned cemetery, hideously unkempt, with all its monuments shattered and strewn in pieces on the ground."

3. (11-12) In the course of their attack, the five kings take Lot and all his possessions - "11 Then they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their provisions, and went their way. 12 They also took Lot, Abram's brother's son who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed."

a) Abram is involved because, as a man of honor, he will fight for his nephew

4. (13-14) Abram hears of Lot's captivity and marshals an army - "13 Then one who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew, for he dwelt by the terebinth trees of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and brother of Aner; and they were allies with Abram. 14 Now when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his three hundred and eighteen trained servants who were born in his own house, and went in pursuit as far as Dan."

a) Abram's wealth is clearly seen in having 318 servants capable of fighting.

(1) Abram walked in faith; yet he was also a prudent man - keeping his own personal army trained and ready.

b) Note: This is the first use of 'Hebrew' in the Bible.

(1) "It is very likely that Abram had this appellation from his coming 'from beyond' the river Euphrates to enter Canaan; for yrbeh haibri, which we render 'the Hebrew', comes from rbe abar, to 'pass over', or come 'from beyond'. It is supposed by many that he got this name from 'Eber' or 'Heber', son of Salah (Ge 11:15) But why he should get a name from Heber, rather than from his own father, or some other of his progenitors, no person has yet been able to discover. We may, therefore, safely conclude that he bears the appellation of Hebrew or 'Ibrite' from the above circumstance, and not from one of his progenitors, of whom we know nothing but the name, and who preceded Abram not less than six generations; and during the whole of that time till the time marked here, none of his descendants were ever called 'Hebrews'." - Adam Clark

5. (15-16) Abram leads his army to victory over the five kings - *"15 He divided his forces against them by night, and he and his servants attacked them and pursued them as far as Hobah, which is north of Damascus. 16 So he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his brother Lot and his goods, as well as the women and the people."*

- a) Using the tactic of a night attack with his army split into two groups, he succeeds in rescuing Lot and recovering what was seized by the five kings
- b) Unfortunately, Lot will move right back to where he was in Sodom.
- c) Perhaps Lot was made an Elder in Sodom because of his connection with Abraham (as added security)?

B. ABRAM AND MELCHIZEDEK

1. (17-20) Abram meets Melchizedek - *"17 And the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley), after his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him. 18 Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. 19 And he blessed him and said: 'Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; 20 And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand.' And he gave him a tithe of all."*

- a) The name Melchizedek means "king of righteousness".
- b) He is the king of Salem (Peace) - the original Jerusalem - and he is priest of God Most High.
 - (1) 'God Most High' - 'El Elyon' means "Highest God". It's like saying "Supreme Being" - don't settle for a "higher power"; serve the 'Supreme Power'.
- c) Melchizedek serves Abram bread and wine; perhaps pointing to the bread and wine of the Lord's Table.
- d) Who Is He?
 - (1) Some have suggested that he is Seth, Noah's son; or Job; or an angel.
 - (2) But it is more likely that he is a Pre-Incarnate appearance of Jesus.
 - (3) [see MELCHIZEDEK in Appendix]

2. (21-24) Abram refuses the plunder from the battle - *"21 Now the king of Sodom said to Abram, 'Give me the persons, and take the goods for yourself.' 22 But Abram said to the king of Sodom, 'I have raised my hand to the LORD, God Most High, the Possessor of heaven and earth, 23 'that I will take nothing, from a thread to a sandal strap, and that I will not take anything that is yours, lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich' -- 24 "except only what the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men who went with me: Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion."*

- a) The king of Sodom wanted to reward Abram for all he did in recovering what was taken by the confederation of five kings, yet Abram will not take it - because of a vow he has made to God Most High - a phrase he uses after hearing Melchizedek use it. [The King of Sodom is a type of Satan]
- b) Abram refused the spoil because he would not let any man say they had made Abram rich - Abram demanded that the credit go to God alone.
- c) At the same time, however, Abram does not impose his scruples on his Amorite allies (14:13). They are entitled to as much of the spoil as is appropriate

IV. GENESIS 15 - GOD CONFIRMS THE COVENANT WITH ABRAM

A. GOD SPEAKS TO ABRAM'S FEARS AND DOUBTS WITH A PROMISE

1. (1) The word of the Lord comes to Abram in a vision - *"1 After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward."*

a) Abram was a prophet - first of *"word of the LORD"*.

(1) How does the word of the Lord come to us?

b) There is good reason for God to tell Abram "Do not be afraid". Having just defeated a large army - retribution was to be expected

c) Abraham refused Sodom's rewards - therefore God blesses him with the highest blessing - Himself! [see "OUR VERY GREAT REWARD" in appendix]

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

a) Abram says i.e. , "Lord, what good is all this stuff, if I don't have a descendant to give it to?"

(1) Eliezer of Damascus was Abram's chief servant, his right-hand-man. He was a good man, but not a son to Abram

b) Note: Abram's bold honesty before the Lord - instead of bottling up his feelings, he lays them out before the Lord

3. (4-5) God speaks to Abram's doubts with a promise - *"4 And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir." 5 Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be."*

a) God reminds Abram of the promise originally recorded in Genesis 12:2 and 13:15-16; God knows how much we need to be reminded

b) God often states a promise with such certainty, we believe it will be fulfilled right away; but the fulfillment of this promise was still 15 years away

(1) No wonder the writer to the Hebrews says: *"11 We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure. 12 We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised."* (Heb. 6:11-12)

c) God explained exactly what He meant in His promise: it wasn't a spiritual descendant that would inherit the promise (such as Eliezer), but an actual flesh and blood descendant.

d) God confirms the promise with an illustration: the stars show how vast the number of Abram's descendants would be

(1) One of those descendants would be the Bright and Morning Star (Rev 22:16)

4.(6) Abram's response to God's promise - *"6 And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness."*

a) When Abram put his trust in God, specifically in God's promise, God credited that belief to Abram's account as righteousness

(1) There are essentially two types of righteousness: righteousness that we accomplish by our own efforts, and righteousness that is accounted to us by the work of God when we believe

(2) cf. Phil. 3:7-9 - "7 But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. 8 What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ--the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith."

b) JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH - This is one of the clearest expressions of the truth of salvation through faith by grace, in the Bible. This is the first time '*believed*' is used in the Bible; and the first time '*righteousness*' is used. It is the gospel in the Old Testament, quoted four times in the New Testament

(1) "1 What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, discovered in this matter? 2 If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about--but not before God. 3 What does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." (Romans 4:1-3).

(2) "9 Is this blessedness only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We have been saying that Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness. 10 Under what circumstances was it credited? Was it after he was circumcised, or before? It was not after, but before!" (Romans 4:9-10).

(3) "19 Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead--since he was about a hundred years old--and that Sarah's womb was also dead. 20 Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, 21 being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. 22 This is why "it was credited to him as righteousness." 23 The words "it was credited to him" were written not for him alone, 24 but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness-- for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead." (Romans 4:19-24)

(4) "Does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard? 6 Consider Abraham: "He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." 7 Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham." (Galatians 3:5-7)

c) Romans 4:9-10 makes much of the fact that this righteousness was accounted to Abram *before* he was circumcised (Gen. 17). No one could say that Abram was made righteous because of his fulfillment of religious law or ritual. It was faith alone that caused God to account Abram as righteous

d) The faith that made Abram righteous isn't so much believing *in* God (as we usually think about believing in God) as it is *believing* God; those who only believe in God (in the sense of believing that He exists) are merely qualified to be demons (James 2:19)

5.(7-8) Abram's doubts surface again - *"7 Then He said to him, "I am the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it." 8 And he said, "Lord GOD, how shall I know that I will inherit it?"*

a)How could Abram say "How shall I know?" when God had just accounted him righteous? He is experiencing what many of those who are accounted righteous experience; it's as if he says, "I believe when I hear God say it, but five minutes later, I'm not sure!"

(1)Remember that Abram had no title deed to the land; nothing that would make anyone else believe it was his - all he had was the promise of God.

(2)James 1:22-25, - *"22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; 24 for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. 25 But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does."*

6.(9-11) Abram prepares to make a covenant with God - *"9 So He said to him, "Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." 10 Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, down the middle, and placed each piece opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. 11 And when the vultures came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away."*

a)Abram knew exactly what to do with these animals: he cut them in two . . . and placed each piece opposite the other. Abram understood that God was telling him to get a contract ready for signing

(1)In those days, contracts would be made by the sacrificial cutting of animals, with the split carcasses laying on the ground. Then, both parties would walk through the animal parts together, repeating the terms of the covenant.

(2)"made a covenant" is literally, 'cut a covenant'.

(a)Jeremiah 34:18-20 makes reference to this same practice

i)Jer 34:18-20, - *"18 `And I will give the men who have transgressed My covenant, who have not performed the words of the covenant which they made before Me, when they cut the calf in two and passed between the parts of it-- 19 `the princes of Judah, the princes of Jerusalem, the eunuchs, the priests, and all the people of the land who passed between the parts of the calf-- 20 `I will give them into the hand of their enemies and into the hand of those who seek their life. Their dead bodies shall be for meat for the birds of the heaven and the beasts of the earth."*

(3)The symbolism is plain: 1) this is a covenant so serious it is sealed with blood; 2) if I break this covenant, let bloodshed be poured out on me!

b)Abram waits for the Lord to appear and walk through the carcasses with him (to sign the covenant). God doesn't come right away, but vultures do...

7.(12-16) Prologue to the covenant - *"12 Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, horror and great darkness fell upon him. 13 Then He said to Abram: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. 14 "And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. 15 "Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. 16 "But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."*

a)God tells Abram of the slavery and hardship that Israel will endure in Egypt (Exodus 1:1-14), yet they would, after four generations, come back into the promised land. In essence, God reads the 'fine print' to Abram in advance.

(1)At the end of the day, God has still not appeared to walk through the animal parts with Abram. Instead, Abram falls into a deep sleep.

b)They served as slaves but when they left, they got their "back wages".

8. (17-21) The covenant is made - "17 *And it came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark, that behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces.* 18 *On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying: "To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates--* 19 *"the Kenites, the Kenezites, the Kadmonites,* 20 *"the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim,* 21 *"the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites."*

9. Abram sees God do an amazing thing: pass through the animal parts all by Himself, while Abram watches on the sidelines

a) God represented Himself by a smoking oven and a burning torch

(1) The smoking oven reminds us of the pillar of cloud (Exodus 13:21-22); the smoke on Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:18); and the cloud of God's Shekinah glory (1 Kings 8:10-12)

(2) The burning torch reminds us of the pillar of fire (Exodus 13:21-22); the burning bush (Exodus 3:4); and the fire from heaven that consumed sacrifices God was pleased with (1 Kings 18:38; 1 Chronicles 21:26; 2 Chronicles 7:1)

b) As God passed through the animal parts by Himself, He showed that this was an Unconditional covenant: Abram never "signed" the covenant, because God "signed" it for both of them

(1) "13 When God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no-one greater for him to swear by, he swore by himself, 14 saying, "I will surely bless you and give you many descendants." 15 And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised. 16 Men swear by someone greater than themselves, and the oath confirms what is said and puts an end to all argument. 17 Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. 18 God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged. 19 We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, 20 where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest for ever, in the order of Melchizedek." (Hebrews 6:13-20)

(2) The certainty of the covenant is based on who God is, not on who Abram is or what Abram does. This is a covenant that cannot fail, because God cannot fail

(3) "A Divine covenant is not a mutual agreement on equal terms between two parties, but a Divine promise assured." (Maclaren)

c) By quoting the specific lands Abram's descendants will inherit, God makes it plain that this is not a "pie in the sky" spiritual promise; it is real.

(1) "For a very brief time, under Solomon (1 Kings 8:65) and possibly again under Jeroboam II (2 Kings 14:25), the children of Israel ruled all this territory, as a token of the final and permanent possession they will have in the future." (Morris)

V. GENESIS 16 - HAGAR AND THE BIRTH OF ISHMAEL

A. SARAI GIVES HER SERVANT GIRL HAGAR TO ABRAM

1. (1-2) Sari proposes a child for Abram through Hagar - *"1 Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. And she had an Egyptian maidservant whose name was Hagar. 2 So Sarai said to Abram, "See now, the LORD has restrained me from bearing children. Please, go in to my maid; perhaps I shall obtain children by her." And Abram heeded the voice of Sarai."*

a) Hagar was an Egyptian maidservant; likely part of what was given to Abram during his time in Egypt (Genesis 12:16)

b) Sarai encouraged Abram to take part in a "surrogate mother" arrangement.

According to customs of the time, the child would be considered to be the child of Abram and Sarai, not Abram and Hagar

(1) Note: They were married in Ur and according to ancient marriage contracts:

1) A barren woman was to provide her husband with a slave girl to bear a son. i.e. a "surrogate mother" 2) A man might take a 2nd wife only if the 1st failed to give birth within 7 years or a 3rd wife only if the first 2 were barren.

c) Why would Sarai do such a thing? Perhaps she thought that she was the problem with the promise being fulfilled. So, to "help God out", she allowed her husband to impregnate Hagar.

(1) Ginzberg quotes Jewish tradition that says before they came to live in the Promised Land, Abram and Sarai regarded their childlessness as punishment for not living in the land. But now, they had been in the land for ten years and still had no children. Sarai probably felt it was time to do something - after all, doesn't "God help those who help themselves?"

(2) Even though this form of "surrogate motherhood" was accepted, it doesn't mean it was right - Abram and Sarai are not being led by God.

2. (3-4) Abram agrees with Sarai's suggestion - *"3 Then Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar her maid, the Egyptian, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan. 4 So he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress became despised in her eyes."*

a) It had been more than ten years since the promise was made regarding Abram's descendants.

(1) The long waiting for the promise had made them discouraged, and vulnerable to acting in the flesh; yet, even after this, it would still be more than thirteen years until the child of promise was born!

(2) When we impatiently try to "help God out" in the flesh, it accomplishes nothing and may even prolong the time until the promise is fulfilled. Jacob had to live as an exile for 25 years because he tried to "help God out" to get his father's blessing; Moses had to tend sheep for 40 years in the desert after he tried to "help God out" by murdering an Egyptian

(3) How much better to receive God's help than try and help Him out in the flesh! "Those who are truly zealous for God frequently reach for fruit without first dying. Unfortunately much Christian work is done in this way, and while there is conception, the child that is born can never be the heir. Christian work that is done merely through the zeal of human effort without counting the body as dead ("and Sarai as good as dead") may produce great revival campaigns with but a few genuinely saved, large church memberships with many tares among the wheat." (Barnhouse)

(a) According to the custom of the day, Hagar would actually sit on the lap of Sarai as Abram inseminated her, to show that the child would legally belong to Sarai, as Hagar was merely a substitute for Sarai

3.(5-6) Sarai's anger towards Hagar - *"5 Then Sarai said to Abram, "My wrong be upon you! I gave my maid into your embrace; and when she saw that she had conceived, I became despised in her eyes. The LORD judge between you and me." 6 So Abram said to Sarai, "Indeed your maid is in your hand; do to her as you please. ..."*

- a)Hagar's contempt for Sarai starts the problems; she couldn't resist thinking her pregnancy made her better than Sarai
- b)Unfortunately, a common human trait is to hold others responsible for our plans when they don't work out the way we hoped. "If it works it's mine - If it's broken it must be yours!"
- c)Abram seems to make a bad situation worse by turning the situation over to Sarai, not taking care of the child he is father to. Yet, he is putting his relationship with Sarai first, and that's good
 - (1)Complicated and difficult situations often result from our sin. How much the Lord desires to spare us from them!

B.HAGAR FLEES FROM ABRAM AND SARAI

1.(6b-9) The Angel of the Lord appears to Hagar and instructs her - *"6 ... And when Sarai dealt harshly with her, she fled from her presence. 7 Now the Angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur. 8 And He said, "Hagar, Sarai's maid, where have you come from, and where are you going?" She said, "I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai." 9 The Angel of the LORD said to her, "Return to your mistress, and submit yourself under her hand."*

- a)God tells Hagar to go back and submit herself to Sarai.
- b)*the Angel of the LORD* - [see 'The Angel of the Lord' in Appendix]

2.(10-12) The promise of the Angel of the Lord to Hagar - *"10 Then the Angel of the LORD said to her, "I will multiply your descendants exceedingly, so that they shall not be counted for multitude." 11 And the Angel of the LORD said to her: "Behold, you are with child, And you shall bear a son. You shall call his name Ishmael, Because the LORD has heard your affliction. 12 He shall be a wild man; His hand shall be against every man, And every man's hand against him. And he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren."*

- a)Ishmael will become the father of all the Arabic peoples
 - (1)Conflict between Jew and Arab is nothing new; both are descended from Abram by two men who were half-brothers - Ishmael and Isaac
 - (2)The entire conflict can be traced back to Abram's decision to "help God out" in the flesh - both when he agreed to impregnate Hagar, and when he went to Egypt in the first place.
 - (3)Who knows how far reaching the effects of our sin may be?
- b)Her child's life will not be easy, but God will still bless and sustain him.
- c)*You shall call his name Ishmael* - Ishmael is first man in Bible to be given his name before birth. Ishmael means "God hears"
- d)*the LORD has heard your affliction* - God's dealings with Hagar gives us hope - He sees our sufferings and acts to touch our lives.

3.(13-16) God's blessing and protection of Hagar and Ishmael - *"13 Then she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees; for she said, "Have I also here seen Him who sees me?" 14 Therefore the well was called Beer Lahai Roi; observe, it is between Kadesh and Bered. 15 So Hagar bore Abram a son; and Abram named his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. 16 Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram."*

- a)Hagar knew that this was no mere angel who appeared to her; the Angel of the Lord was also 'The-God-Who-Sees', and was watching over them

b) Apparently, Hagar did return with a submissive heart; she told the whole story to Abram and Sarai, and Abram named the child Ishmael as the Angel of the Lord had directed Hagar.

(1) Can you imagine Hagar coming back and saying, "I fled from you all because I was so miserable and thought I could not continue here. But the Lord met me and told me He would see me through. He told me to come back and submit to you, so that's why I'm here." After meeting with El Roi (You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees), Hagar knew that if God could be with her in the wilderness, He would be with her in submitting to Sarai also.

(2) "If we seek to change our circumstances, we will jump from the frying pan into the fire. We must be triumphant exactly where we are. It is not a change of climate we need, but a change of heart. The flesh wants to run away, But God wants to demonstrate His power exactly where we have known our greatest chagrin." (Barnhouse)

VI. GENESIS 17 - GOD REAFFIRMS THE COVENANT

A. AN APPEARANCE FROM GOD, A CHANGE OF NAME FOR ABRAM

1. (1-2) God appears to Abram when he is ninety-nine years old - *"1 When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless. 2 "And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly."*

a) First, God tells Abram who He is - *"I am Almighty God"* - by this name 'El Shaddai', He reveals Himself to Abram

(1) "All Sufficient" - Jehovah is, sufficient in and of Himself, and for Himself, and stands in no need of any, or of anything from another; and has a sufficiency for others, both in a way of providence and grace [Gill]

(2) There is some debate as to what exactly the name El Shaddai means

(a) Kidner: "A traditional analysis of the name is 'God (el) who (sa) is sufficient (day)'"

(b) Clarke: "El shaddai, I am God all-sufficient; from shadah, to shed, to pour out. I am that God who pours out blessings, who gives them richly, abundantly, continually."

(c) Barnhouse: the Hebrew word shad means "chest" or "breast." It may have in mind the strength of a man's chest (God Almighty) or the comfort and nourishment of a woman's breast (God of Tender Care)

(d) Leupold: Shaddai comes from the root shadad, which means "to display power"

(e) Gill: Some render it "all sufficient" - Jehovah is, sufficient in and of Himself, and for Himself, and stands in no need of any, or of anything from another; and has a sufficiency for others, both in a way of providence and grace:

(f) We do know that the Septuagint translates the word with the Greek pantokrator, "Almighty", the "One who has His hand on everything"

b) Then, God tells Abram what is expected of him: *"walk before Me and be blameless"*. We can only do what God expects of us when we know Who He is, and know it in a full, personal way.

(1) *"blameless"* lit. means "whole"; God wanted all of Abram.

c) God reminds Abram that He has not forgotten the covenant though it's been @ 25 years since it was first made

(1) The last time we are told that the Lord communicated with Abram directly was more than thirteen years before; seemingly, Abram had thirteen years of "normal" fellowship with God, waiting for the promise all the time - and surely, at times, feeling that God had forgotten

(2) To make a great man of faith it takes years of daily, unsensational trust in God interspersed with a few spectacular encounters.

2. (3-5) God calls Abram 'Abraham' - *"3 Then Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying: 4 "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations. 5 "No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations."*

3.(6-8) God refers to specific terms of the covenant - 6 *"I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you.* 7 *"And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you.* 8 *"Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."*

a)To encourage Abram's faith re descendants, God changes his name, from Abram ("exalted father") to Abraham ("father of many nations")

(1)There are many wonderful name changes in the Bible; such as when God changed Jacob's name to Israel (Genesis 32:28) and when He changed Simon's name to Peter (Mark 3:16); God promises a wonderful new name to every overcomer (Rev. 2:17)

(a)God gives us many names in faith (saint, righteous, chosen, royal priesthood, sons of God, and so forth) - and He knows that He will accomplish them in us, even if it seems preposterous

b)To encourage Abraham's faith re the land, God repeats the promise, reminding Abraham that it is an everlasting possession given by an everlasting covenant

x

4.(9-14) God institutes a sign of the covenant for Abraham and his descendants - *"9 And God said to Abraham: "As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. 10 "This is My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised; 11 "and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you. 12 "He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised, every male child in your generations, he who is born in your house or bought with money from any foreigner who is not your descendant. 13 "He who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money must be circumcised, and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. 14 "And the uncircumcised male child, who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant."*

a)God gives Abraham something to take upon themselves as a sign of the covenant, showing they have received the covenant by faith. The sign would be circumcision - the cutting away of the male foreskin.

b)Why did God choose this sign?

(1)Circumcision was practiced by various peoples at that time.

(2) There were undoubtedly hygienic reasons.

(a)McMillen, in *None of These Diseases*, notes that studies in 1949 and 1954 show an incredibly low rate of cervical cancer for Jewish women, because they mostly have husbands who are circumcised

(b)"There is some medical evidence that this practice has indeed contributed to the long-lasting vigor of the Jewish race." (Morris)

(3)Cutting away of the flesh is an appropriate sign for those who should put no trust in the flesh

(a)Also, because circumcision deals with the organ of procreation, it was a reminder of the special seed of Abraham that would bring the Messiah

c)Why did God command that circumcision take place on the eighth day?

(1)McMillen notes that an important blood-clotting agent, vitamin K, is not formed in the normal amount until the fifth to seventh day of life. Another blood clotting agent, prothrombin, is at its highest levels in infants on precisely the eighth day of life - making the eighth day the safest, earliest day to circumcise an infant. [also reduced sensitivity to pain]

d) Those who rejected circumcision were rejecting the sign of the covenant. It wasn't that circumcision made them a part of the covenant (faith did); but rejection of circumcision was rejection of the covenant

(1) Unfortunately, through the centuries, the Jews began to trust more in the sign of the covenant (circumcision) than in the God of the covenant, believing that circumcision in itself was sufficient and necessary to save someone. Paul refutes this idea extensively, especially in light of the finished work of Jesus (Galatians 5:1-15)

(2) Therefore, Christians are free to either circumcise or not; one may do so for social or hygienic reasons, but it doesn't get one any closer to God:

(a) Galatians 5:6, - *"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love."*

e) The Christian parallel to circumcision is baptism; Paul relates the two ideas together in Colossians 2:11-12 - *"11 In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, 12 having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead."*

B. THE PROMISE OF A SON TO BOTH ABRAHAM AND SARAH

1. (15-16) The promise is stated: a son will come through Sarah, whose name is changed from Sarai - *"15 Then God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. 16 "And I will bless her and also give you a son by her; then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples shall be from her."*

a) There is only a subtle difference between Sarai and Sarah, but it is important; Sarai signifies 'my princess' - while Sarah is 'a princess' - The idea seems to be that while childless, she was dear to Abram alone - but soon she will have a child and will be a princess to many.

b) God makes it plain: Sarah herself will give birth - even though it's past her time (90 at this time)

2. (17-18) Abraham's response to the promise - *"17 Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, "Shall a child be born to a man who is one hundred years old? And shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?" 18 And Abraham said to God, "Oh, that Ishmael might live before You!"*

a) Abraham appears to be suggesting that God establish the covenant through Ishmael.

3. (19-22) God repeats the promise and names the child that will come forth from Abraham and Sarah - *"19 Then God said: "No, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his descendants after him. 20 "And as for Ishmael, I have heard you. Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall beget twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. 21 "But My covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this set time next year." 22 Then He finished talking with him, and God went up from Abraham."*

a) Ishmael will be blessed, but the covenant and its promises will pass only through Isaac, the son of promise

b) The son would be named Isaac ("laughter") because he would be a joy to his parents, but also to remind them that they laughed at God's promise.

c) Abraham's knew that both he and Sarah were well past the time people normally have children; yet, "18 Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be." 19 Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead--since he was about a hundred years old--and that Sarah's womb was also dead. 20 Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, 21 being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised." (Romans 4:17-21)

d) Note: Sarah is his wife. God recognizes no other. The covenant is with the son of his wife. Although God doesn't specifically rebuke Abraham regarding Hagar, He is teaching the special relationship between husband and wife.

(1) cf. also - 22:2 - "Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about."

4. (23-27) Abraham carries out God's command of circumcision - "23 So Abraham took Ishmael his son, all who were born in his house and all who were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house, and circumcised the flesh of their foreskins that very same day, as God had said to him. 24 Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. 25 And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. 26 That very same day Abraham was circumcised, and his son Ishmael; 27 and all the men of his house, born in the house or bought with money from a foreigner, were circumcised with him."

a) Abraham's belief in the covenant was seen in his obedience to the command; what we really believe will be evident in our actions.

b) Abraham's obedience was complete (every male of his household), prompt (same day), and courageous (incapacitating all men at the same time)

(1) Abraham didn't need to pray about this; he didn't need to grow into this. God said it, and he did it

VII. GENESIS 18 - THE PROMISE OF ISAAC CONFIRMED

A. ABRAHAM MEETS SOME VERY IMPORTANT VISITORS

1. (1-5) Abraham invites the Lord and two others to a meal - *1 Then the LORD appeared to him by the terebinth trees of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day. 2 So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground, 3 and said, "My Lord, if I have now found favor in Your sight, do not pass on by Your servant. 4 "Please let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. 5 "And I will bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh your hearts. After that you may pass by, inasmuch as you have come to your servant." They said, "Do as you have said."*

a) Here again, the Lord appears to Abraham in human, bodily form.

b) It's unclear if Abraham immediately recognized these visitors.

(1) though the Lord (in the person of Jesus Christ) had appeared to Abraham twice before (Gen 12:7, 17:1), we don't know if Jesus looked the same each time, or if Abraham could just know who this was without a similar appearance

c) As would be customary, Abraham offers hospitality [cf. Bedouins]

d) Note: God said that Sarah would give birth one year later - (*"But my covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you by this time next year."* Genesis 17:21) - and at this time, she is not yet pregnant - so this couldn't be more than three months after the events in Genesis 17

2. (6-8) Sarah and Abram prepare a meal for their visitors - *"6 So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah and said, "Quickly, make ready three measures of fine meal; knead it and make cakes." 7 And Abraham ran to the herd, took a tender and good calf, gave it to a young man, and he hastened to prepare it. 8 So he took butter and milk and the calf which he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree as they ate."*

3. (9-10) God reconfirms His promise of a son - *"9 Then they said to him, "Where is Sarah your wife?" So he said, "Here, in the tent." 10 And He said, "I will certainly return to you according to the time of life, and behold, Sarah your wife shall have a son." (Sarah was listening in the tent door which was behind him.)"*

a) Why does God repeat the promise so soon? We need to hear God's promises over and over again; it is a way He encourages and develops our faith: *"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God"* (Romans 10:17)

4. (11-12) Sarah's reaction - *11 Now Abraham and Sarah were old, well advanced in age; and Sarah had passed the age of childbearing. 12 Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, "After I have grown old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?"*

a) There was good reason for Sarah to laugh; she had passed the age of childbearing - she had gone through menopause

5. (13-15) God answers Sarah's laugh - *13 And the LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, saying, 'Shall I surely bear a child, since I am old?' 14 "Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son." 15 But Sarah denied it, saying, "I did not laugh," for she was afraid. And He said, "No, but you did laugh!"*

a) Is there anything too hard for the Lord? Thankfully not!

(1) *hard* is the same word for "wonderful" in Isaiah 9:6 - *"For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given . . . And His name will be called Wonderful..."* Jesus is our "wonderful" One

(2) God dealt with Abraham about this, not Sarah herself, because Abraham was the head of his home

b)cf. Sarah with Mary - Lk. 1:34-37 - 34 "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" 35 The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. ... 37 For nothing is impossible with God."
c)God heard Sarah's laugh even though she laughed within herself - there's nothing hidden before the Lord

(1)i. How would we live differently if we remembered that God hears and knows everything we think and say?

d)Note: Fear is often the cause of lies

B. ABRAHAM INTERCEDES FOR SODOM AND GOMORRAH

1.(16-22) God decides to reveal the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah - 16 Then the men rose from there and looked toward Sodom, and Abraham went with them to send them on the way. 17 And the LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing, 18 "since Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? 19 "For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him. 20 And the LORD said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grave, 21 "I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry against it that has come to Me; and if not, I will know. 22 Then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the LORD. "

a) in order that he may command his children and his household after him - Notice God's emphasis upon family! If we minister to our families, the blessings will follow *that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him.*

b)The two men mentioned in verse 22 are actually the angels of Genesis 19; the third "man" in the party is the Lord Himself.

2.(22-26) Abraham asks an important question - "23 And Abraham came near and said, "Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked? 24 "Suppose there were fifty righteous within the city; would You also destroy the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous that were in it? 25 "Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked; far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" 26 So the LORD said, "If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes."

a)Abraham "reminded" the Lord of His own nature and principles; shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? How could God, as a righteous Judge, cause the innocent to perish with the guilty?

b)Abraham's theology was more sophisticated than we often give him credit for.

3.(27-33) Abraham Intercedes for Sodom and Gomorrah - "27 Then Abraham answered and said, "Indeed now, I who am but dust and ashes have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord: 28 "Suppose there were five less than the fifty righteous; would You destroy all of the city for lack of five?" So He said, "If I find there forty-five, I will not destroy it." 29 And he spoke to Him yet again and said, "Suppose there should be forty found there?" So He said, "I will not do it for the sake of forty." 30 Then he said, "Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Suppose thirty should be found there?" So He said, "I will not do it if I find thirty there." 31 And he said, "Indeed now, I have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord: Suppose twenty should be found there?" So He said, "I will not destroy it for the sake of twenty." 32 Then he said, "Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak but once more: Suppose ten should be found there?" And He said, "I will not destroy it for the sake of ten."

4.33 *So the LORD went His way as soon as He had finished speaking with Abraham; and Abraham returned to his place."*

- a) The principle has been established - God will not destroy the righteous with this wicked - now it is just a matter of numbers. How many righteous will God spare the city for?
- b) Abraham gets God to lower the number of righteous required to spare the city down - first by units of five, then by units of ten, until the number settles at ten
- c) Note: God is a Patient Teacher. He let Abraham go through this process and learn more of His Character, when all along, the Lord knew what He would do.

VIII. GENESIS 19 - THE DESTRUCTION OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH

A. THE TWO ANGELS COME TO SODOM

1. (1-3) Lot convinces the angelic visitors to stay with him - *"1 Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them, and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground. 2 And he said, "Here now, my lords, please turn in to your servant's house and spend the night, and wash your feet; then you may rise early and go on your way." And they said, "No, but we will spend the night in the open square." 3 But he insisted strongly; so they turned in to him and entered his house. Then he made them a feast, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate."*

- a) Lot himself was a righteous man who was grieved by the sin he saw around him - *"7 and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the filthy lives of lawless men 8 (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)" - 2 Peter 2:7-8*
- b) Yet we see how much Lot was influenced and permeated with the values of the world.
 - (1) There has been a steady progression of compromise in Lot's life; from looking toward Sodom (13:10), to pitching his tent toward Sodom (13:12), to living in Sodom (14:12) and losing everything. Now Lot is sitting in the gate of Sodom indicating that he is a civic leader
- c) The effect of his compromise was that few of his family and none of his friends were saved - compromise destroyed his testimony

2. (4-9) The wickedness and depravity of the men of Sodom - *"4 Now before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both old and young, all the people from every quarter, surrounded the house. 5 And they called to Lot and said to him, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may know them carnally." 6 So Lot went out to them through the doorway, shut the door behind him, 7 and said, "Please, my brethren, do not do so wickedly! 8 "See now, I have two daughters who have not known a man; please, let me bring them out to you, and you may do to them as you wish; only do nothing to these men, since this is the reason they have come under the shadow of my roof." 9 And they said, "Stand back!" Then they said, "This one came in to stay here, and he keeps acting as a judge; now we will deal worse with you than with them." So they pressed hard against the man Lot, and came near to break down the door."*

- a) Their sin is homosexuality; which the Bible clearly declares sin. [see Appendix]
 - (1) *Leviticus 18:22 - "Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable."*

(2) *Leviticus 20:13 - "If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They must be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads."*

(3) *Romans 1:26-28 - "26 Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. 27 In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion. 28 Furthermore, since they did not think it worth while to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done."*

b) They come to homosexually rape and abuse these two visitors; but we are just as shocked at the willingness of Lot to give up his daughters to this mob as we are at the sinful desire of the mob itself

(1) The offer is horrible, but more understandable in light of the low place of women in the pre-Christian world, and the high place of any guest in your home; a guest was to be protected more than your own family

c) Note: Although homosexuality is the blatant sin seen here, Eze. 16:49-50 makes it clear that Sodom and Gomorrah were also being judged for pride and refusing to help the poor and needy.

(1) "49 Look, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughter had pride, fullness of food, and abundance of idleness; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. 50 And they were haughty and committed abomination before Me; therefore I took them away as I saw fit." *Ezekiel 16:49-50*

d) *This one came in to stay here, and he keeps acting as a judge* - Lot's efforts at providing moral leadership were rejected and mocked by the men of Sodom.

(1) Perhaps Lot thought that, through compromise, he might reach these men, but just the opposite happened - they have no respect for him whatsoever.

3.3. (10-11) Angelic protection at the door - ***"10 But the men reached out their hands and pulled Lot into the house with them, and shut the door. 11 And they struck the men who were at the doorway of the house with blindness, both small and great, so that they became weary trying to find the door."***

a) This is a special kind of blindness found only also in 2 Kings 6:18. It was a blindness of mind - confusion, rather than a physical blindness. i.e. They could see, but could not recognize the door.

(1) *"As the enemy came down towards him, Elisha prayed to the LORD, "Strike these people with blindness." So he struck them with blindness, as Elisha had asked." (2 Kings 6:18)*

(2) Like spiritual blindness - "You have eyes to see but are blind!"

B. THE ANGELS' DELIVERANCE OF LOT

1. (12-14) The angels warn Lot, Lot warns his family - ***"12 Then the men said to Lot, "Have you anyone else here? Son-in-law, your sons, your daughters, and whomever you have in the city--take them out of this place! 13 "For we will destroy this place, because the outcry against them has grown great before the face of the LORD, and the LORD has sent us to destroy it." 14 So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who had married his daughters, and said, "Get up, get out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city!" But to his sons-in-law he seemed to be joking."***

a) The effect of Lot's life of compromise is clearly seen; when he speaks to his sons-in-law about the judgment of God, he seemed to be joking.

b) It is possible to have a saved soul and a wasted life.

(1) *1 Corinthians 3:15 - "If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire."*

2.(15-16) The angels hurry Lot and his family - "15 *When the morning dawned, the angels urged Lot to hurry, saying, "Arise, take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you be consumed in the punishment of the city."* 16 *And while he lingered, the men took hold of his hand, his wife's hand, and the hands of his two daughters, the LORD being merciful to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city."*

a) *he lingered* - too much of Lot's heart was in Sodom. Lack of urgency to do the things of God is a sign of compromise and a backslidden condition

(1) Like Lot, many believers have too much of the world to be happy in the Lord, and too much of the Lord to be happy in the world.

b) *the men took hold of his hand, his wife's hand, and the hands of his two daughters, the LORD being merciful to him, and they brought him out* - The Mercy of God compels Him to take action - even using force if necessary - to spare us from our deserved judgment.

(1) Jude 22-23 - "22 *Be merciful to those who doubt; 23 snatch others from the fire and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear--hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh."*

3.(17-22) The escape from Sodom - "17 *So it came to pass, when they had brought them outside, that he said, "Escape for your life! Do not look behind you nor stay anywhere in the plain. Escape to the mountains, lest you be destroyed."* 18 *Then Lot said to them, "Please, no, my lords! 19 "Indeed now, your servant has found favor in your sight, and you have increased your mercy which you have shown me by saving my life; but I cannot escape to the mountains, lest some evil overtake me and I die. 20 "See now, this city is near enough to flee to, and it is a little one; please let me escape there (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live." 21 And he said to him, "See, I have favored you concerning this thing also, in that I will not overthrow this city for which you have spoken. 22 "Hurry, escape there. For I cannot do anything until you arrive there." Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar. [Zoar means 'little' or 'small'] 23 *The sun had risen upon the earth when Lot entered Zoar."**

a) *I cannot do anything until you arrive there.* - God would not bring judgment on Sodom until the righteous were delivered.

b) Consider what this says concerning the Rapture of the Church. (cf. Lk. 17:28-30)

(1) 1Thess. 5:9 - "For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. " [cf. Rev. 3:10]

(2) Rev. 3:10 - "Since you [Philadelphia] have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth."

C. GOD'S JUDGMENT OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH

1.(23-26) The cities destroyed, Lot's wife turned to a pillar of salt - "23 *The sun had risen upon the earth when Lot entered Zoar. 24 Then the LORD rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the LORD out of the heavens. 25 So He overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. 26 But his wife looked back behind him, and she became a pillar of salt."*

a) Today, these cities are believed to be buried under the Dead Sea. cf. high salt and mineral content in the area of the Dead Sea. [<http://www.ctvn.org/the-programs/origins/origins-on-demand> look for 'Sodom & Gomorrah 1&2']

(1) The area of Sodom had been beautiful and productive, like the garden of the Lord (13:10) - yet this blessing did not turn their hearts towards God

b) Lot's wife was turned to a pillar of salt because she looked back after the angels had specifically said **Don't look back**

(1) Referring to the end times, Jesus said: "Remember Lot's wife" in Luke 17:32.

(2) Lk. 9:62 - "Jesus replied, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."

2. (27-29) Abraham learns of Sodom and Gomorrah's destruction - "27 And Abraham went early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the LORD. 28 Then he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain; and he saw, and behold, the smoke of the land which went up like the smoke of a furnace. 29 And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities in which Lot had dwelt."

a) SODOM & GOMORRAH IS AN EXAMPLE FOR US

(1) OF THE DAY OF THE LORD'S RETURN

(a) Lk. 17:28-32 - "28 It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. 29 But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. 30 "It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed. 31 On that day no one who is on the roof of his house, with his goods inside, should go down to get them. Likewise, no one in the field should go back for anything. 32 Remember Lot's wife!"

(2) OF THE ETERNAL PUNISHMENT OF HELL [add article to Appendix???

(a) Jude 1:7 - "In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire."

(b) "7 and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the filthy lives of lawless men 8 (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)-- 9 if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment. " (2 Peter 2:7-9)

(3) OF THE DANGERS OF PRIDE AND ARROGANCE

(a) Ezekiel 16:48-50, - "48 "As I live," says the Lord GOD, "neither your sister Sodom nor her daughters have done as you and your daughters have done. 49 "Look, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughter had pride, fullness of food, and abundance of idleness; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. 50 "And they were haughty and committed abomination before Me; therefore I took them away as I saw fit."

b) Note v.29 *God ... remembered Abraham, and He brought Lot out of the catastrophe* - Lot was protected because of his relationship to Abraham. We are saved because of our relationship to Jesus.

3.3. (30-32) Lot and his daughters live in a wilderness cave - "30 Then Lot went up out of Zoar and dwelt in the mountains, and his two daughters were with him; for he was afraid to dwell in Zoar. And he and his two daughters dwelt in a cave. 31 Now the firstborn said to the younger, "Our father is old, and there is no man on the earth to come in to us as is the custom of all the earth. 32 "Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve the lineage of our father."

a) There are many caves and caverns in Judea some large enough to hold and shelter 100s of people. cf. Judges 6:2, 1Sam. 22:1-2 (400 men with David in a cave)

b) What would lead the daughters of Lot to do such a thing?

(1) Some suggest they believed the whole world had perished with Sodom and Gomorrah; but their time in Zoar showed there were other people.

(2) Perhaps they thought there were no other 'eligible' men of the godly line? - *that we may preserve the lineage of our father*

4.(33-38) Moab and Ammon are born from this incestuous relationship - "33 So they made their father drink wine that night. And the firstborn went in and lay with her father, and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose. 34 It happened on the next day that the firstborn said to the younger, "Indeed I lay with my father last night; let us make him drink wine tonight also, and you go in and lie with him, that we may preserve the lineage of our father." 35 Then they made their father drink wine that night also. And the younger arose and lay with him, and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose. 36 Thus both the daughters of Lot were with child by their father. 37 The firstborn bore a son and called his name Moab; he is the father of the Moabites to this day. 38 And the younger, she also bore a son and called his name Ben-Ammi; he is the father of the people of Ammon to this day."

a) Their descendants will be enemies and obstacles for Israel just like the descendants of Ishmael.

b) Yet - cf. *Duet. 2:9* - "Then the Lord said to me, "Do not harass the Moabites or provoke them to war, for I will not give you any part of their land. I have given Ar to the descendants of Lot as a possession."

IX. GENESIS 20 - ABRAHAM LIES ABOUT SARAH AGAIN

A. ABRAHAM'S LIE, GOD'S PROTECTION

1.(1-2) Abraham lies the same old lie again - "1 And Abraham journeyed from there to the South, and dwelt between Kadesh and Shur, and stayed in Gerar [Gerar was the capitol city of the Philistines at the time]. 2 Now Abraham said of Sarah his wife, "She is my sister." And Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah."

a) Abraham is stumbling in a place where he had stumbled before.

(1) Age does not automatically sanctify us. Unless yielded to the Spirit of God, we will continue to repeat sinful patterns.

(2) cf. *Hebrews 12:10-11* - "10 Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. 11 No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it."

b) *Abimelech* - 'My father a king', or 'father of a king', a common name of the Philistine kings, as "Pharaoh" was of the Egyptian kings.

c) *Easton Bible Dict*: "The Philistine king of Gerar in the time of Abraham. By an interposition of Providence, Sarah was delivered from his harem, and was restored to her husband Abraham. As a mark of respect he gave to Abraham valuable gifts, and offered him a settlement in any part of his country; while at the same time he delicately and yet severely rebuked him for having practised a deception upon him in pretending that Sarah was only his sister. ... A few years after this Abimelech visited Abraham, who had removed southward beyond his territory, and there entered into a league of peace and friendship with him. This league was the first of which we have any record. It was confirmed by a mutual oath at Beer-sheba (Gen 21:22-34).

d)(3-7) God threatens judgment upon Abimelech for taking Sarah - "3 *But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, "Indeed you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is a man's wife."* 4 *But Abimelech had not come near her; and he said, "Lord, will You slay a righteous nation also? 5 "Did he not say to me, 'She is my sister'? And she, even she herself said, 'He is my brother.' In the integrity of my heart and innocence of my hands I have done this."* 6 *And God said to him in a dream, "Yes, I know that you did this in the integrity of your heart. For I also withheld you from sinning against Me; therefore I did not let you touch her. 7 "Now therefore, restore the man's wife; for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you shall live. But if you do not restore her, know that you shall surely die, you and all who are yours."*

e) Because Abimelech's heart was right in this regard, God kept him from sin.

f) God's mercy has not left Abraham, even though he wasn't trusting as he should.

B. ABRAHAM IS REBUKED AGAIN

1. (8-10) Abraham (just like last time) suffers rebuke from a heathen king - 8 "So *Abimelech rose early in the morning, called all his servants, and told all these things in their hearing; and the men were very much afraid. 9 And Abimelech called Abraham and said to him, "What have you done to us? How have I offended you, that you have brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? You have done deeds to me that ought not to be done."* 10 *Then Abimelech said to Abraham, "What did you have in view, that you have done this thing?"*

2. (11-13) Abraham's excuse - "11 *And Abraham said, "Because I thought, surely the fear of God is not in this place; and they will kill me on account of my wife. 12 "But indeed she is truly my sister. She is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife. 13 "And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said to her, 'This is your kindness that you should do for me: in every place, wherever we go, say of me, "He is my brother.'"*"

a) Abraham excuses his deception by saying 'surely the fear of God is not in the place'; but perhaps the real problem was that the fear of God wasn't in Abraham!

b) Be careful not to make false assumptions based on first impressions. You'd be surprised where you'll find faith, or at least fear of God. [cf. TV project and Instructor's response]

c) Abraham justifies his lie by saying it is really the truth. But a half-truth, said with intent to deceive, is always a whole lie

d) **when God caused me to wander** - Abraham may also be blaming God for the problem.

(1) "There is a terrible meaning in this verb wander which Abraham uses. The Hebrew word occurs exactly fifty times in Scripture and never in a good sense. It is used of animals going astray, of a drunken man reeling, or staggering, of sinful seduction, of a prophet's lies causing the people to err, of the path of a lying heart. Six other words are translated wander, any one of which Abraham might have used, but he used the worst word available." (Barnhouse)

3.(14-18) Abimelech's gift recompenses Sarah, Abraham prays for him - *"14 Then Abimelech took sheep, oxen, and male and female servants, and gave them to Abraham; and he restored Sarah his wife to him. 15 And Abimelech said, "See, my land is before you; dwell where it pleases you." 16 Then to Sarah he said, "Behold, I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver; indeed this vindicates you before all who are with you and before everybody." Thus she was rebuked. 17 So Abraham prayed to God; and God healed Abimelech, his wife, and his female servants. Then they bore children; 18 for the LORD had closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife."*

a)Some [Easton] have suggested that the 1,000 pieces of silver was for Sarah to get a veil, which, as a married woman, she should have worn (in Abimelech's view).

(1)cf. KJV - *16 ...Behold, I have given thy brother a thousand pieces of silver: behold, he is to thee a covering of the eyes, unto all that are with thee, and with all other: thus she was reproved.*

(a)Among the gifts presented by the king were a thousand pieces of silver as a "covering of the eyes" for Sarah; i.e., either as an atoning gift and a testimony of her innocence in the sight of all, or rather for the purpose of procuring a veil for Sarah to conceal her beauty, and thus as a reproof to her for not having worn a veil which, as a married woman, she ought to have done.

b)We can imagine the irony in Abimelech's voice when he refers to Abraham as Sarah's *brother*.

c)Note: God could have healed apart from Abraham's prayer - but this way Abraham was confirmed in their sight as a prophet of the True God.

X.GENESIS 21 - THE BIRTH OF ISAAC

A.THE BIRTH OF ISAAC

1.(1-2) God fulfills His promise to Abraham and Sarah - *"1 And the LORD visited Sarah as He had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as He had spoken. 2 For Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him."*

a)It took a long time (@25 years) for this promise to come to pass; but the Lord did for Sarah as He had spoken - as He always does

(1)Note: The Graciousness of the Lord is that He does *What* He has promised, *When* He has promised in the *Way* He has promised.

b)The promise of a son was not fulfilled because Abraham was perfect in his obedience, but because God is faithful to His Word.

2.(3-7) The child is named Isaac - *"3 And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him--whom Sarah bore to him--Isaac. 4 Then Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. 5 Now Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. 6 And Sarah said, "God has made me laugh, and all who hear will laugh with me." 7 She also said, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? For I have borne him a son in his old age."*

a)cf. Rom. 4:18-21 - *"18 Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be." 19 Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead--since he was about a hundred years old--and that Sarah's womb was also dead. 20 Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, 21 being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised."*

- b) Isaac becomes a wonderful type (picture) of Jesus:
- (1) Both were promised sons
 - (2) Both mothers were assured by God (18:13-14; Luke 1:34, 37)
 - (3) Both were given names before they were born
 - (4) Both births occurred at God's appointed time (21:2; Galatians 4:4)
 - (5) Both births were miraculous
 - (6) Both births were accompanied by joy (21:6; Luke 1:46-47; 2:10-11)

B. CONFLICT BETWEEN ISHMAEL AND ISAAC

1.(8-11) Sarah wants Abraham to cast out both Hagar and Ishmael - *"8 So the child grew and was weaned. And Abraham made a great feast on the same day that Isaac was weaned. 9 And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, scoffing. 10 Therefore she said to Abraham, "Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, namely with Isaac." 11 And the matter was very displeasing in Abraham's sight because of his son."*

- a) Children were not weaned until the age of two to four
- b) There arises an inevitable conflict between these two sons (though they are some thirteen years apart), and Abraham finds it hard to put away his son Ishmael.

(1) Notice that Ishmael was the one scoffing at Isaac

- c) Galatians 4:22-29 gives a spiritual application to this conflict.

(1) *22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. 23 His son by the slave woman was born in the ordinary way; but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a promise. 24 These things may be taken figuratively, for the women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar. 25 Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children. 26 But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother. ... 28 Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. 29 At that time the son born in the ordinary way persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit. It is the same now.... 31 Therefore, brothers, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman." (Galatians 4:22-31)*

(2) Even as Ishmael and his descendants persecuted Isaac and his descendants, we should not be surprised when those who follow God in the flesh persecute those who follow God by faith.

C.(12-14) Under God's instruction, Abraham puts Hagar and Ishmael out - *"12 But God said to Abraham, "Do not let it be displeasing in your sight because of the lad or because of your bondwoman. Whatever Sarah has said to you, listen to her voice; for in Isaac your seed shall be called. 13 "Yet I will also make a nation of the son of the bondwoman, because he is your seed." 14 So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water; and putting it on her shoulder, he gave it and the boy to Hagar, and sent her away. Then she departed and wandered in the Wilderness of Beersheba."*

1. It may have seemed ruthless of Abraham to do this; but it was what God wanted, and what needed to happen.

- a) God wants us to be ruthless with the flesh in the same manner: "those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" (Gal 5:24)

(1) Perhaps in Abraham's mind, Ishmael was sort of a "back-up" plan; if something should happen to Isaac, there would always be Ishmael.

D.(15-21) God's preservation of Ishmael and Hagar - *"15 And the water in the skin was used up, and she placed the boy under one of the shrubs. 16 Then she went and sat down across from him at a distance of about a bowshot; for she said to herself, "Let me not see the death of the boy." So she sat opposite him, and lifted her voice and wept. 17 And God heard the voice of the lad. Then the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said to her, "What ails you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is. 18 "Arise, lift up the lad and hold him with your hand, for I will make him a great nation." 19 Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. And she went and filled the skin with water, and gave the lad a drink. 20 So God was with the lad; and he grew and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer. 21 He dwelt in the Wilderness of Paran; and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt."*

1. *God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water* - Just as God had to open Hagar's eyes for her to see the water. So today, until the Grace of God opens a person's heart, all they see is dry desert. Pray for God's grace to open the blinded eyes of unbelievers.
2. God shows favor to Ishmael because of Abraham

E. ABRAHAM MAKES A COVENANT WITH A PHILISTINE KING

1. (22-24) Abraham makes a no-hostility treaty with Abimelech - *"22 And it came to pass at that time that Abimelech and Phicol, the commander of his army, spoke to Abraham, saying, "God is with you in all that you do. 23 "Now therefore, swear to me by God that you will not deal falsely with me, with my offspring, or with my posterity; but that according to the kindness that I have done to you, you will do to me and to the land in which you have dwelt." 24 And Abraham said, "I will swear."*

- a) Abimelech noticed that God was with Abraham in everything he did so he established a 'Non-Agression Pact' between them.

2. (25-32) In return for the treaty, Abraham clears up a dispute about an important well - *"25 Then Abraham rebuked Abimelech because of a well of water which Abimelech's servants had seized. 26 And Abimelech said, "I do not know who has done this thing; you did not tell me, nor had I heard of it until today." 27 So Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave them to Abimelech, and the two of them made a covenant. 28 And Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves. 29 Then Abimelech asked Abraham, "What is the meaning of these seven ewe lambs which you have set by themselves?" 30 And he said, "You will take these seven ewe lambs from my hand, that they may be my witness that I have dug this well." 31 Therefore he called that place Beersheba, because the two of them swore an oath there. 32 Thus they made a covenant at Beersheba. So Abimelech rose with Phicol, the commander of his army, and they returned to the land of the Philistines."*

- a) 'Beersheba' means 'well of the (7-fold) oath'
- b) In the East, digging wells gave unofficial title to unoccupied lands.

3. (33-34) Abraham still has a real, alive walk with God - *"33 Then Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and there called on the name of the LORD, the Everlasting God. 34 And Abraham stayed in the land of the Philistines many days."*

XI. GENESIS 22 - ABRAHAM WILLING TO OFFER ISAAC

A. GOD'S COMMAND TO ABRAHAM AND HIS RESPONSE

1. (1-2) God tests the faith of Abraham - *"1 Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." 2 Then He said, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."*

a) This was not so much a test that would produce faith, as it was a test that would prove faith.

(1) cf. 1 Peter 1:6-7 - *"6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. 7 These have come so that your faith--of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire--may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed."*

b) cf The Fellowship of His Suffering / Sacrifice

(1) God's revelation of Himself to Abraham was progressive. From The Fellowship of Separation [12:1] - to The Fellowship of His Suffering. [22]

c) Significantly, God calls Isaac **"your only son"**, as far as God was concerned, Abraham had only one son - the one born to his wife.

d) This test seemed to contradict the previous promise of God; hadn't God promised in Isaac your seed shall be called? How could Abraham kill him - wouldn't he be killing the very promise God made to him?

e) There was a specific place God commanded Abraham to go; a particular spot where this should be done (on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you). God is carefully directing each detail

f) **Isaac, whom you love** - The first mention of love in the Bible is the love between father and son, and connected with the idea of the sacrificial offering of the son

2. (3) Abraham's immediate response of faith - *"3 So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him."*

a) There is not the slightest hint of hesitation on Abraham's part.

(1) Abraham is trusting God, even when he does not understand; sometimes we say "I'm not going to obey or believe until I understand it all".

(a) Abraham is trusting, even when he does not feel like it; - he was walking by faith, not feelings

i) God had been training Abraham, bringing him to this place of great trust. In just the last chapter, God asked Abraham to "give up" Ishmael in a less severe way. God used that and everything else to train up Abraham

(b) In wonderful, trusting obedience, Abraham goes right to the spot. How much easier it would have been had God asked Abraham to offer himself!

B. ABRAHAM'S OFFERING OF ISAAC

1. (4-8) Abraham journeys to the place of sacrifice with Isaac - *"4 Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off. 5 And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you." 6 So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together. 7 But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." Then he said, "Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" 8 And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering." So the two of them went together."*

- a) This is the first use of the word worship in reference to God in the Bible; the Hebrew word 'shachah' simply means "to bow down," - Abraham was bowing down in complete surrendered obedience to the command of God.
- b) Abraham comes to the place on the third day.
- c) Isaac carries wood for his own sacrifice up the hill
- d) Abraham *carried the fire and the knife* - "That knife was cutting into his own heart all the while, yet he took it. Unbelief would have left the knife at home, but genuine faith takes it." (Spurgeon)
- e) Note His faith - *"we will come back to you."*
- f) *Heb 11:17-19 - 17 By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, 18 even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." 19 Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death."*
- g) He knew that in Isaac your seed shall be called (21:12), and Isaac had yet to have any children.
- h) He knew that anything was possible - except that God would break His promise; he knew God was not a liar.
- i) Faith resolves apparent "contradictions" which appear to the natural mind. i.e. Sovereignty vs. Free Will. The natural mind gets "beached" on one side or the other - Faith sees "two banks to a river" to keep us flowing down the center of God's will.
 - (a) Where is the lamb? That question had been asked by all the faithful, from Isaac, to Moses, to David, to Isaiah, all the way to the time of John the Baptist, when he declares: Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! (John 1:29)
 - (b) *"God will provide for Himself the lamb"* [KJV - *"God will provide Himself the lamb"*] - one of the greatest professions of faith in the Bible.

2. (9) Isaac willingly lies down on the altar - *"9 Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood."*

- a) At this time, Abraham was more than 100 years old, and Isaac [@30 yrs old] would have been able to get away had he chosen to. Yet he submits to his father perfectly - never forget Isaac's faith also.
- b) cf. with Jesus
 - (1) *Jn. 10:17-18 - "17 The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life--only to take it up again. 18 No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father."*
 - (2) *Mt. 26:39 - "Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."*
 - (3) *Mt. 26:42 - "He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done."*

3. (10-14) God's merciful reprieve - "10 And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. 11 But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" So he said, "Here I am." 12 And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me." 13 Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son."

a) Abraham displayed his heart towards God in his willingness to give his only son for Him; God displays His heart towards us in the same way

(1) When God asked Abraham for the ultimate demonstration of love and commitment, He asked for Abraham's son. When the Father wanted to show us the ultimate demonstration of His love and commitment to us, He gave us His Son.

(2) "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8)

(a) Abraham was willing, because his faith was in God's ability to raise Isaac from the dead, not in God's desire to stop the sacrifice.

i) "Often there are believers who wonder how they may know the will of God. We believe that ninety per cent of the knowing of the will of God consists in willingness to do it before it is known." (Barnhouse)

ii) "If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own." (John 7:17)

(3) We can say to the Lord, "Now I know that You love me, seeing You have not withheld Your Son, Your only Son from me"

b) Note: The Lord often asks us to "put to death" in our hearts a vision or promise which He Himself has given us. This is to test and prove that we love the Master more than any Ministry or Mission.

4. (14) A very special place - "14 And Abraham called the name of the place, *The-LORD-Will-Provide*; as it is said to this day, "In the Mount of The LORD it shall be provided."

a) 'Jehoveh - Jireh' - The LORD our Provider [see 'Names of God' in Appendix]

b) WHY MORIAH? [Moriah means "chosen by God"]

c) The Temple (2Chron. 3:1) - According to tradition, the Temple was built on the spot where Abraham offered Isaac.

(1) Abraham had said "God, Himself, will provide the lamb", but sacrificed a ram. Yet He called the place "The Lord will Provide" because, by faith he knew that God would yet provide the lamb for the sacrifice.

d) The Cross - Golgotha is actually a continuation of Mt. Moriah which has been separated by quarries, ruins and rebuilding.

(1) On the mountain of the Lord it *has* been provided!

(2) Jn. 1:19 - "Look, the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world!"

(3) God's Provision for Us. The Law condemns us and holds the knife of judgment ready to strike. But, in Jesus, God cries out "Stop!" and provides a Lamb in our place - THE LAMB OF GOD.

(4) Note: The Cross was *not* God's "Plan B" when Jesus was rejected by the leaders of Israel.

5. Isaac's picture of Jesus becomes even more clear:

a) Both were loved by their father

b) Both offered themselves willingly

c) Both carried wood up the hill of their sacrifice

d) Both were sacrificed on the same hill

(1) Both were delivered from death on the third day

6.(15-19) God re-confirms His promise to Abraham in light of his faith - *"15 Then the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, 16 and said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son -- 17 "blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. 18 "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice." 19 So Abraham returned to his young men, and they rose and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba."*

a)The Covenant blessings were repeated - most likely in Isaac's hearing!

7.(20-24) The listing of Nahor's family - *"20 Now it came to pass after these things that it was told Abraham, saying, "Indeed Milcah also has borne children to your brother Nahor: 21 "Huz his firstborn, Buz his brother, Kemuel the father of Aram, 22 "Chesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel." 23 And Bethuel begot Rebekah. These eight Milcah bore to Nahor, Abraham's brother. 24 His concubine, whose name was Reumah, also bore Tebah, Gaham, Thahash, and Maachah."*

a)Setting the stage for Chpt. 24

b)Note: "A concubine was an inferior kind of wife, taken according to the common practice of those times, subject to the authority of the principal wife, and whose children had no right of inheritance, but were endowed with gifts." (Poole)

(1)"20 Some time later Abraham was told, "Milcah is also a mother; she has borne sons to your brother Nahor: 21 Uz the firstborn, Buz his brother, Kemuel (the father of Aram), 22 Kesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph and Bethuel." 23 Bethuel became the father of Rebekah. Milcah bore these eight sons to Abraham's brother Nahor. 24 His concubine, whose name was Reumah, also had sons: Tebah, Gaham, Tahash and Maacah."

XII.GENESIS 23 - SARAH DIES AND IS BURIED

A.THE DEATH OF SARAH

1.(1) Sarah's Death and Abraham's Mourning - *"1 Sarah lived one hundred and twenty-seven years; these were the years of the life of Sarah. 2 So Sarah died in Kirjath Arba (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan, and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her."*

a) Sarah is the only woman in the Bible whose age at death is recorded - a measure of how great the Bible sees her as being

b) Interestingly, no place in the Bible are we told to look to Mary as an example of a godly woman. But twice we're told to look to Sarah as an example (; 1 Pet 3:3-6)

(1) *Isaiah 51:1-2 - 1 "Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness and who seek the LORD: Look to the rock from which you were cut and to the quarry from which you were hewn; 2 look to Abraham, your father, and to Sarah, who gave you birth. When I called him he was but one, and I blessed him and made him many."*

(2) *1 Peter 3:3-6 - "3 Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewellery and fine clothes. 4 Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. 5 For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful. They were submissive to their own husbands, 6 like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear."*

c) Sarah had been by Abraham's side through the whole journey of faith - a faithful and supportive helpmate. Now she was gone.

B.ABRAHAM BUYS LAND FOR SARAH'S BURIAL

1.(3-16) Abraham haggles with the Philistines for the land of Sarah's tomb - *"3 Then Abraham stood up from before his dead, and spoke to the sons of Heth, saying, 4 "I am a foreigner and a visitor among you. Give me property for a burial place among you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight." 5 And the sons of Heth answered Abraham, saying to him, 6 "Hear us, my lord: You are a mighty prince among us; bury your dead in the choicest of our burial places. None of us will withhold from you his burial place, that you may bury your dead." 7 Then Abraham stood up and bowed himself to the people of the land, the sons of Heth. 8 And he spoke with them, saying, "If it is your wish that I bury my dead out of my sight, hear me, and meet with Ephron the son of Zohar for me, 9 "that he may give me the cave of Machpelah which he has, which is at the end of his field. Let him give it to me at the full price, as property for a burial place among you." 10 Now Ephron dwelt among the sons of Heth; and Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the presence of the sons of Heth, all who entered at the gate of his city, saying, 11 "No, my lord, hear me: I give you the field and the cave that is in it; I give it to you in the presence of the sons of my people. I give it to you. Bury your dead!" 12 Then Abraham bowed himself down before the people of the land; 13 and he spoke to Ephron in the hearing of the people of the land, saying, "If you will give it, please hear me. I will give you money for the field; take it from me and I will bury my dead there." 14 And Ephron answered Abraham, saying to him, 15 "My lord, listen to me; the land is worth four hundred shekels of silver. What is that between you and me? So bury your dead." 16 And Abraham listened to Ephron; and Abraham weighed out the silver for Ephron which he had named in the hearing of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, currency of the merchants."*

a) This way of negotiating the price is typical of ancient and modern practices in that culture; as a gesture of kindness, the selling party may offer to give the property in question to the buyer, until the buyer insists on paying a price

b) Ephron is following the customs of bargaining: first offer to give it; then, when that is refused, suggest a price which you claim is modest but is really very high.

This is understood to be the starting point, and from there the bargaining begins

(1) The feeling I am a foreigner and a sojourner among you in Abraham was not due to the fact that he came from Ur of the Chaldeans; it was because he recognized his real home was heaven. Moses knew the same, and commanded Israel to know it (Leviticus 25:23); David knew the same (1 Chronicles 29:14-15; Psalm 39:12)

2. (17-20) Abraham buys the field and buries Sarah - *"17 So the field of Ephron which was in Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the field and the cave which was in it, and all the trees that were in the field, which were within all the surrounding borders, were deeded 18 to Abraham as a possession in the presence of the sons of Heth, before all who went in at the gate of his city. 19 And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah, before Mamre (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan. 20 So the field and the cave that is in it were deeded to Abraham by the sons of Heth as property for a burial place."*

a) This is also where Isaac and Ishmael bury Abraham. Isaac and Rebekah were both buried here. Jacob buried Leah here, and Joseph buried Jacob here. And this was the place Joseph told his descendants to bury him, taking his bones with them when they came into the Promised Land.

XIII.GENESIS 24 - ISAAC AND REBEKAH - A "Love Story" and a beautiful Analogy:
Abraham = God the Father, The Servant = the Holy Spirit, Isaac = Jesus Christ, the Son of
God,Rebekah = the Church - the Bride of Christ.

A.ABRAHAM'S COMMISSION TO HIS SERVANT

1.(1-4) Abraham sends out a servant to seek out a bride for his son - *"1 Now Abraham was old, well advanced in age; and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things. 2 So Abraham said to the oldest servant of his house, who ruled over all that he had, "Please, put your hand under my thigh, 3 "and I will make you swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and the God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell; 4 "but you shall go to my country and to my family, and take a wife for my son Isaac."*

a)The oldest servant of his house, who ruled over all he that had is the servant named Eliezer (Genesis 15:2)

(1) - or at least he was some sixty years before this. If it was someone else, the Holy Spirit didn't want us to know it!

b)The oath is, according to the custom, a serious one; Abraham is extremely concerned that Isaac not be married to a Canaanite.

2.(5-9) The commission clearly defined - *"5 And the servant said to him, "Perhaps the woman will not be willing to follow me to this land. Must I take your son back to the land from which you came?" 6 But Abraham said to him, "Beware that you do not take my son back there. 7 "The LORD God of heaven, who took me from my father's house and from the land of my family, and who spoke to me and swore to me, saying, 'To your descendants I give this land,' He will send His angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there. 8 "And if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be released from this oath; only do not take my son back there." 9 So the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and swore to him concerning this matter."*

a)Note: Isaac, the son of promise, never once left the Promised Land.

B.THE SERVANT'S MISSION FULFILLED

1.(10-14) Eliezer's prayer to God - *"10 Then the servant took ten of his master's camels and departed, for all his master's goods were in his hand. And he arose and went to Mesopotamia, to the city of Nahor. 11 And he made his camels kneel down outside the city by a well of water at evening time, the time when women go out to draw water. 12 Then he said, "O LORD God of my master Abraham, please give me success this day, and show kindness to my master Abraham. 13 "Behold, here I stand by the well of water, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water. 14 "Now let it be that the young woman to whom I say, 'Please let down your pitcher that I may drink,' and she says, 'Drink, and I will also give your camels a drink' --let her be the one You have appointed for Your servant Isaac. And by this I will know that You have shown kindness to my master."*

a)Eliezer is asking God to guide through providential circumstances.

(1)However, generally speaking, circumstances alone can be a dangerous way to discern God's will. We have a way of ignoring circumstances that speak against what we want (or attributing them to the Devil), while focusing on the circumstances that speak for what we want

(2)ii. But in this case, Eliezer establishes what he will look for before anything happens; he isn't making up the rules as he goes along

b)It would take a remarkable woman to volunteer for this tedious task. Considering that camels drink up to 20 gallons, to water ten camels meant at least an hour of hard work

2.(15) God answers the servant's prayer before it was finished - *"15 And it happened, before he had finished speaking, that behold, Rebekah, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, came out with her pitcher on her shoulder."*

a) Isaiah 65:24 speaks of this kind of answer to prayer - "It shall come to pass That before they call, I will answer; And while they are still speaking, I will hear."

3.(16-21) The servant, waits for complete confirmation of his prayer - *"6 Now the young woman was very beautiful to behold, a virgin; no man had known her. And she went down to the well, filled her pitcher, and came up. 17 And the servant ran to meet her and said, "Please let me drink a little water from your pitcher." 18 So she said, "Drink, my lord." Then she quickly let her pitcher down to her hand, and gave him a drink. 19 And when she had finished giving him a drink, she said, "I will draw water for your camels also, until they have finished drinking." 20 Then she quickly emptied her pitcher into the trough, ran back to the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels. 21 And the man, wondering at her, remained silent so as to know whether the LORD had made his journey prosperous or not."*

a) As Rebekah begins the hard work of watering the camels, the servant does not stop her.

(1) Perhaps Eliezer knew that for some, it is much easier to talk like a servant than to actually serve; he wanted to see if she had a servant's heart, not only a servant's mouth

b) Rebekah was faithful in the "little things" - so God blessed her in the great things. [cf. Song "Rebekah"]

4.(22-26) The 'bride-to-be' receives rich gifts even before the marriage - *"22 So it was, when the camels had finished drinking, that the man took a golden nose ring weighing half a shekel, and two bracelets for her wrists weighing ten shekels of gold, 23 and said, "Whose daughter are you? Tell me, please, is there room in your father's house for us to lodge?" 24 So she said to him, "I am the daughter of Bethuel, Milcah's son, whom she bore to Nahor." 25 Moreover she said to him, "We have both straw and feed enough, and room to lodge." 26 Then the man bowed down his head and worshiped the LORD.*

a) Some think it gross that Rebekah would wear a nose ring; but there was certainly nothing strange, shocking, or rebellious about it

5.(27-28) The servant gives thanks - *27 And he said, "Blessed be the LORD God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken His mercy and His truth toward my master. As for me, being on the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master's brethren." 28 So the young woman ran and told her mother's household these things."*

6.27 ...the LORD led me.

a) Ps. 37:23 - *"The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way."*

b) Prov. 3:5-6 - *"5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. 6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."*

c) cf. Visit to JPC in LA - Trask? Pulled over to see where we were - we were there!

d) **Being on the way, the LORD led me** - It's hard to steer a parked car; if we want to be guided by the Lord, we should be on our way

7.(29-33) Laban entertains the servant - "29 Now Rebekah had a brother whose name was Laban, and Laban ran out to the man by the well. 30 So it came to pass, when he saw the nose ring, and the bracelets on his sister's wrists, and when he heard the words of his sister Rebekah, saying, "Thus the man spoke to me," that he went to the man. And there he stood by the camels at the well. 31 And he said, "Come in, O blessed of the LORD! Why do you stand outside? For I have prepared the house, and a place for the camels." 32 Then the man came to the house. And he unloaded the camels, and provided straw and feed for the camels, and water to wash his feet and the feet of the men who were with him. 33 Food was set before him to eat, but he said, "I will not eat until I have told about my errand." And he said, "Speak on."

a) Laban's eyes seem to be on the riches; yet he also shows appropriate hospitality

8.(34-49) The servant tells his story - "34 So he said, "I am Abraham's servant. 35 "The LORD has blessed my master greatly, and he has become great; and He has given him flocks and herds, silver and gold, male and female servants, and camels and donkeys. 36 "And Sarah my master's wife bore a son to my master when she was old; and to him he has given all that he has. 37 "Now my master made me swear, saying, 'You shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell; 38 'but you shall go to my father's house and to my family, and take a wife for my son.' 39 "And I said to my master, 'Perhaps the woman will not follow me.' 40 "But he said to me, 'The LORD, before whom I walk, will send His angel with you and prosper your way; and you shall take a wife for my son from my family and from my father's house. 41 'You will be clear from this oath when you arrive among my family; for if they will not give her to you, then you will be released from my oath.' 42 "And this day I came to the well and said, 'O LORD God of my master Abraham, if You will now prosper the way in which I go, 43 'behold, I stand by the well of water; and it shall come to pass that when the virgin comes out to draw water, and I say to her, "Please give me a little water from your pitcher to drink," 44 'and she says to me, "Drink, and I will draw for your camels also," --let her be the woman whom the LORD has appointed for my master's son.' 45 "But before I had finished speaking in my heart, there was Rebekah, coming out with her pitcher on her shoulder; and she went down to the well and drew water. And I said to her, 'Please let me drink.' 46 "And she made haste and let her pitcher down from her shoulder, and said, 'Drink, and I will give your camels a drink also.' So I drank, and she gave the camels a drink also. 9.47 "Then I asked her, and said, 'Whose daughter are you?' And she said, 'The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bore to him.' So I put the nose ring on her nose and the bracelets on her wrists. 48 "And I bowed my head and worshiped the LORD, and blessed the LORD God of my master Abraham, who had led me in the way of truth to take the daughter of my master's brother for his son. 49 "Now if you will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me. And if not, tell me, that I may turn to the right hand or to the left."

C. REBEKAH IS BROUGHT TO ISAAC

1.(50-53) The family agrees to give Rebekah to Isaac; the servant gives more gifts - "50 Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, "The thing comes from the LORD; we cannot speak to you either bad or good. 51 "Here is Rebekah before you; take her and go, and let her be your master's son's wife, as the LORD has spoken." 52 And it came to pass, when Abraham's servant heard their words, that he worshiped the LORD, bowing himself to the earth. 53 Then the servant brought out jewelry of silver, jewelry of gold, and clothing, and gave them to Rebekah. He also gave precious things to her brother and to her mother."

a) When an agreement of marriage had been made, it was customary for the bridegroom (or his representative) to give the family of the bride gifts as a dowry, to demonstrate his ability to provide for the bride

2. (54-60) The servant intends to depart quickly; Rebekah agrees - *"54 And he and the men who were with him ate and drank and stayed all night. Then they arose in the morning, and he said, "Send me away to my master." 55 But her brother and her mother said, "Let the young woman stay with us a few days, at least ten; after that she may go." 56 And he said to them, "Do not hinder me, since the LORD has prospered my way; send me away so that I may go to my master." 57 So they said, "We will call the young woman and ask her personally." 58 Then they called Rebekah and said to her, "Will you go with this man?" And she said, "I will go." 59 So they sent away Rebekah their sister and her nurse, and Abraham's servant and his men. 60 And they blessed Rebekah and said to her: "Our sister, may you become The mother of thousands of ten thousands; And may your descendants possess The gates of those who hate them."*

a) A remarkable thing about Rebekah is her willingness to leave all to be with a bride groom she has never seen; her words I will go are worthy words of faith

b) "If the world does not succeed in persuading the believer to abide in the world, it will seek to delay his exit. . . . When you decide to go with the Lord, the world will applaud your devotion but will say, 'Don't rush. Abide a few days, at least ten, and then go.'" (Barnhouse)

3. (61-63) Rebekah is brought to Isaac - *"61 Then Rebekah and her maids arose, and they rode on the camels and followed the man. So the servant took Rebekah and departed.*

a) Imagine the conversations that Rebekah and Eliezer would have on the journey; she would want to know all she could about Isaac.

4. *62 Now Isaac came from the way of Beer Lahai Roi, for he dwelt in the South. 63 And Isaac went out to meditate in the field in the evening; and he lifted his eyes and looked, and there, the camels were coming.*

a) This is the first mention of Isaac since he was left on top of Mount Moriah (22:19) - We see nothing of Isaac from the time of his "resurrection" to the time he is united with his bride.

5. (64-67) They marry - *64 Then Rebekah lifted her eyes, and when she saw Isaac she dismounted from her camel; 65 for she had said to the servant, "Who is this man walking in the field to meet us?" The servant said, "It is my master." So she took a veil and covered herself. 66 And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done. 67 Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent; and he took Rebekah and she became his wife, and he loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his mother's death."*

a) The covering with a veil signified chastity, modesty, and submission. This is how Rebekah wants to meet her bride groom

b) A union of faith. By Faith: Isaac stayed home and patiently waited for God's choice and timing for a wife. By Faith: Rebekah left home and stepped out into an adventurous journey to a man and a land she had never seen. One Stepped-out and the other Stayed - both did so by faith!

(1) There is no better glue in marriage than a common, non-negotiable commitment to the Lord.

D. In all this, we see the coming together of Isaac and Rebekah as a remarkable picture of the coming together of Jesus and the church. Summarizing the pictures of Isaac, Rebekah, Jesus, and the Church

1. Both Rebekah and the Church . . .

- a) Were chosen for marriage before they knew it (Ephesians 1:3-4)
- b) Necessary for the accomplishment of God's eternal purpose (Ephesians 1:23)
- c) Destined to share in the glory of the son (John 17:22-23)
- d) Learn of the son through his representative
- e) Must leave all to be with the son
- f) Are loved and cared for by the son

2. Both Isaac and Jesus . . .

- a) Were promised before their coming
- b) Finally appeared at the appointed time
- c) Were conceived and born miraculously
- d) Given a special name before birth
- e) Offered up in sacrifice by the father
- f) Brought back from the dead
- g) Prepared a place for their bride
- h) Had a ministry of prayer while awaiting the bride

E. A father, desiring a bride for his son (who has just been "dead" and "raised from the dead") sends forth a nameless servant (whose name, Eliezer, actually means "God of help" or "helper"), to get a bride for the son. The lovely bride is divinely met, chosen, and called, and then lavished with gifts. She then is entrusted to the servant, until she meets with her bride groom.

1. A beautiful picture of the work of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in the work of redemption

XIV. GENESIS 25 - ABRAHAM'S DEATH; JACOB AND ESAU BORN TO ISAAC

A. ABRAHAM'S LATTER LIFE AND DEATH

1. (1-4) Abraham marries again and has many children by Keturah
2. (5-6) - Abraham is careful to set Isaac apart as the child of promise - **"5 Abraham left everything he owned to Isaac. 6 But while he was still living, he gave gifts to the sons of his concubines and sent them away from his son Isaac to the land of the east."**
 - a) Abraham gives his wealth to Isaac (all that he had), and he gives the land God had promised to him to Isaac (he sent them eastward, away from Isaac his son)
 - b) WE ALSO HAVE AN INHERITANCE
 - (1) Gal. 3:29 - "29 If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."
 - (2) Lk. 12:32 - "Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom."
 - (3) Rom. 8:32 - "He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all-- how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?"
 - (4) Eph. 1:13-14 - "13 ...Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession--to the praise of his glory."
3. (7-11) Abraham's death and burial - **"7 Altogether, Abraham lived a hundred and seventy-five years. 8 Then Abraham breathed his last and died at a good old age, an old man and full of years; and he was gathered to his people."**
 - a) cf. Gen. 15:15 - "You, however, will go to your fathers in peace and be buried at a good old age."
 - b) Abraham passes from the scene, being one of the most important men of the Bible; he is mentioned 70 times in the New Testament alone (only Moses is mentioned more times in the New Testament [80 times])
 - c) His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah where Sarah was buried.
 - d) Note: "gathered to his people" - has a literal sense when you see inside the cave-tombs in Israel.
4. (12-18) The life and descendants of Ishmael

B. THE CHILDREN OF ISAAC: JACOB AND ESAU

1. (19-26) The conception and birth of Jacob and Esau
 - a) Note: The prayers of a husband for his wife.
 - b) **22 The babies jostled each other within her, and she said, "Why is this happening to me?" So she went to inquire of the LORD.**
 - (1) It's OK to Ask "Why?" - but be sure to "Inquire of the LORD"!
 - c) As Rebekah seeks God, the Lord speaks to her regarding the sons within her womb
 - d) What God says is simple: she has twins within her; the twins will each father nations; one shall be greater than the other; and the younger will be greater than the older
 - (1) Note: In the line of the Messiah, neither Seth, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, nor David were first-born sons.
 - e) Circumstances surrounding the birth of each child were responsible for their names; Esau refers to the hairiness of the first born child, Jacob refers to the way the second born was holding on to the heel of his brother
 - (1) "heel-catcher" meant something in that day; it had the idea of "trickster," "con-man," "scoundrel," or "rascal"

f)cf. God's Sovereign Choice

(1)Rom. 9:9 -16 - "9 For this was how the promise was stated: "At the appointed time I will return, and Sarah will have a son." 10 Not only that, but Rebekah's children had one and the same father, our father Isaac. 11 Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad--in order that God's purpose in election might stand: 12 not by works but by him who calls--she was told, "The older will serve the younger." 13 Just as it is written: "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." 14 What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! 15 For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." 16 It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy."

(a)Paul points out that God's choice was not based on the performance of Jacob or Esau.

(b)The real thought here is much more like "accepted" and "rejected" rather than "loved" and "hated"

i)"A woman once said to Mr. Spurgeon, 'I cannot understand why God should say that He hated Esau.' 'That,' Spurgeon replied, 'is not my difficulty, madam. My trouble is to understand how God could love Jacob.'" (Newell in Romans, Verse by Verse)

(2)Our greatest error in considering the choices of God is to think that God chooses for arbitrary reasons; we may not be able to fathom God's reasons for choosing,, but His choices are not capricious

2.(27-28) - The different characters of Jacob and Esau - **"27 The boys grew up, and Esau became a skilful hunter, a man of the open country, while Jacob was a quiet man, staying among the tents. 28 Isaac, who had a taste for wild game, loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob."**

a)Like so many siblings in a family, Jacob and Esau were very different from each other in their personality and tastes. And each parent had a "favorite" child

(1)Beware: Divided affections result in divided families

b)The Hebrew word for 'quiet' has the idea of "wholeness" . It is used of Job in Job 1:8 - "Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no-one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil.""

3.(29-34) Esau sells his birthright to Jacob

a)Hebrews 12:16-17 - "See that no-one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son. 17 Afterwards, as you know, when he wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected. He could bring about no change of mind, though he sought the blessing with tears."

(1)"History shows that men prefer illusions to realities, choose time rather than eternity, and the pleasures of sin for a season rather than the joys of God forever. Men will read trash rather than the Word of God, and adhere to a system of priorities that leaves God out of their lives. Multitudes of men spend more time shaving than on their souls; and multitudes of women give more minutes to their makeup than to the life of the eternal spirit. Men still sell their birthright for a mess of pottage." (Barnhouse)

b)cf. Birthright vs Blessing

c)Jacob had been promised pre-eminence - but was trying to attain it by his own methods.

(1)Blessings gained by manipulation instead of Faith often become Burdens.

XV. GENESIS 26 - ISAAC SINS LIKE ABRAHAM

A. ISAAC REPEATS ABRAHAM'S MISTAKES

1. (1-5) God proclaims the covenant to Isaac
 - a) The covenant God made with Abraham was not only unto Abraham, but unto all of his descendants also (Genesis 17:7-8).
 - b) At the same time, God does all this for Abraham's sake; saying that he "obeyed Me and kept My requirements".
 - c) Note: This is the LORD's first appearance to Isaac personally - other than at Mt. Moriah with his father Abraham. Remember: God has no grandchildren. We must lead our children not just to agree with our faith - but to know our God personally - so that He truly becomes *their* Lord.
2. (6-9) Isaac says Rebekah is his sister
 - a) Abraham's 'half-truth' has become Isaac's whole lie.
 - b) The sins of fathers are often found in children, because of their bad example.
 - c) When Abimelech saw Isaac caressing Rebekah (the KJV has "sporting with" here), he put two and two together and understood the true nature of their relationship.
3. (10-11) Isaac is rebuked by a pagan king - even as his father was
 - a) And, even as his father was protected by God, so was Isaac.

B. ISAAC'S GREAT PROSPERITY

1. (12-14) Isaac becomes quite wealthy, even as Abraham was
 - a) He Planted and God Blessed it!
2. (15-23) Isaac experiences disputes concerning wells, until he moves to Beersheba
 - a) The first well was named "contention" [Esek] because the herdsmen of Gerar quarrelled over it. The next well was named "opposition or strife" [Sitnah] for similar reasons. But the third well was named "roominess" [Rehoboth].
 - b) Note: Isaac's responses to the herdsmen of Gerar are an example of Rom. 12:16-18 - "16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. 17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. 18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."
 - c) Also: Like Abraham separating from Lot, Isaac didn't quarrel over wells and provision - he quietly and peacefully trusted the LORD.
3. (24) God again confirms His promise to Isaac - **That night the LORD appeared to him and said, "I am the God of your father Abraham. Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bless you and will increase the number of your descendants for the sake of my servant Abraham."**
 - a) This was the LORD's last appearance to Isaac.
4. (25) A picture of abiding in the Lord - **"Isaac built an altar there and called on the name of the LORD. There he pitched his tent, and there his servants dug a well."**
 - a) cf. John 15:5 - "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing."
5. (26-31) Abimelech makes a 'Non-Agression Pact' with Isaac
 - a) Similar to what happened with Abraham - cf. Prov. 16:7 - "When a man's ways are pleasing to the Lord, he makes even his enemies live at peace with him."
6. (32-33) God's blessing for Isaac in the form of a well
 - a) Note: We have here a picture of Isaac receiving God's promises by faith and "settling down" - putting roots down - into God's promises and faithfulness.
 - (1) Consecration - "He built an altar"
 - (2) Worship - He "called on the name of the Lord"
 - (3) Abiding - He "pitched his tent" - i.e. settled down
 - (4) Blessing - He was refreshed by the "living water" of the well.
 - (5) Peace - "they left him in peace"
7. (34-35) Esau marries to the grief of his parents
 - a) There is always grief associated with being unequally yoked.

XVI.GENESIS 27 - JACOB DECEPTIVELY GAINS THE BLESSING OF ISAAC

A.REBEKAH AND JACOB PLOT TO DECEIVE ISAAC

1. (1-4) Isaac's deathbed request to Esau
 - a)Isaac believes his time has come to die, and this is his way of "settling his affairs". However, Martin Luther calculated Isaac's age to be 137 at this point; and he lived to be 180 - 43 more years!
- 2.(5-10) Rebekah advises Jacob to deceive his father Isaac
 - a)Instead of trusting God to fulfill His promise, she goes about it in the flesh.
 - b)Yet, Isaac is no less scheming than Rebekah; in the willfulness of his old age, he is determined to pass on the blessing to Esau, despite what the Lord has said.
 - (1)The fact that Isaac appears to dispense the blessing secretly shows that he knows what he is doing is wrong.
- 3.(11-17) Preparations are made for Jacob's deceptive "stealing" of the blessing
 - a)Jacob, true to his name, is all too willing to go along with this plan; his only concern is whether or not it will work
 - (1)When our only concern is "what works?" we are no longer living by character or convictions - as much of the church today.

B.JACOB RECEIVES THE BLESSING ISAAC INTENDED FOR ESAU

- 1.1. (18-27a) Jacob lies to his father, pretending to be Esau
 - a)Even under repeated questioning (Are you really my son Esau?), Jacob stays confirmed in his lie (I am). Perhaps, Isaac could not believe that his Jacob would lie to him so repeatedly
 - b)Note: One of the effects of trying to receive blessings by manipulating circumstances is being robbed of the assurance of *God's* will in our life.
- 2.(27b-29) The blessing is given to Jacob
 - a)Isaac is blessing Jacob as the spiritual head of the family.
 - b)The words of the blessing are filled with pictures of the Lord's rich bounty, and they echo some of the words of the covenant God made with Abraham
 - (1)"The point is that the sovereign will of God is done, in spite of our or any other person's opposition to it." (Boice)

C.ESAU DISCOVERS THE DECEPTION OF JACOB

- 1.1. (30-38) Esau's grief at discovering Jacob's deception
 - a)When Isaac trembled violently, what was he troubled about? He was troubled because he knew that he had tried to defeat God's plan and had been beaten. He realized that he would always be defeated when he tried to resist God's will.
 - b)Note: Hebrews 12:17 - "Afterwards, as you know, when he wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected. He could bring about no change of mind, though he sought the blessing with tears."
- 2.(39-40) Isaac pronounces a limited blessing upon Esau
 - a)Esau would be under Jacob (you shall serve your brother), but not forever: you shall break his yoke from your neck
- 3.(41-46) Esau's anger; Rebekah makes plans for Jacob to flee
 - a)Esau planned to kill Jacob as soon as Isaac died, and this was comforting to him.
 - b)The few days Jacob was to stay with Laban family in Haran will turn out to be more than twenty years - yet, God will have a purpose in all of it

XVII.GENESIS 28 - JACOB FLEES FROM ESAU

A.ISAAC'S FAREWELL TO JACOB

- 1.(1-2) Instructions to not take a Canaanite wife
- 2.(3-5) The all-important transferral of Abraham's blessing - **"3 May God Almighty ...**
- 4 ... give you and your descendants the blessing given to Abraham,..."**
 - a)Isaac has realized the unchangeableness of God's Plans and is now purposely giving the blessing to Jacob.
- 3.(6-9) Esau adds to his wives by marrying a non-Canaanite woman - **"9 ... he went to Ishmael and married Mahalath, the sister of Nebaioth and daughter of Ishmael son of Abraham, in addition to the wives he already had."**
 - a)Esau just doesn't seem to understand the importance of God's ways. Besides, Ishmael was not in the line of promise.
 - b)Esau was acting like the Children of Israel who tried to enter the Promised Land by force after they had refused to go in by faith [cf. Num.14]. The result was that God did not go with them and they were defeated.

B.JACOB MEETS GOD AT BETHEL

- 1.(10-12) Jacob's Ladder - **"12 He had a dream in which he saw a stairway [ladder] resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it."**
 - a)STAIRWAY: JESUS IS THE BRIDGE BETWEEN HEAVEN AND EARTH!
 - (1)Jn. 1:51 - "He then added, "I tell you the truth, you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."
 - (2)note: This is not the usual Heb. word for ladder or stairway. This word is used only this one time in the Bible.
- 2.(13-15) God speaks to Jacob - **"13 There above it stood the LORD, and he said: "I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. 14 Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. 15 I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."**
 - a)God is repeating to Jacob the terms of the covenant that He gave to both Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3) and Isaac (Genesis 26:2-5)
 - b)Jacob had no doubt heard about the great God who had appeared to Abraham and to Isaac, but now this same God has a personal encounter with Jacob himself.
 - c)cf. **"I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."** w/Phil. 1:6 - God won't let us go until His work is complete in us
- 3.(16-19) Jacob worships God, naming the place Bethel
 - a)This was the same place where the LORD had Abraham look at all the land that He would give to him and his offspring.
 - b)Jacob was right in sensing the presence of the Lord in that place; but he was wrong in perhaps thinking that God was in some places and not in some others - cf. Psalm 139:7 - "Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?"
 - (1)The city of Bethel plays an important (though not glorious) role in Israel's history; it is second only to Jerusalem in the frequency of mention in the Old Testament
 - (a)Later, God introduces Himself to Jacob as the God of Bethel (31:13)
 - (b)Bethel would eventually become a high place, a place notorious for idolatrous sacrifice (1 Kings 13:32, Hosea 10:15, Amos 4:4)

4.(20-22) Jacob's vow unto God - **"20 Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me and will watch over me on this journey I am taking and will give me food to eat and clothes to wear 21 so that I return safely to my father's house, then the LORD will be my God 22 and this stone that I have set up as a pillar will be God's house, and of all that you give me I will give you a tenth."**

a)"If God will be with me" - God has given him a promise, yet he is still making "deals" with God - even promising God money if He makes good on His promise!

b)There is a great contrast between God's promise and Jacob's vow.

(1)God's promise:

(a)I am the Lord God

(b)I will give to you

(c)I am with you

(d)I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken

(2)Jacob's vow:

(a)If God will be with me

(b)[If God will] keep me in this way that I am going

(c)[If God will] Give me bread and clothing

(d)So that I come [If God will bring me] back to my father's house

c)If-Then: Unfortunately, we often relate to God on that level. It is not a real recognition of His Lordship. More like idolatry.

d)How much better if Jacob would have prayed, "Because You have promised to be with me and to keep me and to provide for all my needs, and to bring me back to the land which you swore to give to my fathers and to me, I will be completely Yours, God."

XVIII. GENESIS 29 - JACOB'S MARRIAGES AND CHILDREN

A. JACOB MEETS RACHEL

- 1.(1-3) Jacob comes upon a well that is covered
- 2.(4-10) Jacob meets Rachel at the well
 - a)Jacob knew that he had come to marry one of the daughters of Laban (Genesis 28:2), so he is more than willing to show kindness (and perhaps strength) to Laban's daughter Rachel
- 3.(11-14a) Rachel arranges for her father Laban to meet Jacob
 - a)Rachel has heard of her relatives (Rebekah is her aunt) and she understands that Jacob is from this family

B. LABAN'S DEAL WITH JACOB

- 1.1. (14b-20) Jacob offers to work for seven years as a dowry to receive Rachel in marriage
 - a)There is dispute as to exactly what the phrase Leah's eyes were delicate means; some think it means that her eyes were bad, and she couldn't see well. Others think that it means that her eyes were "dull"; not beautiful and full of life like her sister Rachel's eyes; or simply that they were 'blue' which was not considered attractive
 - (1)What should your wages be might sound nice, but really, Laban is letting Jacob know that if he wants to stay around, he must stay as a hired servant. Jacob was the son of a man of tremendous wealth; certainly, he was not lazy, but he wasn't used to hard work - servants did the hard work back home. But now, Jacob is the servant. How will he react? You never know what kind of servant you are until you are treated like one
 - (2)b. Not only was Rachel beautiful of form and appearance, but she was also the first friendly face Jacob met in the area. It is understandable why he should have a "love at first sight" attachment to Rachel
 - b)The offer to work for seven years was essentially a dowry; though Jacob came from a family with great wealth, he left home penniless, and before he could take a woman in marriage he had to provide a dowry to demonstrate that he was fit to support a family and to compensate for the taking of the daughter
 - (1)Seven years was a very generous offer, far above a normal dowry; Jacob doesn't want to risk a refusal. When Laban sees how badly Jacob wants Rachel, he knows he can take advantage of him
 - c)Because of the great love he had for her; the seven years of labor without pay (except for room and board) seemed to pass quickly.
 - (1)This is an example of the principle that 'Hope Inspires Endurance' - cf. 1 Thessalonians 1:3 - "We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labour prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ."
 - (a)i. We should understand also that in this culture, Jacob would not have been allowed to spend as much time as he wanted with Rachel; there were strict social guidelines that kept unmarried people of the same sex apart from each other
 - (b)ii. This clearly demonstrates an important principle: true love waits. Jacob was willing to wait seven years for Rachel!
- 2.(21-25) Laban switches Leah for Rachel on the wedding night
 - a)Even though Jacob waited, when the time was done, he was done waiting.
 - b)How could Jacob be fooled? In the wedding customs of that day, the wife was veiled until she was finally alone with her husband in the "honeymoon suite." If it was dark by the time Jacob and his new bride were alone together, it helps explain how Jacob was fooled

c)How could Leah agree to this? "She may have loved Jacob secretly. She may have considered this her one chance to get a husband. She may have thought this an unsought, and therefore justifiable, opportunity to steal a march on her sister." (Leupold) Beyond all this, she was under the absolute authority of her father

(1)This may also explain why Rachel "agreed" to this

d)Imagine how Jacob felt; imagine how Leah felt; imagine how Rachel felt! All because of Laban's sin; or, should we say, because of Jacob's sin? The deceiver has been deceived!

e)Significantly, Laban's deception towards Jacob is similar to the deception Jacob put upon Isaac and Esau; Jacob is reaping what he had sown.

(1)When Jacob deceived his father and cheated his brother, God did not change His plan to choose Jacob to receive the birthright. Instead, God took Jacob to 'school'. Don't think that your disobedience can derail God's plan for your life, but it will greatly affect how you end up experiencing it. You may spend 20 years working for a Laban while God teaches you a few things

3.(26-30) Laban agrees to give Rachel to Jacob in return for another seven years of work

a)Laban basically says, "Oh, didn't we tell you? We don't do it that way around her. Thought you knew!"

b)The second seven years was Jacob's post-graduate work in the 'school of hard knocks'.

(1)Laban is a perfect picture of a deceptive manipulator; he ends up getting exactly what he wanted (both his daughters married); yet his will turns out badly for both himself and his daughters. Often times God judges manipulators by giving them what they, in their sinful desires and methods, want

(a)i. The problems in this family can be seen immediately - not only has Jacob married two sisters, but he also lets everyone know that one will be favored and loved more than the other. Ultimately, all these problems stem from Laban manipulative deception, and the prior sin of Jacob that brought it all upon himself

(b)ii. Well then, what should have Jacob done? He could not have put Leah aside; she was unable to marry another after having been given to Jacob. Instead, he should have done the best he could in the situation, and that would have been to love his two wives equally. What a mess!

(c)d. We don't practice polygamy, but we do practice "serial marriage." What is the difference? Think of polygamy as "mass marriage" in the sense we speak about "mass murder" - someone who marries more than one at the same time. But there is also "serial murder" - where a murderer kills many, but one at a time. We multiply wives to ourselves, we just do it one at a time

i)i. We can't do anything about our marriages that have broken up in the past. But we can do all we can before God to make sure that from now on, it is one partner for all time

C. JACOB'S FIRST FOUR SONS BORN THROUGH LEAH

1.(31) God's gracious love for Leah - **"When the LORD saw that Leah was not loved, he opened her womb, but Rachel was barren."**

a) God's compassion on Leah is touching; she is an innocent party in this mess.

(1) God can minister to a wife and meet her needs even when the husband is acting in an ungodly manner

(a)i. "Wretched Leah sits sadly in her tent with her maid and spends her time spinning and weeping. For the rest of the household, and especially Rachel, despises her because she has been scorned by her husband, who prefers Rachel and is desperately in love with Rachel alone. She is not beautiful, not pleasing. No, she is odious and hated. . . . There the poor girl sits; no one pays any attention to her. Rachel gives herself airs before ; she does not deign to look at her. 'I am the lady of the house,' she thinks, 'Leah is a slave.' These are truly carnal things in the saintly fathers and mothers, like the things that usually happen in our houses." (Luther)

(2) Isaiah 54:5 says, "For your Maker is your husband, the Lord of hosts is His name;"

2.(32) The birth of Reuben [by Leah]

a) Reuben sounds like the Heb. for 'he has seen my misery' and means "Behold, a Son" - **"It is because the LORD has seen my misery. Surely my husband will love me now."**

(1) Reuben, as the firstborn son, is the logical one to inherit the promise that God had made to Abraham, and passed on to Isaac, and then to Jacob

(a) Jacob, even though he did not love Leah, still would have sex with her. Unfortunately, men are much more able to detach sex from love than women are. Worse yet, Leah was painfully aware of the fact that Jacob did not love her, even though he was obviously having sex with her

3.(33) The birth of Simeon [by Leah]

a) Simeon, means "One Who Hears" - **"Because the LORD heard that I am not loved, he gave me this one too."**

(1) The birth of Reuben did not turn the heart of Jacob towards Leah; she is still aware that he does not love her

(a)i. Of course, Jacob and Leah were married, so there was nothing sinful in their having sex. But what this does show is that Jacob, like most any man in the flesh, was able and willing to have sex with someone he did not love

(b)ii. Ladies, never think that a man loves you just because he is having sex with you. A 1993 Los Angeles Times article interviewed young men to find out their views on sex. One man named Christian (17 years old), explained how things work between men and women: "We're just not sentimental. That's why we're men. . . . We like girls, we don't love them. . . You see a girl and you just think, yeah, she's really pretty and the first thing that comes to mind is you want to have sex." He then explained how he seduced a girl: "You start kissing her and hugging her and little by little you start touching her." After sex, he explained that many boys dump the girls. "Girls get mad, but they don't take it hard. They get over it."

(c)iii. This is the kind of man that a woman might have sex with in the misguided effort to keep him as her boyfriend, because he has deceived her into thinking that he loves her. How dangerous can this be? Consider the words of a woman who caught AIDS from a Ventura man who knew he was infected but never told her: "All I wanted is someone to love me, and now I'm going to die for that. I don't think I should have to die for that."

(d)iv. A 1995 survey asked the following question, "Have you ever had sex with a woman you have actively disliked?" 58% of men answered "yes"

4.(34) The birth of Levi [by Leah]

a)Levi means "Attachment." - **"Now at last my husband will become attached to me, because I have borne him three sons."**

5.(35) The birth of Judah [by Leah] - **"She conceived again, and when she gave birth to a son she said, "This time I will praise the LORD." So she named him Judah. Then she stopped having children."**

a)Judah means "Praise." Apparently, Leah has stopped naming her children to reflect the longing in her heart; now she focuses on God and can praise Him

b)Note: Though she was neglected by Jacob and despised by Rachel, Leah had a great purpose in God's plan. The two greatest tribes came from Leah, not Rachel: Levi (the priestly tribe) and Judah (the royal tribe). And most importantly, the Messiah came from Leah, the uglier sister, who was neglected and despised, but learned to look to the Lord and praise Him.

XIX.GENESIS 30 - THE CHILDREN BORN TO JACOB

A.TWO SONS BORN TO BILHAH

1.(1-4) Rachel, out of frustration, gives her maid Bilhah to Jacob in a "surrogate mother" arrangement

a)Despite Rachel's great beauty, she also was near despair. No doubt, Leah often said "If I only had my sister's beauty and the love of my husband as she does." And, no doubt, Rachel often said, "If I only had sons like my sister." Beautiful or plain, we all have our problems. Stop looking to how God deals with others and set your eyes on him!

b)Much like Sarah gave Hagar to Abraham, Rachel gives Bilhah to Jacob

(1)i. On my knees refers to the custom where the husband would impregnate the surrogate while the surrogate reclined on the lap of the wife, and how she might even recline on the wife as she gave birth. The symbolism clearly showed that the child was legally the child of the mother, not the surrogate, who merely "stood in" for the wife both in conception and birth

2.(5-6) The birth of Dan [by Bilhah - maid of Rachel]

a)Named by Rachel Dan, meaning "vindicated." - **"God has vindicated me; he has listened to my plea and given me a son."**

3.(7-8) The birth of Naphtali [by Bilhah - maid of Rachel]

a)Naphtali means "struggle" - **"I have had a great struggle with my sister, and I have won."**

B.TWO SONS BORN TO ZILPAH

1.(9-11) The birth of Gad [by Zilpah - maid of Leah]

a)Gad means "Troop" or "Good Fortune" - **"Leah said, "What good fortune!"** {Or "A troop is coming!"}

2.2. (12-13) The birth of Asher [by Zilpah - maid of Leah]

a)Asher means "Happy" - **"How happy I am! The women will call me happy."**

C.LEAH HERSELF BEARS TWO MORE SONS AND A DAUGHTER

1.(14-18) The birth of Issachar [by Leah]

a)Mandrakes (a root, called "love-apples" in Hebrew) were thought (and still are among some peoples) to increase fertility in women

(1)i. We don't know if the effect of the mandrakes was something biological, or if it functioned more as a placebo; but under the guiding hand of God, the mandrakes seemed to "work" in the case of Leah and Jacob. Whatever strange agencies God may allow to be used (mandrakes?), the real factor is His sovereign will (God listened to Leah)

(2)The hostility among Leah and Rachel is as obvious as it is painful; it must have been terrible living in a home where one wife would believe that the other had stolen her husband from her

(a)i. This confirms the wisdom of God's original plan, as expressed in Genesis 2:24: that one man be joined to one woman in a one-flesh relationship

(b)ii. "Is it any wonder that this family had a history of strife and bloodshed? Children reflect the atmosphere of the home" (Barnhouse)

(c)iii. Later, Leviticus 18:18 forbids the marrying of sisters - and no wonder why!

b)Issachar means "Reward" - **"God has rewarded me for giving my maidservant to my husband."**

2.(19-20) The birth of Zebulun [by Leah]

a)Zebulun means "honour" - **"God has presented me with a precious gift. This time my husband will treat me with honour, because I have borne him six sons."**

3.(21) The birth of Dinah

a)a. Finally, after ten children, Jacob becomes father to a daughter through Leah, who is named Dinah. Apparently, there was nothing symbolically significant in her name

b)b. The ungodly competition has, in one sense, ended; Leah and the two maids will have no more children

(1)i. But the wives battled each other like a poker game:

(2)"I bid one wife, loved and beautiful."

(3)"I bid one wife and four sons."

(4)"I'll match your one wife and raise you a concubine and the concubine's two sons."

(5)"I'll raise you another concubine and two more sons by her; plus two more sons on my own, and I'll throw in a daughter. I'll stand with one wife, one concubine, six sons, and one daughter."

D.RACHEL HERSELF BEARS A SON TO JACOB

1.(22) God's sovereignty over the womb - **"Then God remembered Rachel; he listened to her and opened her womb."**

a)The idea that God is sovereign over the womb is a persistent theme in the Bible; God granted twins to Rebekah (Genesis 25:23); He opens the womb of Leah (Genesis 29:31), and closes the womb of Hannah (1 Samuel 1:5). Why He opens one and closes another may be unknowable, but God has His purpose

2.(23-24) The birth of Joseph

a) Joseph means "May He Add" - **"God has taken away my disgrace..." "May the LORD add to me another son."**

b)At this point, none would think that this eleventh son would end up being the key son used to further God's redemptive purpose through this family.

E. JACOB'S AGREEMENT WITH LABAN

1.(25-27) Jacob knows that it is time to go back to Canaan

a)After fourteen years, Jacob still calls the promised land my country. He knows that he belongs in the land that was promised to him by God, through the covenant made with his grandfather Abraham and his father Isaac.

b)Laban practiced divination and worshipped idols - cf. 31:30

2.(28-34) Jacob negotiates a deal with Laban that will build a flock of sheep and goats for himself

a)This is an agreeable deal to both parties; it is also a foolproof way to distinguish between the flocks of Laban and Jacob.

3.(35-36) The agreement is made, and the flocks are separated

a)So there would be no mixing of the flocks, Laban's sons took care of all the existing sheep and goats that were speckled and spotted, keeping them a three-day journey from the main flock.

b)Jacob now will care for the large flock of his father-in-law Laban, made up of solid colored animals, and Jacob will receive any speckled or spotted offspring of this flock. Obviously, if there was a way that Jacob could encourage these solid colored sheep to bring forth spotted and speckled offspring, it would greatly increase his personal wealth

4.(37-43) Jacob's method of breeding is blessed by God, and he greatly increases in wealth - **"43 In this way the man grew exceedingly prosperous and came to own large flocks, and maidservants and menservants, and camels and donkeys."**

a)Jacob took branches from poplar, almond, and chestnut trees, strips them of bark, and puts them in the drinking troughs of the flocks. Apparently, this method worked to increase the number of speckled and spotted offspring from the solid-colored flock that Jacob managed

b)Jacob also used selective breeding to increase the strength and vitality of his flock

c)The Hebrew of verse 43 says, "the man burst out exceedingly exceedingly." God was really blessing Jacob;

(1)but why? Because of how great or good Jacob was? No; because of the promises God made to Jacob (Genesis 28:13-15) and the covenant made to Abraham.

(a)c. How did this method work? It is possible that Jacob knew more about animal husbandry than we do today; but it is more likely that Jacob did the best he knew, and God blessed it

XX.GENESIS 31 - JACOB FLEES FROM LABAN TO CANAAN

A.JACOB'S DISPUTES WITH LABAN AND HIS SONS

- 1.(1-2) Contention causes Laban to look differently upon Jacob
 - a)The problem wasn't that Jacob was stealing, it was that Laban's sons were filled with envy. Envy will distort the truth.
- 2.(3) God tells Jacob to go back home - **"Then the LORD said to Jacob, "Go back to the land of your fathers and to your relatives, and I will be with you."**
 - a)A timely revelation.
 - b)Note: Sometimes the Lord turns up the heat where we're at in order to increase our interest in moving on to other things.
- 3.(4-13) Jacob explains the situation and his plan to his wives - **10 "In the breeding season I once had a dream in which I looked up and saw that the male goats mating with the flock were streaked, speckled or spotted. 11 The angel of God said to me in the dream, 'Jacob.' I answered, 'Here I am.' 12 And he said, 'Look up and see that all the male goats mating with the flock are streaked, speckled or spotted, for I have seen all that Laban has been doing to you. 13 I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and where you made a vow to me. Now leave this land at once and go back to your native land."**
 - a)Even though Laban was trying to cheat Jacob, God was protecting him all the time. We don't have to fear what man can do to us when God is on our side
 - (1)"The LORD is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?" (Psalm 118:6)
 - b)God told Jacob to go back to Bethel - where he first encountered the Lord in a personal way. This is a picture of returning to one's first love (Rev 2:4-5)
 - c)"**I am the God of Bethel**" - it is good for us to remember times and places where the Lord has done great works for us, and encountered us in wonderful ways. As we remember them, God will remind us that He met our need then and wants to meet our needs now
- 4.(14-16) Leah and Rachel support Jacob
 - a)This is a huge undertaking, to move such a massive family so far; It was nearly three hundred miles from Haran to the mountains of Gilead.
 - b)This may be the first time in quite a while that Leah and Rachel agreed!

B.JACOB'S FLIGHT FROM LABAN

- 1.(17-21) Jacob leaves without saying goodbye
 - a)God has already told him to go, and promised to be with him - Jacob has no need to be afraid of Laban or to sneak away.
 - (1)"He could have announced his departure and gone in the glory of an army with banners. But fear made it impossible to reap the full measure of blessing. He sneaked away into the will of God instead of departing in triumph." (Barnhouse)
 - b)Rachel takes her father's household idols (teraphim); why did she want them? They were often treated as good omens to keep in the house - bringing blessings upon the household etc. (cf. Patron Saints of Catholicism). Perhaps she worshipped these idols and did not want to be without them; perhaps she did not want her father to inquire of them, using them as tools of divination to catch them (as he may have previously done, Genesis 30:27); or perhaps because such idols were often covered with gold or used as deeds to property, and she thinks this is taking her "inheritance".
 - (1)i. Perhaps Rachel stole the teraphim simply to get back at her father, whom she felt had mistreated her, her husband, and her whole family. Jewish traditions say Rachel took the teraphim because she wanted to keep her father Laban from idolatry

- 2.(22-24) Laban pursues and catches Jacob
 - a)God's speaking to Laban in a dream shows that he had evil intention towards Jacob; God is protecting Jacob
- 3.(25-29) Laban meets and confronts Jacob
 - a)Laban first tries to shame Jacob - **"27 ...Why didn't you tell me, so that I could send you away with joy and singing to the music of tambourines and harps?"**
 - b)Then he boasts of his ability to harm him - **"29 I have the power to harm you..."**
- 4.(30-35) Laban accuses Jacob of stealing his teraphim and searches for them
 - a)Jacob, not knowing that Rachel had stolen the household idols, proclaims his innocence and pronounces a harsh curse on whoever is the thief.
 - b)It's a sad comment when your "god" can be stolen from you.
 - (1)WHAT CAN 'STEAL' GOD FROM US? SIN - World, Flesh, Devil
 - (2)WHAT CAN 'STEAL' US FROM GOD? NOTHING
 - (a)Rom. 8:38-39 - "38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."
 - c)Rachel has learned the ways of deception well from her father; she succeeds in deceiving him regarding the idols.
 - (1)"Amid much that is sad and even sordid in this story . . . amid craft, deceit, and lying on almost every side, we cannot fail to see the hand of God overruling and making even the wrath of man to praise Him." (Griffith Thomas)
- 5.(36-42) Jacob's rebuke of his father-in-law Laban
 - a)Note: It was an ancient custom that a shepherd could bring the torn carcass of a sheep to his owner, as evidence that he was brave enough to not let the wolf devour it or take it away - and thus the shepherd would be excused. But Jacob says he didn't even do this - every animal that was attacked, he made good out of his own flock
 - b)Unfortunately, Jacob speaks of "the God of my father", "the God of Abraham" and "the Fear of Isaac" - nowhere does Jacob say "He is *my* God"

C.LABAN AND JACOB MAKE A COVENANT

- 1.(43-50) Jacob and Laban make a covenant
 - a)The idea of Mizpah ("watchtower") is that "if you do wrong, God will see it and punish you!"
 - b)Note: Jacob and Laban sound like a couple of little kids. "Mine!" "No! Mine!"
- 2.(51-55) They set a pillar of separation and part their ways
 - a)They erect a pillar that should serve as a barrier between them
 - (1)There is wisdom in having some separation from in-laws; the Bible does say, therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife (Genesis 2:24) - though the separation in Jacob's case is indeed extreme!
 - b)"In effect, the pillar of Mizpah meant, 'If you come over on my side of this line, the pact is void and I will kill you.' The covenant breaker would need God to take care of him, because the other would shoot to kill." (Barnhouse)
 - c)Note: Culturally, the meal was a part of sealing the agreement between them.
 - d)After a proper good-bye, Laban sees his daughters and grandchildren for the last time. "This is the last we hear of Laban in the Bible, and it is good that this is the end of him." (Boice)

XXI.GENESIS 32 - JACOB PREPARES TO MEET ESAU

A.JACOB HEARS OF ESAU'S APPROACH

1.(1-2) Jacob meets the angels of God at Mahanaim; he realizes God is with him and that he has angelic protection

a)Literally, Jacob observed that he was in a double camp - that he was not alone, that God had a camp of angels with him at Mahanaim [see 'ANGELS' in Appendix]

(1)i. It was not that God's angels just joined Jacob; they had been with him the entire time. Now, Jacob could see God's angels with him, and it provided great encouragement

(2)ii. Angels, though "higher" beings than us, are ordained by God to be our servants (Hebrews 1:14), and they minister to us even as they ministered to Jesus (Matthew 4:11). In 2 Kings 6:15-17, Elisha's servant had his eyes opened to see the tremendous angelic host surrounding them

(3)iii. John Paton, a missionary to the New Hebrides Islands, told of how one night hostile natives surrounded his missions headquarters, intent on burning the Patons out and killing them. He and his wife prayed through the entire night, and when daylight finally came, their attackers all left. A year later, the chief of the tribe became a Christian, and Paton asked the man about that night. The chief replied, "Who were all those men you had with you there?" The missionary explained that only he and his wife were there. The chief insisted that he had seen hundreds of big men with shining garments and swords circling the mission headquarters, so the natives were afraid to attack (Billy Graham in Angels, God's Secret Agents, page 3). That night, there certainly was a "double camp"

b)This revelation of God's presence and care comes after Jacob has separated from Laban, the worldly man. We often miss the things God wants to provide because of our ties to the world.

2.(3-6) Jacob's message to Esau

a)Jacob, in seeking to reconcile himself to his brother (who twenty years earlier had sworn to kill him), begins by humbling himself - **"your servant Jacob"**.

b)Second, Jacob tells Esau that he has oxen, donkeys, flocks, and male and female servants; he is letting Esau know that he is a man of wealth and that he has not come to "get" anything from Esau.

c)When the messengers return, Jacob hears that Esau is coming to meet him with 400 hundred men. Jacob is convinced that the men are an army intending to destroy him and his family.

3.(7-8) Jacob's fear and preparation

a)Since Rebekah never sent for Jacob; he had every reason to believe that 20 years had not diminished his brother's anger.

(1)When Laban confronted Jacob with a hostile militia, Jacob boldly stood up to him and spoke his mind (Genesis 31:36-42), but with Esau, Jacob is afraid to meet him. Why? Because he knew he was in the right with Laban, but he knows he was in the wrong with Esau.

(a)Shakespeare was right when he said, "Conscience does make cowards of us all."

b) Jacob used conventional wisdom to prepare for Esau's coming.

4.(9-12) Jacob's prayer - **"9 Then Jacob prayed, "O God of my father Abraham, God of my father Isaac, O LORD, who said to me, 'Go back to your country and your relatives, and I will make you prosper,' 10 I am unworthy of all the kindness and faithfulness you have shown your servant. I had only my staff when I crossed this Jordan, but now I have become two groups. 11 Save me, I pray, from the hand of my brother Esau, for I am afraid he will come and attack me, and also the mothers with their children. 12 But you have said, 'I will surely make you prosper and will make your descendants like the sand of the sea, which cannot be counted.'"**

a)A new tone is emerging from Jacob. Recognizing God, His Kindness and Faithfulness, Jacob's position as a Servant, God's Blessings, Jacob's Fearful Need, God's Promise/Word.

(1)George Mueller, a great man of faith and prayer, was once asked what was the most important part of prayer. He replied: "The fifteen minutes after I have said Amen." No matter how great Jacob's prayer was, what will he do afterwards?

(2)Jacob goes to the Lord in prayer, and prays a good prayer - full of faith, thanksgiving, and God's Word

(a)Many of our prayers fall short because there is none of God's Word within them; and there is often none of God's Word in them because there is so little of God's Word in us. Jacob remembered what the Lord had said to him!

i)God's Word: the Lord who said to me, "Return to your country and to your kindred, and I will deal well with you" (quoting from what God had said to Jacob in Genesis 31:3); For You said, "I will surely treat you well . . ." (quoting from what God had said to Jacob in Genesis 28:13-15)

b)Jacob understood that he was not worthy of what God had done, or what he was asking God to do. He was relying on what God had said, not upon his own worthiness

5.(13-21) Jacob sends many gifts to Esau [550 animals]

a)Why did Jacob send such an impressive gift to Esau? It could have been an attempt to buy his brother's good favor

b)We sing: All to Jesus, I surrender, all to Him I freely give; I will ever love and trust Him, in His presence daily live. I surrender all, I surrender all, All to Thee, my blessed Savior, I surrender all.

c)But so often, like Jacob, we mean "I surrender all the goats. If that isn't enough I surrender all the sheep. If that isn't enough I surrender all the camels . . ." What Jacob would not do is surrender himself

B.JACOB WRESTLES WITH GOD

1.(22-23) Jacob sends all his possessions over the river

a)This is a demonstration of his faith, because Jacob leaves himself no retreat. If Esau wanted to attack his group, they would quickly be backed up against the river

2.(24-25) A Man wrestles with Jacob - **"24 So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. 25 When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man."**

a)Jacob spends the night alone; his last night on the east side of the Jordan

(1)God had to get Jacob alone before He dealt with him. While all the activity of the huge entourage was with Jacob, he could busy himself with a thousand different tasks. But once he was alone, God could get his attention.

b) This was no mere man; this is another "special appearance" of Jesus in the Old Testament before His incarnation in Bethlehem; this is God in human form. God wanted something from him. God wanted all of Jacob's self-reliance and fleshly scheming and had come to take it - by force if necessary

c) Hosea 12:3-5 - "3 In the womb he grasped his brother's heel; as a man he struggled with God. 4 He struggled with the angel and overcame him; he wept and begged for his favour. He found him at Bethel and talked with him there-- 5 the LORD God Almighty, the LORD is his name of renown!"

(a) As the fight progressed, it seemed that Jacob was pretty evenly matched. But the match was only even in appearance; the Man could have won easily at any time, using supernatural power

i) "How did Jacob ever manage to keep up his struggle throughout the entire night? I do not know. but I do know that his determination to hang in there was no greater than our frequent determination to have our own way and eventually win out over God." (Boice)

ii) Finally the Man turns the tide in an instant.

(b) The Lord Broke Jacob so He could Bless Him. He Crippled him to Crown him. Jacob's limp was his badge - the sign of his circumcised heart, like the pierced ear of a bond-slave.

i) This is a blessed place to come to - the place where we are conquered by God.

(c) Jacob was at his weakest - so he had to trust in God's strength.

3. (26) Jacob's plea - **"Then the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak." But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me."**

a) All Jacob can do is hold on to the Lord with everything he has. Jacob can't fight anymore, but he can hold on. Not a bad place to be.

b) God is answering Jacob's prayer in 32:9-12; but before Jacob could be delivered from the hand of his brother, he had to be delivered from his own self-will and self-reliance

4. (27-29) Jacob's name is changed, and he is blessed man - **"28 Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome."**

a) Israel is a compound of two words: sarah (meaning "fight," "struggle," or "rule") and el (meaning "God"). Thus it may mean "He who struggles with God" or "He who rules with God." or "God rules" or even "Ruled by God".

(1) Note: He will be called Jacob twice as often as Israel; apparently, there was still plenty of "old man" left in Jacob

b) In what sense had Jacob overcome? In the sense that he had endured through his struggle until God had thoroughly conquered him; when you battle with God, you only win by losing - and by not giving up until you know you have lost. That is how Jacob prevailed

c) Why did the Man refuse to tell Jacob His name? Probably, because Jacob should have, and actually did already know Who it was. [v30]

5. (30-32) The memorials of this event - **"30 So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, "It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared." 31 The sun rose above him as he passed Peniel, and he was limping because of his hip."**

a) Jacob named the place Peniel ("Face of God") because he knew who had wrestled with him - the One who had been wrestling with him all his life. Jacob also understood that no man should be allowed to wrestle with God and live, but God is gracious!

b) The perpetual limp; Jacob would remember his being conquered by God with every step he took for the rest of his life.

XXII. GENESIS 33 - THE MEETING OF JACOB AND ESAU

A. ESAU'S WARM WELCOME

- 1.(1-2) Notice again Jacob's careful preparations - **"1 Jacob looked up and there was Esau, coming with his four hundred men; so he divided the children among Leah, Rachel and the two maidservants. 2 He put the maidservants and their children in front, Leah and her children next, and Rachel and Joseph in the rear."**
 - a)The placement of the family shows his favoritism to Rachel and Joseph
- 2.(3) Jacob demonstrates his submission by bowing down seven times
 - a)This was the customary homage given to kings at the time. Jacob was recognizing Esau as a ruler in the region.
 - b)This shows that he is submissive to his brother, and wants no social power over him.
- 3.3. (4-7) Esau warmly greets Jacob and his family
 - a)What must have Jacob thought when Esau came running to him? Surely, he must have thought his life would soon end. Instead, God had been working in Esau.
 - b)"**4 But Esau ran to meet Jacob and embraced him; he threw his arms around his neck and kissed him. And they wept.**"
 - (1)We can imagine the great depth of emotions and healing contained in their weeping embrace.
 - (2)Also Note: Neither Esau or Jacob felt a need to "work out" the past. God had worked in both their hearts and there was no need to dredge it all up again. What was past was past.
- 4.(8-11) Esau receives Jacob's gifts - **10 "No, please!" said Jacob. "If I have found favor in your eyes, accept this gift from me. For to see your face is like seeing the face of God, now that you have received me favorably."**
 - a)Just as God had received Jacob favorably, Esau does so also, reminding Jacob of the parallel.
 - (1)cf. Jacob's fearful expectation of destruction by Esau to our fearful expectation of the condemnation of God.
 - b)When Jacob gave such generous gifts, it was his way of saying he was sorry, and when Esau accepted them, it was his way saying he was forgiven.
 - (1)Culture: you would never accept a gift from an enemy, only a friend
 - c)Both Esau and Jacob have been blessed: **"I already have plenty"** (Esau in v 9), **"I have all I need"** (Jacob in v 11).

B. JACOB'S TRAVELS IN THE PROMISED LAND

- 1.(12-17) Jacob and Esau part their ways, Jacob goes to Succoth
 - a)Unfortunately, Jacob is still acting like "Jacob," because he says he will go far to the south with Esau to the area of Mount Seir; instead, he allows Esau to go a few days beyond him and then heads towards the north, to Succoth
 - b)Jacob was glad to be reconciled with his brother **"Just let me find favour in the eyes of my lord."**, but didn't want to be too close to him!
- 2.(18-20) Jacob comes to Shechem - **"20 There he set up an altar and called it El Elohe Israel."**
 - a)"El Elohe Israel" can mean "God, the God of Israel" or "mighty is the God of Israel".
 - b)PROBLEM: Jacob is not fully obeying God. He should have gone to Bethel (Genesis 31:13). This probably would have kept him from the grief and danger of the next chapter.

XXIII.GENESIS 34 - SIMEON AND LEVI MASSACRE SHECHEM

A.THE RAPE OF DINAH

1.(1-4) A prince, Shechem violates Dinah; wants to marry her

a)It is hard to blame Dinah for wanting to see the daughters of the land; but it appears that Jacob did not ensure she was properly supervised. To allow her to socialize unsupervised in a pagan town was a real failure on the part of Jacob and Leah.

(1)"Unattached young women were considered fair game in cities of the time, in which promiscuity was not only common but, in fact, a part of the very religious system itself." (Morris)

(2)"This occurrence serves to illustrate the low standard of morals prevalent among the Canaanites. Any unattended female could be raped, and in the transactions that ensue neither father nor son feel the need of apologizing for or excusing what had been committed." (Leupold)

(a)But try telling this to a teenager like Dinah! Teenagers want it all, and they want it now. It is almost impossible for them to see the benefits of waiting for certain things until they are more mature

(b)A way this difficulty has been measured has been called the marshmallow test. A researcher gives this choice to a four year old: "I am leaving for a few minutes to run an errand and you can have this marshmallow while I am gone, but if you wait until I return, you can have two marshmallows." Researchers at Stanford did this test in the 1960s, and a dozen years later they found that the kids who grabbed the single marshmallow tended to be more troubled as adolescents; the one-marshmallow kids also scored an average of 210 points less on SAT tests. Learning to delay gratification is important!

(c)How could Dinah do this? Why wasn't Jacob being a proper covering for Dinah? Why would he allow her to get into a situation where she could be raped? His own compromise made him less able to stand up to his own children and guide them as they should

i). Jacob's children knew that he had told his brother Esau that he would go south with him, but went north instead. They picked up on this and other areas of compromise, and used it to justify their own compromise

b)As for the young man Shechem, his soul was attracted to Dinah; yet we cannot believe he really loved her, because he violated her

(1)It was soulish love, not godly love. He loved her for what she could be and give to him, not for what he could be and give to her.

(a)It is possible for a man to be attracted to a woman, and to be kind to her, for reasons that have little to do with love; women, in their desire to connect romantically with a man, often forget this

2.(5-7) Jacob's lack of outrage; the anger of Simeon and Levi

a)Why does Jacob seem to take the defilement of his daughter so easily?

(1)When God-appointed heads do not take appropriate leadership, it creates a void that is often filled sinfully

3.(8-12) Hamor and Shechem seek to arrange the marriage of Dinah

a)Hamor and Shechem probably think themselves generous; but they insult Dinah and her family even more with a "just name your price" attitude - as if money and marriage could make her disgrace go away.

b)This was a dangerous challenge to Jacob and his family; intermarriage with the Canaanites

4.(13-17) The counter-offer of Simeon and Levi: all the men of the city of Shechem should be circumcised

a)Simeon and Levi have evil intention in this plan; yet they cover it up with spiritual words (that would be a reproach to us)

5.(18-24) Hamor and Shechem convince the men of the city to go along with the plan

a)i.e. There were many more Canaanites than those in Jacob's family - thus they would easily be assimilated by the Canaanites.

b)Note: That's what the world wants to do - assimilate believers into it by sin, compromise, and unequally-yoked partnerships - all of which make us miserable as believers and unfruitful as witnesses.

B.SIMEON AND LEVI DESTROY THE CITY OF SHECHEM

1.(25) The massacre of the men of the city of Shechem

a)"Crudely performed, circumcision could be quite incapacitating, particularly after two or three days." (Kidner)

2.(26-29) They rescue Dinah and plunder the city

a)Note: Simeon and Levi were 'full' brothers of Dinah by Leah.

b)Certainly, they justified this murder by saying their sister had been disgraced; but the addition of theft and plunder disgraced themselves.

3.(30-31) Jacob's reaction - **"30 Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "You have brought trouble on me by making me a stench to the Canaanites and Perizzites, the people living in this land. We are few in number, and if they join forces against me and attack me, I and my household will be destroyed." 31 But they replied, "Should he have treated our sister like a prostitute?"**

a)Sadly, Jacob is only concerned with himself. This is Jacob, not Israel in action

(1)"Jacob! you brought that trouble on yourself. You passed your own deceitful nature onto your boys. You set them a constant example of guile. They heard you lie to Esau at Peniel and start northwest after he went southeast. They saw your interest in the fat pastures when you pitched your tent in Shechem. You said nothing when Dinah was violated. . . Talk to God about your own sin before talking to these boys about theirs." (Barnhouse)

b)When Jacob was about to die, he prophesied over each of his twelve sons. This is what he said about Simeon and Levi: 5 "Simeon and Levi are brothers--their swords are weapons of violence. 6 Let me not enter their council, let me not join their assembly, for they have killed men in their anger and hamstringed oxen as they pleased. 7 Cursed be their anger, so fierce, and their fury, so cruel! I will scatter them in Jacob and disperse them in Israel." (49:5-7)

(1)He rebuked them far too late.

(a)The prophetic word of God through Jacob proved true - God did in fact both divide the tribes of Simeon and Levi, and scatter them among Israel. But significantly, the way it happened for each tribe was different. Simeon, because of the lack of faithfulness of that tribe, was effectively dissolved as a tribe, and the tribe of Simeon was absorbed into the tribal area of Judah. The tribe of Levi was also scattered; but because of the faithfulness of this tribe during the rebellion of the golden calf (Exodus 32:26-28), it was scattered as a blessing throughout the whole nation of Israel. Both were scattered, but one as a blessing and the other as curse

XXIV.GENESIS 35 - REVIVAL IN JACOB'S LIFE

A.JACOB RETURNS TO BETHEL

1.(1) God speaks to Jacob; calling him back to Bethel - **"1 Then God said to Jacob, "Go up to Bethel and settle there, and build an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you were fleeing from your brother Esau."**

a)The whole Shechem incident is a result of Jacob going to Shechem instead of to Bethel, where he was supposed to be. We often end up in much difficulty, and bring much difficulty to those around us, because we are not where God has told us to be

(1)"The only cure for worldliness is to separate from it." (Barnhouse) Jacob had to leave Shechem and go to Bethel

(2)Note: Chapter 34 does not mention God once. Chapter 35 mentions God over and over again, more than ten times, plus eleven times in names such as Bethel and Israel

2.(2-4) The cleansing of Jacob's family - **"2 So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, "Get rid of the foreign gods you have with you, and purify yourselves and change your clothes. 3 Then come, let us go up to Bethel, where I will build an altar to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and who has been with me wherever I have gone." 4 So they gave Jacob all the foreign gods they had and the rings in their ears, and Jacob buried them under the oak at Shechem."**

a)The idols probably resulted from the plunder of Shechem. Jacob should not have allowed these idols to remain.

b) Jacob's family only got right with God after Jacob himself did.

(1)How could Jacob's kids keep foreign gods? Because mom did! Remember that Rachel clung to the household idols of her father (Genesis 31:19). No matter how hard we try to teach our children godly conduct, they will still do what we do!

c)Why did they have to change their clothes? "Throughout the Bible, garments symbolize character. The inward life of the unregenerate is compared to a polluted garment" (Barnhouse)

(1)Jude 23 gives the idea: "but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh", as does Ephesians 4:22-24: "that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness."

(a)It is important for everyone to take stock of what they may have in their home that is ungodly or occultic in their home, and to promptly get rid of it

3.(5-7) God's protection of Jacob; he comes to Bethel

a)Though Jacob had sinned, he was now doing what was right before God, despite the danger, trusting that God would protect him.

4.(8) The death of Deborah, Rebekah's beloved nurse

a)We know nothing of this woman before this account; seemingly, she came with Rebekah as a companion when she came from Haran to marry Isaac. Obviously, she was a beloved member of the family, because they named the place where she was buried Allon Bachuth, which means "Oak of Weeping"

(1)Many commentators assume that for some reason, she came to be in Jacob's household, coming from his mother's household, but we do not know for certain if this is the case

5.(9-15) God speaks to Jacob again at Bethel

a)When Jacob finally arrives at the place that God had told him to go, God appears to him; God blesses him; and calls him by his new name

(1)Reminder of his new name was important; he had been acting like Jacob instead of Israel. God does the same with us - reminding us who we are in Him

b)This is an example of what it means to return to your first love, as in Revelation 2:4-5: Jacob remembers to go back to Bethel; he repents by getting rid of all the idols; and he does the first works by building an altar and worshipping God as before

c)God grants Jacob a reminder of his place in the covenant, begun with his grandfather Abraham. Jacob did not need to hear anything new from God. He just needed to be reminded of what was true - **"11 And God said to him, "I am God Almighty; be fruitful and increase in number. A nation and a community of nations will come from you, and kings will come from your body. 12 The land I gave to Abraham and Isaac I also give to you, and I will give this land to your descendants after you."**

d)Seemingly, God appeared to Jacob here in bodily form; this is implied by the words **"13 Then God went up from him at the place where he had talked with him."** God blesses Jacob in such great measure after his return to his first love!

e)**"14 Jacob set up a stone pillar at the place where God had talked with him, and he poured out a drink offering on it; he also poured oil on it."**

(1)The idea of a drink offering is found in Exodus 29:40-41, Leviticus 23:13, Numbers 15:5-7 show that the drink offering was made with wine poured out in sacrifice before the Lord at His altar.

(2) Paul considered the pouring out of his life before God to be like the pouring out of a drink offering at God's altar (Philippians 2:17; 2 Timothy 4:6)

(3)Bethel means house of God.

B. THE BIRTH OF BENJAMIN AND THE DEATH OF RACHEL

1. (16-17) The birth of another son

a)We don't know how long Jacob stayed at Bethel, but it is possible that this last child was conceived at this place where Jacob came back to his first love for the Lord

2.2. (18) The naming of the last son

a)Rachel names this last child Ben-Oni, meaning "son of my sorrow"

b)Jacob wisely names the child Benjamin, which means "son of my right hand"; perhaps he rightly sensed the special place God had for this child, or perhaps he simply prized Benjamin so greatly because he was the final link between him and woman he loved most

c)The right side was associated with greater strength and honor, because most people are right handed. Benjamin (son of my right hand) therefore has the idea of "son of my strength" or "son of my honor"

(1)The idea is expressed in passages like Exodus 15:6 - "Your right hand, O LORD, has become glorious in power; Your right hand, O LORD, has dashed the enemy in pieces."

(2)Psalm 16:8 - "I have set the LORD always before me; Because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved."

(3)Psalm 63:8 - "My soul follows close behind You; Your right hand upholds me."

(a)Jesus sits at the right hand of the Father, the position of strength and honor - and we sit there with Him! If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. (Colossians 3:1)

3.(19-20) The death and burial of Rachel

a)Even when we get right with God, and return to our first love, as Jacob did at Bethel, it doesn't mean that life becomes a bed of roses.

(1)But if getting right with God doesn't give us an easier life, what good is it? Then God is not your god; comfort is. All you want is a comfortable life, not a godly life. The symbol of your life is a Lazy-Boy recliner, not a cross

4.(21-22a) Reuben's sin with his father's concubine

a)Reuben was the firstborn; we might have expected him to be the one to most seriously receive the covenant of his fathers. Yet, here he sins in a most offensive way against his father and entire family

b)Gen. 49:3-4 - "3 Reuben, you are my firstborn, my might, the first sign of my strength, excelling in honor, excelling in power. 4 Turbulent as the waters, you will no longer excel, for you went up onto your father's bed, onto my couch and defiled it."

c)Reuben, Simeon, and Levi have "disqualified" themselves from the high calling of the Abrahamic blessing. It will be up to the fourth son, Judah, to bring forth the Messiah.

5.(22b-26) Jacob's 12 sons

a)"12" is the number of government and is used in referring to the tribes of Israel. Actually there were 14 Tribes after Joseph's 2 sons Ephriam and Manasseh were added to the tribes.

(1)cf. 12 Tribes, but One Nation - Many Denominations, but One Church.

(a)From what we have seen in the last few chapters, this is no "all-star team." "We are greatly amazed in reflecting upon the event as a whole that descendants of the worthy patriarch Abraham should almost immediately after his time already have sunk to the level upon which Jacob's sons stand in this chapter." (Leupold)

C.THE DEATH OF ISAAC

1.(27) Jacob visits his father Isaac one last time

a)There seemed to be nothing dramatic between Isaac and Jacob at this meeting; Isaac may have been incapacitated by his old age

2.(28-29) Jacob and Esau bury their father together

a)**28 Isaac lived a hundred and eighty years.** - @40 yrs after he thought he was dying

(1)Our times are in God's hands; we may expect a long or short life for ourselves or others and be quite wrong. Only God knows

b)The sons are again united - this time by the death of their father.

XXV.GENESIS 36 - THE FAMILY OF ESAU

A.ESAU'S SEPARATION FROM JACOB

- 1.(1-5) The wives, sons, and daughters of Esau
- 2.(6-8) The separation of Jacob and Esau
 - a)a. Esau's cry to Isaac Have you only one blessing, my father? (Genesis 27:38) proved unfounded. Because he was a descendant of Abraham, God blessed Esau, and blessed him in the only way he really cared about - materially

B.THE DESCENDANTS OF ESAU

- 1.(9) The Edomites are descendants of Esau
 - a)Edom and the Edomites are mentioned some 130 times in the Bible; they were an important group of "neighbors" to Israel
 - b)When the Israelites came through the wilderness to the Promised Land in the time of Moses, the Edomites refused them passage through their land (Numbers 20:21); this was a source of great discouragement for the nation (Numbers 21:4)
 - c)Even so, God commanded special regard for the Edomites among Israelis: "You shall not abhor an Edomite, for he is your brother" (Dt. 23:7)
 - d)In the days of Saul, Edom was made subject to Israel (1 Samuel 14:47), and David established garrisons there (2 Samuel 8:14). But later, in the days of Joram, the son of Ahab, the Edomites became independent of Israel (2 Kings 8:16-22)
 - e)Several of the prophets spoke about and against Edom, including Obadiah, Jeremiah (Jeremiah 49:17-18) and Ezekiel (Ezekiel 25:12ff).
 - (1)The Edomites held the rock city of Petra, which can only be reached through narrow winding gorge.
 - f)Herod the Great - the one who tried to kill the young child Jesus - was an Edomite. From the time Islam conquered the Middle East, the region has been virtually unoccupied, except for a few Bedouins and military outposts. It has been brought to nothing, as Obadiah had prophesied
- 2.(10-43) The descendants of Edom and the chiefs of the Edomites
 - a)"If God blesses so abundantly those who are not chosen, what is the magnitude of His blessings for those who are chosen? If nonspiritual people experience such outpourings of merely common grace, how great must the special grace of the regenerate be!" (Boice)
 - b)Notable among this list is Amalek mentioned in verse 12; from him would come the Amalekites, notable enemies of Israel (Exodus 17:8-16; Deuteronomy 25:17-19; 1 Samuel 15:1-35)
 - c)The names of the descendants of Esau don't reflect a godly heart; Alvan (verse 23) means "wicked." Ithran (verse 26) means "advantage" and Aran (verse 28) means "mountain goat." There is even a chief named Baal-Hanan (verse 38), embracing the false god Baal
 - d)Is Job Mentioned Here? - **"11 The sons of Eliphaz: Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam and Kenaz." ... "28 The sons of Dishan: Uz and Aran." ... "33 When Bela died, Jobab son of Zerah from Bozrah succeeded him as king."**
 - (1)Job 4:1 - "Then Eliphaz the Temanite replied:"

XXVI. GENESIS 37 - JOSEPH IS SOLD INTO SLAVERY

A. JOSEPH'S DREAMS

1. The beginning of Joseph's story

a) "He was loved and hated, favored and abused, tempted and trusted, exalted and abased. Yet at no point in the one-hundred-and-ten-year life of Joseph did he ever seem to get his eyes off God or cease to trust him. Adversity did not harden his character. Prosperity did not ruin him. He was the same in private as in public. He was a truly great man." (Boice)

b) Joseph is also a remarkable picture of Jesus

2. (1-4) Jacob favors Joseph - **"3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made a richly ornamented robe for him. 4 When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him."**

a) Jacob's favoritism of Joseph was plain to all. He was given **"a richly ornamented robe"**. This signified a position of favor and prince-hood.

(1) The idea behind the Hebrew phrase is that it was a tunic that extended all the way down to the wrists and ankles - not what a working man wore - a garment of privilege and status

b) Jacob's favoritism of Joseph is a source of conflict in the family; the brothers naturally hated him and could not speak peaceably to him

3. (5-8) Joseph's first dream - **"5 Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more. 6 He said to them, "Listen to this dream I had: 7 We were binding sheaves of corn out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered round mine and bowed down to it." 8 His brothers said to him, "Do you intend to reign over us? Will you actually rule us?" And they hated him all the more because of his dream and what he had said."**

a) The brothers understand perfectly the meaning of the dream - that one day, Joseph would reign over them.

b) Relevant to this dream is that it involves sheaves of wheat; Joseph's position of status over his brethren will have much to do with food

4. (9-11) Joseph's second dream - **"9 Then he had another dream, and he told it to his brothers. "Listen," he said, "I had another dream, and this time the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me." 10 When he told his father as well as his brothers, his father rebuked him and said, "What is this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?" 11 His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind."**

a) Possibly, this portion of Genesis isn't in strict chronological order; back in 35:16-20, Joseph's mother Rachel died. This portion of Genesis seems to backtrack somewhat

(1) Probably, the transition point is in 37:2: This is the genealogy of Jacob - this likely ends the record preserved by Jacob himself (who recounted the death of Rachel), and the next line begins the record preserved by Joseph. These same kind of transitions are found in 5:1, 6:9 and 25:19

b) The stars, moon, and sun all representing the family of Israel is repeated in Revelation 12:1, which speaks of Jesus coming from the nation of Israel - **"A great and wondrous sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head."**

B. JOSEPH IS SOLD INTO SLAVERY BY HIS BROTHERS

1. (12-17) Jacob sends Joseph to find his brothers

a) There seems nothing strange about this errand, except that Joseph's brothers are in Shechem, a place where this family before had been influenced and harmed by worldly influences

- 2.(18-22) Joseph's brothers plot to kill him
- a)Joseph was easy to spot because of his special robe.
 - b)They decide they'll defeat Joseph's dreams by raising their hand against him; but, they won't be able to since the dreams came from God.
 - c)Reuben takes a measure of leadership as the eldest, figuring that he can save Joseph from death and rescue him later
 - (1)But why didn't Reuben say, "This is wrong! We can't do this!?" Was it a desire to do right by Joseph without alienating his brothers (a desire to be nice to everyone)?
- 3.(23-28) Joseph is cast into an empty cistern and sold into slavery
- a)The brothers must have had a perverse pleasure in ripping the richly ornamented robe off Joseph.
 - b)The heartless character of these brothers is evident; how could they eat a meal with Joseph nearby in the pit?
 - (1)In Genesis 42:21, the brothers say: "...We saw how distressed he was when he pleaded with us for his life, but we would not listen; that's why this distress has come upon us."
 - (2)When did Joseph plead with them? Undoubtedly when he was in the pit and they were eating their meal
 - (a)"A physicist could compute the exact time required for his cries to go twenty-five yards to the eardrums of the brothers. But it took twenty-two years for that cry to go from the eardrums to their hearts." (Barnhouse)
 - (3)We should never, underestimate the depravity of the human heart. In 1995, Susan Smith deliberately drowned her own children and could still lie to the country about them having been kidnapped. We think someone who committed such an act would be overwhelmed by remorse, but her ability to put on a false face shows how deceitful our hearts are.
 - c)We don't know if we should think more highly of Joseph's brothers because they decided to spare his life or less highly of them because they figured they could get rid of him and make a few bucks at the same time.
 - d)Concerning the Price , cf. Lev. 27:2, 5 - "2 Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'If anyone makes a special vow to dedicate persons to the Lord by giving equivalent values, ...5 If it is a person between the ages of five and twenty, set the value of a male at twenty shekels and of a female at ten shekels..'"
 - (1)Think about it: "After all, he's our brother - so let's only sell him into slavery instead of killing him." And this comes from Judah, who would be chosen to bring forth the Messiah!
- 4.(29-35) They cover their sin and lie to Jacob concerning Joseph's fate
- a)Jacob tore his clothes as an expression of utter horror and mourning because his loved son is gone.
 - (1)"**We found this. Examine it to see whether it is your son's robe.**" - the cruelty of the sons was also directed towards the father who favored him.

5.(36) Joseph ends up in the court of a high Egyptian official - **“36 Meanwhile, the Midianites sold Joseph in Egypt to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard.”**

a)“officials” is lit. ‘eunuch’

b)Egypt had been a large and thriving kingdom for at least a thousand years before Joseph came. They were wealthy and had massive natural resources. They were educated and had no real enemies at that time. When Joseph came to Egypt, some of the pyramids already looked old, and the Sphinx had already been carved.

(1)God has not departed from Joseph.

(a)If Joseph's brothers never sold him to the Midianites, the Joseph never goes to Egypt. If Joseph never goes to Egypt, he never is sold to Potiphar. If he is never sold to Potiphar, he is never falsely accused to rape by Potiphar's wife. If he is never falsely accused of rape by Potiphar's wife, then he is never put in prison. If he is never put in prison, he never meets the baker and butler of Pharaoh. If he never meets the baker and butler of Pharaoh, he never interprets their dreams. If he never interprets their dreams, he never gets to interpret Pharaoh's dreams. If he never gets to interpret Pharaoh's dreams, he never is made prime minister. If he is never made prime minister, he never wisely administrates for the severe famine coming upon the region. If he never wisely administrates for the severe famine coming upon the region, then his family back in Canaan perishes from the famine. If his family back in Canaan perishes from the famine, the Messiah can't come forth from a dead family. If the Messiah can't come forth, then Jesus never came. If Jesus never came, you are dead in your sins and without hope in this world. Thank you Jesus!

XXVII. GENESIS 38 - TAMAR AND THE SIN OF JUDAH

A. This chapter Exposes the "humanity" of Judah.

1. Gives biographical info. on Tamar - She is one of only 4 women mentioned in the genealogical line of Jesus - Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Mary
2. Interestingly, there is a Biblical record about each one.

B. TAMAR'S WIDOWHOOD; JUDAH'S UNFAIRNESS

1. (1-5) Judah and his three sons - Er, Onan, and Shelah
 - a) It isn't hard to see that the sons of Israel were rapidly being corrupted by their Canaanite neighbors. What would happen if they continued there in the land? God has a plan to bring them out!
 - (1) Judah, the fourth-born son of Jacob through Leah has not yet distinguished himself among his brothers; he is the one who suggested that they sell Joseph into slavery (37:26)
2. (6-7) Er's marriage to Tamar and his death
 - a) We are not told what Er's wickedness was; but obviously it was severe enough for God to bring immediate judgment upon him.
3. (8-10) Onan's refusal to raise up offspring for Tamar
 - a) According to the custom of levirate marriage (later codified in Deuteronomy 25:5-10), if a man died before providing sons to his wife, it was the duty of his brothers to "marry" her and to give her sons. The child would be considered the son of the brother who had died, because really the living brother was acting in his place
 - (1) This was done so that the dead brother's name would be carried on; but also, so that the widow would have children who could support her. Apart from this, she would likely live the rest of her life as a destitute widow
 - b) Dt. 25:5-10 - "5 If brothers are living together and one of them dies without a son, his widow must not marry outside the family. Her husband's brother shall take her and marry her and fulfill the duty of a brother-in-law to her. 6 The first son she bears shall carry on the name of the dead brother so that his name will not be blotted out from Israel. 7 However, if a man does not want to marry his brother's wife, she shall go to the elders at the town gate and say, "My husband's brother refuses to carry on his brother's name in Israel. He will not fulfill the duty of a brother-in-law to me." 8 Then the elders of his town shall summon him and talk to him. If he persists in saying, "I do not want to marry her," 9 his brother's widow shall go up to him in the presence of the elders, take off one of his sandals, spit in his face and say, "This is what is done to the man who will not build up his brother's family line." 10 That man's line shall be known in Israel as The Family of the Unsandaled."
 - (1) cf. Mt. 22:23-33 for how the Sadducees twisted this to try and trap Jesus. - "23 That same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question. 24 "Teacher," they said, "Moses told us that if a man dies without having children, his brother must marry the widow and have children for him. 25 Now there were seven brothers among us. The first one married and died, and since he had no children, he left his wife to his brother. 26 The same thing happened to the second and third brother, right on down to the seventh. 27 Finally, the woman died. 28 Now then, at the resurrection, whose wife will she be of the seven, since all of them were married to her?" 29 Jesus replied, "You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God. 30 At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven. 31 But about the resurrection of the dead--have you not read what God said to you, 32 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not the God of the dead but of the living." 33 When the crowds heard this, they were astonished at his teaching."

c) Onan was willing to use Tamar for his own sexual gratification, but did not want to give Tamar a son that he would have to support, but would be considered Er's son.

d) Some use this passage as a proof-text against birth control, but the context clearly centers on Onan's failure to take care of his sister-in-law, rather than his attempt at birth control.

(1) Onan pursued sex as only a pleasurable experience; if he really didn't want to father a child by Tamar, why did he have sex with her at all? He refused to fulfill his obligation to his dead brother and Tamar

(2) Many Christians have used this passage as a proof-text against masturbation; indeed, masturbation has been called "onanism." However, this does not seem to be the case here; whatever Onan was doing, he was not masturbating! This was not a sin of masturbation, but a sin of refusing to care for his brother's widow by giving her offspring, and of a selfish use of sex

4.(11) Judah's unfair dealing with Tamar

a) Judah's hesitancy to give his last son as a husband to Tamar is understandable; two of her previous husbands have already been judged by God.

b) But this was not the fault of Tamar; the blame belonged to the sons of Judah.

C. TAMAR BEARS A CHILD BY JUDAH

1.(12-14) Judah's wife dies; Tamar realizes that Judah will never give her his last son

a) Tamar did not want to face what would be a very difficult existence in that or any culture: life without any husband or children

b) Why couldn't Tamar just find another nice boy to marry? Because she was essentially under the headship of her father-in-law Judah; he would determine who and when she could marry

2.(15-18) Tamar sets a trap for Judah, he has sex with her

a) Tamar demands a pledge of the future payment of the agreed upon price (a young goat)

b) Tamar conceives; this was certainly not intended by Judah, but definitely planned by both Tamar and God

3.(19-23) Judah cannot locate her

a) Judah sends a friend to pay Tamar and retrieve the pledge but, because Tamar has disappeared, he leaves the pledge in her hands.

4.(24-26) Tamar is vindicated, Judah is reproved

a) Judah sees the real issue - he is at fault for not providing Tamar a son through his last son Shelah.

5.(27-30) Tamar gives birth to twins, Perez and Zerah

a) Neither Judah or Tamar are examples of godliness, but both are in the family line of Jesus, through Perez

b) When the Bible shows its leaders and heroes in such terrible, stark truth, we can know for sure that it is a book from God. Men don't write about themselves and their ancestors like this.

XXVIII.GENESIS 39 - JOSEPH IN POTIPHAR'S HOUSE

A.JOSEPH IN POTIPHAR'S HOUSE

1.(1) Joseph is bought by Potiphar, an Egyptian official - **"Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. Potiphar, an Egyptian who was one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him there."**

a)The name Potiphar means "devoted to the sun"; a name connected with the Egyptian religious system

b)Officer may be translated "eunuch"; it was a common practice in ancient times to make those highest up in the royal courts eunuchs, to ensure they'd be wholly devoted to their king. Because this practice was common, the term came to be used for all who served in important positions in a king's court, whether they were literal eunuchs or not.

c)Captain of the guard means Potiphar was head of Pharaoh's personal security detail - i.e. the 'Chief of the Palace Police'

(1)(2-3)

(a)a. Joseph's trial is probably worse than any of us have gone through; yet God did not abandon him even in the smallest way. If God had allowed it to be that Joseph was a slave, than he would be a successful man even as a slave

i)i. We often complain to God that He has allowed us to be put in a terrible or difficult place; yet God's will is that we trust Him to bless us and make us successful (as He measures success) wherever we are

(b)b. Even at this early point, where it seems that Joseph has no control over circumstances - and indeed, he has none - God is overruling the evil or capricious choices of man to accomplish His eternal purpose

(c)c. And his master saw that the Lord was with him: By his trust in God, diligent work, and blessing from God, Joseph was showing Potiphar that God was real. Our bosses should see the difference Jesus makes in our lives by the way we work

2.(2-6) God is with Joseph and blesses Potiphar for his sake

a)"Though stripped of his coat, he had not been stripped of his character."

b)God blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake.

(1)Christian Employees should be a witness by their diligence, trustworthiness, and honesty.

(a)1Tim. 6:1 - "All who are under the yoke of slavery should consider their masters worthy of full respect, so that God's name and our teaching may not be slandered."

(b)Titus 2:9-10 - "9 Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, 10 and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive."

c)Clearly, Joseph rose to the top, but how long did all this take? Joseph was seventeen years old when he was sold into slavery (Genesis 27:2); he was thirty when Pharaoh promoted him (Genesis 41:46), and had been in prison for two years before that (Genesis 41:1). So, he was in Potiphar's house for eleven years.

(1)Eleven years seems like a long time! Many think that if advancement is from God, it must come quickly. Sometimes this is the case, but not normally - "normally," God allows good things to develop slowly. Human children have the longest development time both in the womb and in childhood compared to animals. It takes many years for an acorn to become an oak; a squash grows overnight

(2) Imagine Joseph as a hard worker. When he came to Egypt, he was at a great disadvantage - he knew nothing of the language, culture, customs, or ways of doing business. He had to get up early and stay up late to both do his job and to learn Egyptian ways. Luther said, "Accordingly, Joseph was not only good and chaste, and not only diligently poured out prayers to God for his master, for the king, and for the whole land of Egypt, but he was also a most vigilant overseer and manager of the domestic tasks."

d) Joseph's appearance is of special note; "**Now Joseph was well-built and handsome.**" This is said of only two other men in the Bible: David (1 Samuel 16:12) and Absalom (2 Samuel 14:25)

B. JOSEPH'S RESISTANCE TO TEMPTATION AND ITS AFTERMATH

1. (7-10) The invitation of Potiphar's wife and Joseph's resistance

a) Why was Potiphar's wife so forward?

(1) Perhaps Potiphar was a literal eunuch, and the marriage was purely a ceremonial arrangement, so she felt free to seek sex outside the marriage.

(2) Or, simply because Joseph was notably attractive.

(a) Also, it seems that in the ancient world, the code of morality for women in Egypt, even married women, was loose

b) Note: Satan wants us to think that our temptation is unique, but there is no temptation that has overtaken us except what is common among men (1 Cor. 10:13)

2. (11-12) Joseph resists her brazen attempt at seduction

a) Potiphar's wife knew that Joseph had been avoiding her; so she tried to trap him; she probably made certain that none of the men were inside the house.

b) Joseph is a literal illustration of 2 Timothy 2:22 - "Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart."

(1) How could Joseph resist the temptation at the moment? He ran! Joseph did what we are all supposed to do when faced with this kind of situation - he fled and ran. 2 Timothy 2:22 makes it clear: Flee also youthful lusts

(a)i. If we are not actually running towards sin, we have a tendency to at least linger in its presence; but we are commanded to do the only safe thing - run away from these lusts of the flesh, and to run as fast as we can

(b)ii. The KJV says at verse 12, He left the garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out. He got him out! No one else was going to get him out; God provides a way of escape (1 Corinthians 10:13), but you have to take the way out

3. (13-20) Potiphar's wife falsely accuses Joseph before Potiphar and he is sent to prison

a) The lie against Joseph must have been painful; he was accused of the very thing he had worked so hard to avoid. Yet he does not seem to defend himself against this false accusation, even as Jesus was silent before His accusers (Isaiah 53:7; Matthew 27:13-14)

b) Joseph's imprisonment was a hard penalty, but the normal punishment for such a crime (attempted rape) by a slave upon a high official would be death.

c) Potiphar may have suspected his wife's role in the matter - the anger aroused in verse 19 may not be directed towards Joseph, but against his wife - for manipulating him into a situation where he must dismiss the man who makes the whole household run well

(1) "Death was the only penalty Joseph could reasonably expect. His reprieve presumably owed much to the respect he had won; and Potiphar's mingled wrath and restraint may reflect a faint misgiving about the full accuracy of the charge." (Kidner)

4.(21-23) Joseph prospers, even in prison

a)If God blessed Joseph in the pit; if He blessed Joseph as a slave; we should not be surprised to see Him bless Joseph as a prisoner. None of these terrible circumstances had derailed God's plan for Joseph's life

(1)The dominating theme is that Joseph succeeded because of the blessing of God: **"The LORD was with Joseph and he prospered"**(verse 2); **"his master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD gave him success in everything he did"** (verse 3); **" the LORD blessed the household of the Egyptian because of Joseph. The blessing of the LORD was on everything Potiphar had"** (verse 5)

(2)Even after Joseph is falsely accused and thrown into prison, God is still blessing

(3)"It is but of little consequence where the lot of a servant of God may be cast; like Joseph he is ever employed for his master, and God honors him and prospers his work." (Clarke)

XXIX.GENESIS 40 - JOSEPH INTERPRETS DREAMS IN PRISON

A.JOSEPH MEETS THE CUPBEARER AND BAKER IN PRISON

1.(1-4) The Royal Cupbearer and Baker are put into prison

a)"**3 and put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the same prison where Joseph was confined.**" - Thus, Joseph was imprisoned in the house of Potiphar.

(1)When we see how the captain of the guard treated Joseph in prison, and remember that this was Potiphar (Genesis 39:1), it seems clear that Potiphar did not really believe his wife's accusations against Joseph.

b)The Cupbearer was an officer of high rank with Egyptian, Persian and Assyrian as well as Jewish monarchs. It was his duty to fill the king's cup and present it to him personally. [This would also include responsibility for tasting the wine to ensure that it was not poisoned]. Rabshakeh was cup-bearer in the Assyrian court (2Ki 18:17) Nehemiah filled this office to the king of Persia (Ne 1:11) and we also read of Solomon's cup-bearers (1Ki 10:5, 2Ch 9:4)

c)Why are they there? They had offended Pharaoh; it is difficult to tell if it was in a minor or major way. But, whatever the reason, they were really there to meet Joseph.

2.(5-8) Joseph shows concern for the cupbearer and baker

a)This is a window to the heart of Joseph; men who are consumed with anger or bitterness do not show concern for the personal problems of others.

(1)It would have been easy - perhaps technically true - for Joseph to walk around thinking that because of all the wrong done against him, everything should revolve around his own feelings and hurts. Instead, he cares that the butler and the baker look so sad today!

(a)i. This is one of the keys to living like Jesus: being an others-centered person. Joseph could have justified a certain self-centeredness in his life ("I have to take care of myself right now"), but he did not

b)Remember: Joseph has experience with dreams (Genesis 37:5-11) and was derided as a dreamer (Genesis 37:19-20)

c)[see 'DREAMS' in Appendix]

B. JOSEPH INTERPRETS THEIR DREAMS

- 1.(9-13) The Cupbearer explains his dream and Joseph interprets it
 - a) Though this dream was from God, God used figures and pictures that would make sense to the butler - the images of the vine, the grapes, and him serving Pharaoh the wine
 - b) There are aspects to this dream that could not have been guessed - such as the three branches representing three days. Joseph's interpretation of this dream came from God, not his own wisdom
 - c) b. Also, Joseph's word is bold enough to be falsified - in three days, everyone will know if Joseph was correct or not

- 2.(14-15) Joseph asks the Cupbearer to work for his release
 - a) **"15 For I was forcibly carried off from the land of the Hebrews, ..."** - cf. Ps. 105:18 - " They bruised his [Joseph's] feet with shackles, his neck was put in irons."
 - (1)i. Joseph could have had that "fatalistic faith" - where he says, "Well, if the Lord wants me out of prison, He will do it and I won't have to do anything." It is true that Joseph will not get out of prison until the Lord wants it - but none of that precludes Joseph taking wise and good steps to accomplish what he thinks to be God's will. The butler won't remember until God wants him to anyway!
 - b) Though Joseph is not becoming angry or bitter, he wants to get out, and will use appropriate means to do so!

- 3.(16-19) The baker tells his dream and Joseph interprets it
 - a) The baker was encouraged that his companion had a good interpretation, but finds his dream does not indicate good to come
 - b) Joseph was just as faithful to deliver the heavy message as he was to deliver the happy message - like a godly preacher, who does not fail to bring the whole counsel of God
 - (1) "How many there are who are willing to preach the cupbearer's sermon but are unwilling to preach the baker's sermon!" (Boice)

- 4.(20-23) Joseph's interpretations come to pass
 - a) The three days until Joseph was proved right must have been agonizing for the butler and the baker, yet Joseph was found to be a true messenger of God
 - b) However, the cupbearer did not remember Joseph, but forgot him. Joseph was wronged again!

XXX.GENESIS 41 - JOSEPH INTERPRETS PHARAOH'S DREAM AND RISES TO POWER

A.PHARAOH'S DREAMS AND DILEMMA

- 1.(1-8) Pharaoh's disturbing dreams
 - a)Joseph had been in prison, forgotten by the Cupbearer for two years now.
 - b)In Pharaoh's dream, seven fat cows come out of the waters of the Nile and are consumed by seven gaunt cows; then in a second dream, seven fat heads of wheat are devoured by seven thin heads
 - c)Egypt's magicians were impressive, yet they cannot interpret the dreams. Pharaoh knew they were significant, but no one could give a suitable explanation of them.

- 2.(9-14) Joseph is called in to interpret Pharaoh's dreams
 - a)The butler finally remembers Joseph (and confesses the wrong he has done against him); he recommends Joseph as a man who can interpret dreams.
 - b)When it was in the timing of God to get Joseph out of prison, it happened very quickly. Often, we feel there are long periods of time when God isn't doing anything; but when His timing is right, everything can come together in an instant
 - (1)During those times when we think God isn't doing anything, He is doing the work most important to Him: developing our character and deepening our faith.

- 3.(14-16) Joseph comes before Pharaoh - **"15 Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I had a dream, and no-one can interpret it. But I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it." 16 "I cannot do it," Joseph replied to Pharaoh, "but God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires."**
 - a)Pharaoh gives Joseph a golden opportunity to glorify himself, but Joseph uses it to glorify God.

- 4.(17-24) Pharaoh tells Joseph his dream
 - a)More details of the dream come out on the second telling; when the skinny cows ate the fat cows, they themselves did not become fat; they were just as ugly as at the beginning

B.JOSEPH INTERPRETS PHARAOH'S DREAM

- 1.(25-32) Joseph interprets the dream
 - a)The seven cows and seven heads of grain both represent seven years; there will be seven years of plenty and abundance, then seven years of want and famine, and the years of famine will be so bad that the good years will be forgotten
 - b)Joseph sees the confirming hand of God in the repetition of the dream - **"32 The reason the dream was given to Pharaoh in two forms is that the matter has been firmly decided by God, and God will do it soon."**

- 2.(33-36) Joseph gives his advice to Pharaoh
 - a)He apparently recognized that God had given this word to Pharaoh so he could prepare for the coming crisis.
 - b)Note: In Joseph's interpretations [41:25-32] and his advice to Pharaoh [41:33-36], we see an illustration of the Word of Knowledge and the Word of Wisdom.

- 3.(37-45) Joseph's promotion to a position of great authority
- a)"Can we find anyone like this man, one in whom is the spirit of God?" - this is the first mention in the Bible of the Holy Spirit coming upon a man.
 - (1)cf. Acts 5:32 - "We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him."
 - b)Joseph has gone from the pit to the pinnacle; but it took some thirteen years.
 - c)Joseph is a good example of man who seemed to have all the gifts and talents for leadership; but God put him in a place where his character would be developed, and that took many years. Gifts and talents may be impressive and immediate; but character always takes time.
 - (1)Jewish legends say that each letter of Joseph's Egyptian name means something; linking them all together, the name is "Seer - redeemer - prophet - supporter - interpreter of dreams - clever - discreet - wise"
 - (a)More likely, the name means God Speaks and He Lives, referring both to God's word coming through Joseph, his own preservation, and the way he has preserved the country
 - (b)Jewish legends (fabrications, really) say that Asenath was really the daughter of Dinah and Hamor, who had been abandoned at the border of Egypt, and she was adopted into the family of an Egyptian priest

C. JOSEPH'S LIFE AS PRIME MINISTER

- 1.(46-49) The seven years of plenty come to pass
- a)Joseph stores up the grain during the seven years of plenty
 - b)It was customary for the Pharaoh to take 10% of the grain as a tax; essentially, he doubled the taxes over the next seven years (verse 34 mentions one-fifth, that is, 20%)
- 2.(50-52) Joseph's two sons and his state of heart
- a)From his Egyptian wife, Joseph fathers Manasseh, which means "forgetfulness," for God made Joseph to forget all the previous pain and trial in his life. His second son is Ephraim, which means "fruitfulness," because God has made Joseph fruitful in Egypt
 - (1)Note: The fact that he named his first son Manasseh probably indicates he was stilling trying to forget his past pain and wounds. This is indicated by his reactions when he sees his brothers again.
 - b)Joseph did not forget the faith of his fathers. Even though he had risen to great glory in Egypt and had an Egyptian wife, his children are given Hebrew, not Egyptian, names
- 3.(53-57) The seven years of famine begin
- a)Because of Joseph's preparation, Egypt becomes a supply source for the whole region experiencing the famine.
 - b)Joseph's family in Canaan also suffered from this famine.
 - (1)c. And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. (Romans 8:28). Joseph did not have Romans 8:28 on paper, but he had it in his heart. You may have it on paper, but do you have it in your heart?

XXXI.GENESIS 42 - JOSEPH MEETS HIS BROTHERS IN EGYPT

A.THE SONS OF JACOB COME TO EGYPT

1.(1-4) Jacob sends his sons to Egypt to buy grain

a)The impression we have of Jacob from this chapter is of a man who is bitter and pessimistic because of calamity that has struck his life.

(1)a. Jacob must have noticed how strangely they looked at each other when Egypt was mentioned; because the brothers knew Joseph had likely been sold as a slave there. Their conscience made them feel terrible any time Egypt was mentioned

(a)i. "The father has noted the look of perplexity in his son's faces" . . . literally, the phrase means "to look questioningly one at the other" (Leupold)

(b)ii. "The word Egypt in their ears must have sounded like the word rope in a the house of a man who has hanged himself." (Barnhouse)

(c)iii. Joseph's brothers had lived with a terrible secret these twenty years. They never talked about it, but it never left them - any mention of Joseph or Egypt would dredge up the guilt. They needed to be set free from the power of this terrible secret!

(2)In keeping with this attitude, he demands that Benjamin be left behind. Though he has eleven sons before him, only one is a son of his beloved wife Rachel, and Jacob feels he must protect him

(a)i. Yet, if Jacob only knew! If he could only trust the hand of God that he cannot see! In fact, the only reason there is grain in Egypt to provide for their needs is because God sent Joseph on ahead. God knows what He is doing!

b)Is a famine good? No, but God can and does use material want and lack in our lives to get us to do things that we normally would never do.

2.(5-6) The sons of Jacob bow down before Joseph

a)They know well that in this time of famine, their lives literally depend on this Egyptian official - so they pay him great respect by bowing to him

b)This must have reminded Joseph of the dream that his brothers would bow down to him (Genesis 37:5-8)

(1) Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery to defeat his dreams (Genesis 37:19-20). Instead, they provided the way the dreams would be fulfilled!

(2)The great truth of God's providence is that He can and does use the evil actions of man to further His good plan; this never excuses man's evil, but it means that God's wisdom and goodness is greater than man's evil.

3.(7-17) Joseph interrogates his brothers and puts them into prison

a)Joseph, speaking through an interpreter, does not reveal who he is to his brothers, but instead treats them roughly

(1)Some commentators believe that if it were up to Joseph, he would have revealed himself to his brothers right then and there - but God recalled the dreams to his mind, and guided him to be an instrument for the correction and restoration of the brothers

(2)b. Why is Joseph doing this? Why is he playing these games with his brothers? Whatever the reason, God will use it to bring about restoration and repentance in the hearts of the brothers

(a)i. God can, and must, sometimes use means we think are harsh to call us to where He wants us to be. We must never resent it, because it is the hardness of our hearts that has demanded it. Before I was afflicted I went astray, But now I keep Your word. (Psalm 119:67)

(3)“One is no more” - that was a lie, and the brothers knew it. They had every reason to believe that Joseph was not dead, but living a horrible life of slavery. Perhaps they had repeated the lie to themselves so often that they had come to believe it

b)Perhaps keeping them in prison was intended to give them a taste of what they did to him.

4.(18-20) Joseph gives the terms for their release from prison

a)He also wanted them to know that they could trust him, for he said **“I fear God”**.

b)Joseph's demand is clear: prove you are honest by bringing back the brother you say you have at home.

5.(21-24) The guilty conscience of Joseph's brothers at work

a)They think this mess is because of the way they had treated Joseph - their consciences are pricked. Is this a good thing? Probably; the quickness with which they associated these events with their sin indicates that it has never left their thoughts.

(1)A guilty conscience sees every trouble as sin's penalty

(2)Our government has something called the 'Federal Conscience Fund', which collects money people send in because they know they've cheated the government in some way. People have sent in money because they took army blankets for souvenirs, for cheating on postage, income tax, etc. One man wrote the IRS and said, "I cheated on my taxes and can't sleep at night. Here is a check for \$100. If I still can't sleep, I'll send the rest I owe."

b)Some have described the conscience as the "sundial of the soul"; it tells time well enough when there is light, but in darkness it is of no use. At night, you could shine a flashlight on a sundial and make it read any time you want it to. When the light of God's word shines on our conscience, it is reliable and trustworthy

c)As Joseph sees this work of God in the consciences of his brothers, he is overcome with emotion - perhaps God is working in their hearts.

d)Joseph retains Simeon as a prisoner, to insure that the brothers will return.

(1)Simeon is not mentioned as having a prominent role in the selling of Joseph, as both Reuben and Judah are (Genesis 37:21-28), so we don't know exactly why Simeon was chosen - perhaps he volunteered.

B. JACOB'S SONS RETURN HOME TO CANAAN

1.(25-35) The brothers return to Jacob, tell him the story and find all their money returned

a)They are already suspected of being spies; now, they could be accused as thieves!

b)Note their first response - **“What is this that God has done to us?”**

2.(36) Jacob's reaction: All these things are against me - **“36 Their father Jacob said to them, “You have deprived me of my children. Joseph is no more and Simeon is no more, and now you want to take Benjamin. Everything is against me!”**

a)Note the contrast between Jacob and Joseph; Joseph had far worse circumstances, but he never took the attitude all these things are against me

(1)Jacob's song: "No one loves me, this I know. My misfortunes tell me so."

(2)The motto of too many Christians is “all these things are against me”.

Instead, it should be Romans 8:28 - “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”

3.(37-38) Jacob refuses to let Benjamin go back to Egypt with them - **" 37 Then Reuben said to his father, "You may put both of my sons to death if I do not bring him back to you. Entrust him to my care, and I will bring him back." 38 But Jacob said, "My son will not go down there with you; his brother is dead and he is the only one left. If harm comes to him on the journey you are taking, you will bring my grey head down to the grave in sorrow."**

a)Apparently, Jacob didn't think too much of Simeon! It doesn't matter to him that this son spends his time in an Egyptian jail

XXXII.GENESIS 43 - JOSEPH MEETS HIS BROTHERS A SECOND TIME

A.JACOB DECIDES TO LET THE BROTHERS RETURN TO EGYPT WITH BENJAMIN

1.1. (1-2) Jacob gives the order to go get more food

a)Necessity is driving Jacob to do something he would normally never do.

2.(3-10) Judah convinces his father to let them go to Egypt with Benjamin - **"8 Then Judah said to Israel his father, "Send the boy along with me and we will go at once, so that we and you and our children may live and not die. 9 I myself will guarantee his safety; you can hold me personally responsible for him. If I do not bring him back to you and set him here before you, I will bear the blame before you all my life."**

a)Judah puts his own life on the line as surety for Benjamin; this is the first good thing we see Judah doing - previously, he was the one who had proposed the sale of Joseph; he was the one who wronged his daughter-in-law Tamar.

3.(11-14) Jacob sends them with money and gifts for the Egyptian leader - **"11 Then their father Israel said to them, "If it must be, then do this: Put some of the best products of the land in your bags and take them down to the man as a gift--a little balm and a little honey, some spices and myrrh, some pistachio nuts and almonds. 12 Take double the amount of silver with you, for you must return the silver that was put back into the mouths of your sacks. Perhaps it was a mistake. 13 Take your brother also and go back to the man at once. 14 And may God Almighty grant you mercy before the man so that he will let your other brother and Benjamin come back with you. As for me, if I am bereaved, I am bereaved."**

a)Perhaps Jacob is remembering how well it seemed to work when he showered Esau with gifts (Genesis 33:10-11)

(1)In verse 15, they take double money with them to Egypt, to buy grain and the Egyptian leader's favor. If there are ten brothers going to Egypt, and they take double money, there are twenty units of money. Joseph was sold for twenty pieces of silver (Genesis 37:28), and the words for silver and money are the same

B.THE SONS OF JACOB FACE JOSEPH AGAIN

1.1. (15-18) Joseph invites the brothers to dinner

a)They figure that this mysterious Egyptian is just setting them up.

2.(19-25) The brothers explain about the money, and are treated well in Joseph's house

a)The brothers were expecting to be taken as slaves and have everything stolen (43:18); but verse 24 shows the kindness that Joseph showed to his brothers; he is winning them with love and goodness

(1)i. The brothers received the blessings of love and kindness from Joseph without knowing who he was. In the same way, God showers love and blessing upon man, even when man doesn't know who is blessing

- 3.(26-30) An emotionally charged meeting with Joseph and his brothers
- a)Joseph is especially affected at meeting his only full brother, Benjamin - whom he last saw as a small child.
- 4.(31-32) The dinner tables are segregated - **"32 They served him by himself, the brothers by themselves, and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves, because Egyptians could not eat with Hebrews, for that is detestable to Egyptians."**
- a)At that time, Egypt was a racist society, believing that Egyptians had come from gods, and all other peoples had come from lesser origins. There was no social mixing with foreigners in the Egypt of Joseph's day.
 - (1)"It is known from Herodotus that Egyptians so abhorred things foreign, that priests, at least, ate and drank nothing that was imported, nor would they use utensils for eating that had been used by Greeks." (Leupold)
 - (2)God not only takes the family of Israel out of the corrupt environment of Canaan, but He puts them among a racist people who will not intermarry or even mingle with them - so He sent Joseph on ahead to make the arrangements!
 - (a)Herein is the wisdom of God: God will bring the entire family of Jacob into Egypt, where they will be isolated from the surrounding people for some 400 years. In that time, they will multiply greatly, increasing to the millions. If they remained in Canaan, they would have been assimilated by the corrupt and godless peoples around them. -
 - i) the danger of which has already been demonstrated by the rape of Dinah and its aftermath (Genesis 34) and the sin of Judah and his sons with Tamar (Genesis 38)
- 5.(33-34) Joseph arranges them by order of birth; he favors Benjamin
- a)This arrangement of the brothers was amazing to them because they sensed it couldn't have happened by chance;
 - b)Why does Benjamin get a portion five times greater? Joseph may just want to show special blessing to his only full brother; but he may also want to see how the brothers react when the younger brother (in this case, Benjamin) is favored - because they resented it so much when Joseph was favored by his father.
 - (1)Perhaps he wants to see if there has been a change in the hearts of his brothers; or if they are the same men who threw him into a pit and were deaf to his cries for help
 - (2)If we fail in a test somewhere, God will make arrangements for us to "take that test" again sometime. A reason to take the test well the first time!

XXXIII. GENESIS 44 - JOSEPH TESTS HIS BROTHERS

A. JOSEPH SENDS THEM ON THEIR WAY

- 1.(1-5) Joseph sets up his brothers with another plant of money
 - a)As before, the grain sacks of the brothers are topped off by the money they paid for the grain; but this time, Joseph has his special silver cup put in the sack of Benjamin
 - b)Why is Joseph doing this? Joseph's plan may have been an attempt to keep Benjamin [his only full-brother] with him
 - c)Did Joseph use that cup for divination? We know that the ancients did use sacred cups as divination devices, and it is possible that Joseph did also, because there was no specific revelation from God yet that such a practice was forbidden. Yet, it was not Joseph who said that he used the cup for divination, but his servant - who may have wrongly assumed that Joseph's wisdom was more due to this cup than to his relationship with God

- 2.(6-13) The brothers claim they are innocent of theft, yet the cup is found in Benjamin's sack
 - a)They are so confident they do not have the cup that they say the thief can be killed, and all others taken as slaves

- 3.(14-17) Judah commits himself and all the brothers to stick with Benjamin, even as slaves in Egypt - **"16 "What can we say to my lord?" Judah replied. "What can we say? How can we prove our innocence? God has uncovered your servants' guilt. We are now my lord's slaves--we ourselves and the one who was found to have the cup."**
 - a)God has been working in their hearts: Judah figures that they will be resigned to live as slaves in Egypt for the rest of their lives, because they sold Joseph as a slave some twenty years before this
 - (1)The brothers were innocent of stealing the cup, but guilty of greater sins. In the same way, we pride ourselves because we are innocent of some sin or another, yet we are guilty of far greater. You can't hide from your sin; time does not erase the guilt of your sin - only the blood of Jesus can!
 - (2)This resignation to slavery is significant considering these are middle aged men, who come from lives of privilege and status
 - b)Judah insists that the brothers will stick by Benjamin, though he is the favored and more greatly blessed son. If they quickly abandoned Benjamin, it would show there was little change of heart from when they abandoned Joseph

B. JUDAH INTERCEDES FOR BENJAMIN

- 1.(18-32) Judah tells Joseph the whole story from the beginning
 - a)H.C. Leupold wrote, "This is one of the manliest, most straightforward speeches ever delivered by any man. For depth of feeling and sincerity of purpose it stands unexcelled." Barnhouse said it was "the most moving address in all the Word of God."
 - b)Twenty years before, Joseph's brothers showed a callous disregard of their father when reporting Joseph's "death" (Genesis 37:31-33); now Judah shows that they are greatly concerned for the feelings and welfare of their father - another evidence of a change of heart

2.(32-34) Judah lays down his life for Benjamin and his father

- a)Twenty years ago, these brothers did not care about Joseph, Benjamin, or even their father, but now, Judah is willing to lay down his life for Benjamin
- b)Judah is willing to be a substitutionary sacrifice, out of love for his father and brethren
- c)Remember: Judah was the one who suggested selling Joseph twenty years earlier!
(Genesis 37:26-27) Now he will lay down his life for the favored brother.
(1)Note: Moses was willing to offer himself for the salvation of Israel, and so was Paul

(a)"31 So Moses went back to the LORD and said, "Oh, what a great sin these people have committed! They have made themselves gods of gold. 32 But now, please forgive their sin--but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written." (Exodus 32:31-32)

(b)"2 I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. 3 For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, 4 the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises." (Romans 9:2-4)

3.Review: evidence of the changed hearts of Joseph's brothers

- a)They do not resent it when Benjamin is given the favored portion (43:34)
- b)They trust each other and do not accuse one another of wrong when accused of stealing the silver cup (44:9)
- c)They do not abandon Benjamin, but humble themselves for his sake (44:13-14)
- d)They know their predicament is the result of their sin against Joseph (44:16)
- e)They offer themselves as slaves (44:16)
- f)They are concerned for how this might affect their father (44:29-31)
- g)Judah is willing to be made a substitutionary sacrifice for his brother (44:33)

XXXIV.GENESIS 45 - JOSEPH IS REUNITED WITH HIS BROTHERS

A.JOSEPH REVEALS HIMSELF TO HIS BROTHERS

1.(1-3) The emotional revelation

- a)Because of the punishment they anticipated, the great emotion of Joseph, his manner of revelation, and the total shock of knowing that Joseph is not only alive but right in front of them, there is no wonder that the brothers are terrified - the Hebrew word for terrified (bahal) means "amazed", "frightened", or "terrified"
- b)This is a shadow of what will happen with the Jews see Jesus for who He is: "And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn." (Zechariah 12:10)

2.(4-8) Joseph's testimony - **"4 Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come close to me." When they had done so, he said, "I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt! 5 And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. 6 For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will not be ploughing and reaping. 7 But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance. 8 "So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt."**

- a)Joseph does not diminish what the brothers did, but puts it in the right perspective: **"it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. "**
 - (1)When we have been sinned against, we are tempted to play "let's pretend you never did it," or to fail to see the over-arching hand of God in every circumstance
 - (2)So why was Joseph in Egypt? Was it because of the sin of his brothers or because of the good plan of God? Both!
- b)All Joseph's sorrows were for a purpose: to preserve this family and provide the conditions for it to become a nation. Joseph was a victim of men - but God turned it around for His glory. None of it was for a loss; God had a purpose!
- c)Joseph realized that, because God is in control, all things can work together for good

B.JOSEPH SENDS HIS BROTHERS HOME

1.(9-15) He gives instructions for them to go home, get their father and be protected from the famine

- a)What a message to deliver: Thus says your son Joseph! Can there be any greater news than that the favored son, who was given up for dead, is now alive?
- b)Joseph kissed all his brothers and wept over them; he did not exclude those who had been especially cruel to him
- c)After this, they talked. There was a lot to catch up on!

2.(16-24) Pharaoh and Joseph send the brothers on their way with many gifts

- a)The sons of Israel were given transportation, provision, garments, riches - but why? Because of who their brother was. Pharaoh blessed the sons of Jacob for Joseph's sake
 - (1)"To return to Canaan with 'carts from Egypt' was the cultural equivalent of landing a jumbo jet among a tribe of isolated savages. It would be the stuff legends are made of." (Boice)

b) Joseph knew that a wonderful reunion doesn't mean the end of all strife - "24 **Then he sent his brothers away, and as they were leaving he said to them, "Don't quarrel on the way!"**

3.(25-28) Jacob hears the good news that Joseph lives

a) Jacob was told Joseph was dead, and believed it. Now he is told Joseph is alive, and he does not believe it - until his sons tell him the words of Joseph and show him the blessings that have come into their lives through Joseph. Then he believes Joseph is alive, though he has not yet seen him.

(1) The only way people will know Jesus is alive is if we tell them His words and show them His blessings in our lives

b) What can change a man's testimony from "**everything is against me**" (42:36) to "**I'm convinced! My son Joseph is still alive.**"? Only the news that the favored son is not dead, but lives

XXXV. GENESIS 46 - THE FAMILY OF JACOB COMES TO EGYPT

A. THE FAMILY COMES TO EGYPT

1.(1-4) God speaks to Jacob on the way to Egypt - "2 **And God spoke to Israel in a vision at night and said, "Jacob! Jacob!" "Here I am," he replied. 3 "I am God, the God of your father," he said. "Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you into a great nation there. 4 I will go down to Egypt with you, and I will surely bring you back again. And Joseph's own hand will close your eyes."**

a) Jacob stopped at Beersheba, the southernmost outpost of the Promised Land on the way to Egypt, to honor God with sacrifices

(1) Both Abraham (Genesis 22:19) and Isaac (Genesis 26:23) lived for a time at Beersheba

(2) Israel's grandfather Abraham had planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba many years before, and had called on the name of the Lord there (Genesis 21:33); Isaac had received a special promise from God and built an altar for sacrifice there, calling on the name of the Lord (Genesis 26:24-25); it was probably at this very place where Israel sacrificed

b) God's assurance to Jacob seems to answer a fear or hesitation in his mind

(1) i. Jacob may have remembered that Abraham had gone to Egypt in a time of famine once before, and it was a manifestation of his unbelief and much evil eventually came from it (Genesis 12:10-20). He also may have remembered that his father Isaac had been particularly told by God not to go down to Egypt (Genesis 26:2)

(2) ii. Also, Jacob would know that God had told Abraham that his descendants would be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years (Genesis 15:13); as Jacob leads his family into this land that is not theirs, he knows what the future will hold - yet at the same time, he knows Who holds the future

c) More than forty years before, when Jacob was about to leave the Promised Land, God spoke to him in a dream (Genesis 28:12-17); now when he is about to leave the land again, God brings reassurance through a dream again

d) God also declares what His purpose was in bringing this large family or clan down to Egypt: "**I will make you into a great nation there.**" Because of the exclusive, segregated nature of Egyptian life, Israel's descendants will be able to grow as a large, distinct nation there.

2.(5-27) Listing of Jacob's family that came with him to Egypt - **"26 All those who went to Egypt with Jacob--those who were his direct descendants, not counting his sons' wives-- numbered sixty-six persons. 27 With the two sons who had been born to Joseph in Egypt, the members of Jacob's family, which went to Egypt, were seventy in all."**

a)The sons of Judah are of special note, because this is the Messianic lineage; the line of descent so far goes like this: Abraham - Isaac - Jacob - Judah - Perez - Hezron (Luke 3:33)

b)The total number of males of this clan was seventy; sixty-six, plus Jacob himself, Joseph, and his two sons. This large family will become a nation of more than two million over the next four hundred years!

(1)i. Like many great works of God, Israel had a slow beginning. From the time God called Abraham, it took at least 25 years to add one son, Isaac. It took Isaac 60 years to add another son of Israel, Jacob. It took fifty or sixty years for Jacob to have twelve sons and one daughter. But in 430 years, Israel will leave Egypt with 600,000 men. It took this family 215 years to grow from one to 70. In another 430 years, they grew to two million

- Note: How can 46:27 say that there were seventy all together of the family of Israel, when Stephen in Acts 7:14 says it was seventy-five?
 - Stephen is quoting from the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, which says seventy-five; the number in the Septuagint is not wrong, just arrived at in a different way, specifically adding five more sons (or grandsons) of Joseph born in Egypt
 - In the speech of Stephen the number is stated to be seventy-five ("After this, Joseph sent for his father Jacob and his whole family, seventy-five in all." - Acts 7:14); but as that estimate includes five sons of Ephraim and Manasseh (1Chron. 7:14-20), born in Egypt, the two accounts coincide.
 - 14 The descendants of Manasseh: Asriel was his descendant through his Aramean concubine. She gave birth to Makir the father of Gilead. 15 Makir took a wife from among the Huppites and Shuppites. His sister's name was Maacah. Another descendant was named Zelophehad, who had only daughters. 16 Makir's wife Maacah gave birth to a son and named him Peresh. His brother was named Sheresh, and his sons were Ulam and Rakem. 17 The son of Ulam: Bedan. These were the sons of Gilead son of Makir, the son of Manasseh. 18 His sister Hammoleketh gave birth to Ishhod, Abiezer and Mahlah. 19 The sons of Shemida were: Ahian, Shechem, Likhi and Aniam. 20 The descendants of Ephraim: Shuthelah, Bered his son, Tahath his son, Eleadah his son, Tahath his son, (1 Chronicles 7:14-20).

B. THE FAMILY SETTLES IN THE LAND OF GOSHEN

1.(28-30) The emotional meeting between Joseph and his father

a)This reuniting of Israel with Joseph is quite a transition from "all things are against me"! (Genesis 42:36)

2.(31-34) Joseph tells his family of the plan to ask for the area of Goshen

a)The Egyptians were agricultural in the sense of farming crops; they considered sheep unclean, and therefore detested shepherds

XXXVI.GENESIS 47 - JACOB MEETS PHARAOH, THE FAMILY SETTLES IN EGYPT

A.JACOB MEETS PHARAOH

- 1.(1-6) The brothers ask for the land of Goshen and Pharaoh gives them the best of the land
 - a)This blessing is all because of Joseph; he has saved Egypt - and much of the world - from terrible famine, and now the whole family of Israel is blessed and receives an inheritance because of Joseph
- 2.(7-10) Jacob blesses Pharaoh
 - a)Jacob confessed that he was on a pilgrimage; he knew that his real home was somewhere else - heaven - **"9 And Jacob said to Pharaoh, "The years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty. My years have been few and difficult, and they do not equal the years of the pilgrimage of my fathers."**
 - b)Pharaoh acknowledges that Jacob is a man of God by accepting his blessing; in the Egyptian religion, Pharaoh was no mere man; he was a god - the human embodiment of Ra, the sun god. It is all the more remarkable that he allows himself to be blessed by Israel!
- 3.(11-12) The family settles in Goshen and Joseph provides for them.

B.JOSEPH DEALS WITH THE FAMINE

- 1.(13-14) In the early years of the famine, money pours into the treasury of Egypt, because it is the only place to buy food
- 2.2. (15-26) In the later years of the famine, Joseph arranges ways for the people to purchase food with whatever they have to give
 - a)In the process, the power and wealth of Pharaoh is multiplied greatly; often, in times of national crisis, the power of central government increases
 - b)Joseph wasn't unfair; he fed the people when they would have starved, and in return asked for one-fifth (20%) annually from the produce of the land. Many people today would be happy with only a 20% tax!

C.ISRAEL ANTICIPATES HIS DEATH

- 1.(27) The multiplication of the family of Israel - **"27 Now the Israelites settled in Egypt in the region of Goshen. They acquired property there and were fruitful and increased greatly in number."**
 - a)Grew and multiplied exceedingly is certainly true; in some four hundred years this will be a nation of some two million or more peoples
 - b)Henry Morris calculates that the initial group of five (Jacob and his four wives) grew into a clan of about 100 in fifty years (the 100 includes the seventy of 46:27 plus a few wives of the sons not mentioned and grandchildren). That is a growth rate of just over 6% per year. At that rate there would be several million descendants by the time of the Exodus 430 years later.
- 2.(28-31) Israel makes Joseph vow to bury him in Canaan
 - a)Israel knew that Egypt was not his home; he belonged in the land which was promised to him and his descendants; he clearly believed and understood that he was the inheritor of Abraham's covenant

XXXVII. GENESIS 48 - JACOB BLESSES JOSEPH'S SONS

A. JACOB CALLS FOR HIS SONS

1. (1-4) Jacob's testimony of God's promise - **1 Some time later Joseph was told, "Your father is ill." So he took his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim along with him. 2 When Jacob was told, "Your son Joseph has come to you," Israel rallied his strength and sat up on the bed. 3 Jacob said to Joseph, "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and there he blessed me 4 and said to me, 'I am going to make you fruitful and will increase your numbers. I will make you a community of peoples, and I will give this land as an everlasting possession to your descendants after you.'**

a) Luz is another name for Bethel, where Jacob first met God; Jacob still remembers this outstanding encounter he had with the Lord

b) Jacob's phrasing is reminiscent of exact promises that God made to Abraham in Genesis 17 (see 17:2, 6, and 8); Abraham was careful to pass down the exact words of God's covenant with him to the inheritors of the covenant, because the exact words of God are important!

2.2. (5-6) Jacob adopts Joseph's sons as his own - **5 "Now then, your two sons born to you in Egypt before I came to you here will be reckoned as mine; Ephraim and Manasseh will be mine, just as Reuben and Simeon are mine. 6 Any children born to you after them will be yours; in the territory they inherit they will be reckoned under the names of their brothers. 7 As I was returning from Paddan, to my sorrow Rachel died in the land of Canaan while we were still on the way, a little distance from Ephrath. So I buried her there beside the road to Ephrath" (that is, Bethlehem).**

a) Reuben and Simeon were the first and second born of Israel; Jacob is showing that these two sons of Joseph are being adopted into the family at the highest level (as if they were the first and second born)

(1) And, perhaps, they are "replacements" for Reuben and Simeon, who had in a sense disqualified themselves from positions of status and leadership in Israel's family because of their sin (Genesis 34:25; 35:22)

b) Jacob's adoption of Manasseh and Ephraim explains why there can be 12 tribes listed in different combinations; because of this adoption, there are actually 13 sons of Israel; the 12 were born, but Joseph was divided into two tribes

(1) 'There are no less than 20 different ways of listing the tribes in the Old Testament.'

c) Twelve is a number often associated with government or administration in God's eyes; there are twelve tribes, twelve apostles, twelve princes of Ishmael, twelve pillars on Moses' altar, twelve stones on the high priest's breastplate, twelve cakes of showbread, twelve silver platters, silver bowls, and gold pans for the service of the tabernacle, twelve spies to search out the land, twelve memorial stones, twelve governors under Solomon, twelve stones in Elijah's altar, twelve in each group of musicians and singers for Israel's worship, twelve hours in a day, twelve months in a year, twelve Ephesian men filled with the Holy Spirit, twelve thousand from twelve tribes sealed and preserved through the tribulation, heaven has twelve gates of twelve pearls, and twelve angels at the gates, the New Jerusalem has twelve foundations, each with the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, its length, breadth, and height are all twelve thousand furlongs, and the tree of life in heaven has twelve fruits. The number twelve is special to God!

d) v.7 may indicate that Jacob saw Joseph's sons as substitutes for sons he may have hoped Rachel would have had if she'd lived.

B. JACOB BLESSES MANASSEH AND EPHRAIM

1. (8-14) Jacob calls for Joseph's sons, to bless them - **8 When Israel saw the sons of Joseph, he asked, "Who are these?" 9 "They are the sons God has given me here," Joseph said to his father. Then Israel said, "Bring them to me so that I may bless them." 10 Now Israel's eyes were failing because of old age, and he could hardly see. So Joseph brought his sons close to him, and his father kissed them and embraced them. 11 Israel said to Joseph, "I never expected to see your face again, and now God has allowed me to see your children too." 12 Then Joseph removed them from Israel's knees and bowed down with his face to the ground. 13 And Joseph took both of them, Ephraim on his right towards Israel's left hand and Manasseh on his left towards Israel's right hand, and brought them close to him. 14 But Israel reached out his right hand and put it on Ephraim's head, though he was the younger, and crossing his arms, he put his left hand on Manasseh's head, even though Manasseh was the firstborn.**

- a) Joseph shows great reverence to his father
- b) The right hand in the Bible always has with it the idea of the favored position, because generally speaking, the right hand is the hand of strength and skill
 - (1) The right hand is associated with God's strength (Exodus 15:6), favor (Psalm 16:11), and help (Psalm 20:6); it is for good reason that Jesus is described as sitting at the right hand of the Father (Mark 14:62)
- c) Jacob was guiding his hands knowingly; he deliberately chose the second-born to receive a greater blessing than the first born

2.3. (15-16) The blessing of Jacob upon Manasseh and Ephraim - **15 Then he blessed Joseph and said, "May the God before Whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God Who has been my shepherd all my life to this day, 16 the Angel who has delivered me from all harm--may He bless these boys. May they be called by my name and the names of my fathers Abraham and Isaac, and may they increase greatly upon the earth."**

- a) He gives the same blessing for both sons, but the son of the right hand will receive a greater proportion of the blessing
 - (1) This was fulfilled in Israel's history - both tribes were blessed, but Ephraim was greater as a tribe, even to the point where the name "Ephraim" was used to refer to the whole northern nation of Israel (Isaiah 7:8, 17; 11:13)
- b) Jacob's testimony is a testimony of grace, not personal merit; he is not recounting how faithful he has been to God, but how faithful God has been to him
- c) This is the first mention in the Bible of God being a shepherd to His people

3. (17-20) Jacob answers Joseph's objection about the order of blessing - **17 When Joseph saw his father placing his right hand on Ephraim's head he was displeased; so he took hold of his father's hand to move it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. 18 Joseph said to him, "No, my father, this one is the firstborn; put your right hand on his head." 19 But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know. He too will become a people, and he too will become great. Nevertheless, his younger brother will be greater than he, and his descendants will become a group of nations." 20 He blessed them that day and said, "In your name will Israel pronounce this blessing: 'May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh.'" So he put Ephraim ahead of Manasseh.**

- a) Ephraim was not the firstborn; but he had that position in God's view; "For I am a Father to Israel, And Ephraim is My firstborn" (Jeremiah 31:9)

b) This shows how the idea of "firstborn" in the Bible is often a position of pre-eminence, not necessarily "first out of the womb"

(1) David had the position of firstborn, though he was the youngest son.

(a) "So he asked Jesse, "Are these all the sons you have?" "There is still the youngest," Jesse answered, "but he is tending the sheep." Samuel said, "Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives." (1 Samuel 16:11)

(b) "I will also appoint him my firstborn, the most exalted of the kings of the earth." (Psalms 89:27)

(2) Jesus has the pre-eminent position of firstborn (Colossians 1:15), though this does not mean that Jesus is literally the first "born" creature of God, because Jesus was not created

4. (21-22) Jacob makes a personal bequest to Joseph - **21 Then Israel said to Joseph, "I am about to die, but God will be with you and take you back to the land of your fathers. 22 And to you, as one who is over your brothers, I give the ridge of land I took from the Amorites with my sword and my bow."**

a) Apparently, while still in Canaan, Jacob battled for control of a portion of land from the Amorites, and he deeded that land to Joseph and his descendants - to be appropriated some 400 years later!

b) "**God will be with you**" completes a wonderful work regarding Jacob's recognition of God's presence his life:

(1) I am with you (Genesis 28:15)

(2) God gives the young believer every possible assurance of His presence and grace

(3) I will be with you (Genesis 31:3)

(4) God expects the growing believer to trust that He will be with us, even when we only have the promise of His presence

(5) God . . . has been with me (Genesis 31:5)

(6) God gives a glorious testimony to the mature believer, able to say how God has been with us, even when we haven't felt His presence in the way we wished

(7) God will be with you (Genesis 48:21)

(8) God gives the mature believer the opportunity to encourage others with the promise of God's presence

c) This is truly a passing of the torch on to Joseph

(1) "If Abraham dies, there is Isaac; and if Isaac dies, there is Jacob; and if Jacob dies, there is Joseph; and if Joseph dies, Ephraim and Manasseh survive. The Lord shall never lack a champion to bear his standard high among the sons of men. Only let us pray God to raise up more faithful ministers day and night. We have plenty of a sort, but, oh, for more that will weigh out sixteen ounces to the pound of gospel in such a way that people will receive it. We have too much of fine language, too much of florid eloquence, and little full and plain gospel preaching, but God will keep up the apostolic succession, never fear of that. When Stephen is dying, Paul is not far off. When Elijah is taken up, he leaves his mantle behind him." (Spurgeon)

5. See 'JOSEPH TYPE OF JESUS' in Appendix

XXXVIII.GENESIS 49 - THE BLESSING OF THE SONS OF JACOB

A.THE CRYPTIC BLESSINGS

1.(1-2) What will befall the sons of Jacob in the last days? - **1 Then Jacob called for his sons and said: "Gather round so that I can tell you what will happen to you in days to come. 2 "Assemble and listen, sons of Jacob; listen to your father Israel.**

a)Jacob, as the heir to Isaac and Abraham, pronounces a "blessing" upon each son

b)But some of these are not so much "blessings" as they are prophesies regarding what God will do with these tribes in the future

(1)This is the first conscious prophecy spoken by a human being in the Bible; there have been many prophecies announced by God (such as the promise of the triumph of the seed of the woman in Genesis 3:15), and other veiled prophecies by men, but this is the first knowing prophecy of the Bible

c)At the very beginning of the blessing, Jacob realizes that he is both Jacob and Israel, and that his sons are sons of both. This is a place of spiritual maturity, to realize both what God has made us and what we have to battle against

2.(3-4) REUBEN: you shall not excel - **3 "Reuben, you are my firstborn, my might, the first sign of my strength, excelling in honour, excelling in power. 4 Turbulent as the waters, you will no longer excel, for you went up onto your father's bed, onto my couch and defiled it.**

a)As the firstborn of the family, Reuben had claim to the inheritance rights of the firstborn, but he forfeit it through immorality.

(1)i. Reuben's immorality with his father's concubine Bilhah (the mother of his brothers Dan and Naphtali) is recorded in Genesis 35:22

b)Because of Reuben's instability (turbulent as the waters), the birthright ends up being divided. Usually, the firstborn would be the spiritual and social leader of the "clan"; but the rights of blessing, priesthood, and rulership will be divided among the brothers rather than centralized in one

(1)i. Though we see the great wisdom of God in "decentralizing" authority among the sons of Israel, Reuben pays a high price for his instability - as much as anything, God looks for stable character in those who would lead His people

c)The Tribe of Reuben...

(1)The rebellion of Korah [Num. 16]

(2)Took own inheritance East of Jordan [Num. 22]

(3)Built unauthorized Altar [Josh. 22]

(4)Did not answer Deborah's call to arms [Judges 5:15]

d)The tribe of Reuben never does excel: there comes no prophet, no judge, or no king from the tribe of Reuben. Reuben is an example of how the first can be last (Matthew 19:30)

3.(5-7) SIMEON and LEVI - **5 "Simeon and Levi are brothers--their swords are weapons of violence. 6 Let me not enter their council, let me not join their assembly, for they have killed men in their anger and hamstring oxen as they pleased. 7 Cursed be their anger, so fierce, and their fury, so cruel! I will scatter them in Jacob and disperse them in Israel.**

a)The second and third born sons Simeon and Levi receive the same "blessing" for the same evil deed; they were instruments of cruelty when they wiped out all the men of Shechem in retaliation of the rape of their sister Dinah (Genesis 34:25-29)

(1)The sins of our past can come back and haunt us. Even when forgiven, they may carry consequences that we must face for a lifetime

- b)The real problem with Simeon and Levi was their anger (killed men in their anger . . . Cursed by their anger, so fierce)
- (1)The Bible speaks of a godly anger (Be angry and do not sin, Ephesians 4:26) and an ungodly anger (Let all bitterness, wrath, anger . . . be put away from you, Ephesians 4:31). Often time, the difference between a godly, righteous anger and an ungodly anger is self-will
- c)The prophecy of scattering and dispersing for Simeon.
- (1)The tribe of Simeon will be the weakest numerically of the 12 (Numbers 26:14) and will be assimilated into Judah
- (a)The second lot came out for the tribe of Simeon, clan by clan. Their inheritance lay within the territory of Judah. (Joshua 19:1)
- (2)In fact, the tribe of Simeon became small during the wilderness wanderings; they started out from Egypt being the third largest tribe (Numbers 1:23), but some thirty-five years later, at the second wilderness census of Israel, 63% of the tribe has perished and they are the smallest tribe
- d)The prophecy of scattering and dispersing for Levi.
- (1)They never had an inheritance of land, but were scattered in cities throughout the land [Josh. 13:33; 21:1-3]
- (2)The Levites distinguished themselves by their stand against idolatry in Moses' time. [Ex. 32:25-29]

4.(8-12) JUDAH: the scepter shall not depart from Judah - 8 "**Judah, your brothers will praise you; your hand will be on the neck of your enemies; your father's sons will bow down to you.** 9 **You are a lion's cub, O Judah; you return from the prey, my son. Like a lion he crouches and lies down, like a lioness-- who dares to rouse him? 10 The sceptre will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes [Shiloh] to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his. 11 He will tether his donkey to a vine, his colt to the choicest branch; he will wash his garments in wine, his robes in the blood of grapes. 12 His eyes will be darker than wine, his teeth whiter than milk.**

- a)Judah wasn't an exemplary character; he was the one who suggested a profit motive in getting rid of Joseph (Genesis 37:26), who did not deal faithfully with his daughter-in-law Tamar (Genesis 38:26) and who had sex with her as a prostitute (Genesis 38:18); but he did shine when he intercedes and offers himself as a substitute for Benjamin (Genesis 44:18-34) - overall, this blessing is an example of the riches of God's grace
- (1)Jewish tradition says that after Judah heard what Jacob had to say to Reuben, Simeon, and Levi, he was afraid because of the evil he had done
- b)The name 'Jews' is derived from 'Judah'
- c)Judah inherits the leadership aspect of the firstborn's inheritance
- (1)In Revelation 5:5, Jesus is called the Lion of the tribe of Judah
- (2)"The firstborn normally had two rights. First, he became the leader of the family, the new patriarch. Second, he was entitled to a double share of the inheritance, receiving twice as much as any of the other brothers." (Boice)
- d)However, this takes some 640 years to fulfill in part (with the reign of David, first of Judah's dynasty of kings), and some 1600 years to fulfill in Jesus, who is referred to as Shiloh, the name meaning "He whose right it is" and a title understood to mean the Messiah
- (1)From David until the Herods, a prince of Judah was head over Israel (even Daniel in captivity!). The promise was that Israel would keep this scepter until Shiloh comes - and even under their foreign masters, Israel had a limited right to self rule - until in 7 A.D., under Herod and the Romans, when their right to capital punishment was taken away

(2)At the time, the Rabbis considered it a disaster of unfulfilled Scripture - seemingly, the last vestige of the scepter had passed from Judah, and they did not see the Messiah. Rabbis walked the streets of Jerusalem and said, "Woe unto us, for the scepter has been taken away from Judah, and Shiloh has not come." But had God's word been broken? No way!

(a)Certainly, Jesus was alive then; perhaps this was the very year He was 12 years old and discussing God's Word in the temple with the scholars of His day - perhaps He was impressing them with His understanding of this very issue!

5.(13) ZEBULUN: a haven for ships - **13 "Zebulun will live by the seashore and become a haven for ships; his border will extend towards Sidon.**

a)Jacob now skips the birth order, moving to the tenth and ninth born sons, but staying with the sons born of Leah

b)The tribe of Zebulun was noted for its faithfulness to David, supplying the largest number of soldiers for David's army of any single tribe: "of Zebulun there were fifty thousand who went out to battle, expert in war with all weapons of war, stouthearted men who could keep ranks" (1 Chronicles 12:33)

c)The tribe of Zebulun seems to have taken the piece of land sitting between the Mediterranean Sea and the Sea of Galilee; literally, shall dwell by the haven of the sea can be rendered "looking towards the sea" - which they did, both to the East and West

6.(14-15) ISSACHAR: a strong donkey - **14 "Issachar is a strong donkey lying down between two saddlebags. 15 When he sees how good is his resting place and how pleasant is his land, he will bend his shoulder to the burden and submit to forced labour.**

a)Issachar was a large tribe; third in size according to the Numbers 26 census; because of their size and abundance, they were often targets of foreign armies, who forced them into servitude

b)"The meaning seems to be that Issachar was strong, but docile and lazy. He would enjoy the good land assigned him but would not strive for it. Therefore, eventually he would be pressed into servitude and the mere bearing of burdens for his masters." (Leupold)

7.(16-18) DAN: a serpent by the way - **16 "Dan will provide justice for his people as one of the tribes of Israel. 17 Dan will be a serpent by the roadside, a viper along the path, that bites the horse's heels so that its rider tumbles backwards. 18 "I look for your deliverance, O LORD.**

a)The tribe of Dan supplied one of the most prominent of the Judges, Samson (Judges 13:2)

b)But Dan was the tribe to introduce idolatry into Israel (Judges 18:30); Jeroboam set up one of his idolatrous golden calves in Dan (1 Kings 12:26-30), and later Dan became a center of idol worship in Israel (Amos 8:14)

c)"**I look for your deliverance, O LORD.** The Hebrew word for deliverance is yeshuwah; at this point, Jacob calls out for God's salvation - he calls out for Jesus!
d)note: Missler makes a fascinating case for the Anti-Christ coming from Dan

8.(19) GAD: he shall triumph at last - **19 "Gad will be attacked by a band of raiders, but he will attack them at their heels.**

a)The tribe of Gad furnished many fine troops for David (1 Chronicles 12:14)

b)In the days of Jeremiah, Gad was oppressed by foreign armies (Jeremiah 49:1)

c)Gad's territory was east of the Jordan

9.(20) ASHER: he shall yield royal dainties - **20 "Asher's food will be rich; he will provide delicacies fit for a king.**

a)This prophecy regarding Asher is taken up again by Moses in Deuteronomy 33:24 - "Asher is most blessed of sons; let him be favored by his brothers, and let him dip his foot in oil"

10.10. (21) NAPHTALI: - **21 "Naphtali is a doe set free that bears beautiful fawns. [or He uses beautiful words.]**

a)Naphtali's land was near the Sea of Galilee, the region where Jesus did much of His teaching and ministry; it is fitting that it is said of him that he uses beautiful words

b)Now when Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, He departed to Galilee. And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles: The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, And upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death Light has dawned." (Matthew 4:12-16)

11.(22-26) JOSEPH: a fruitful bough - **22 "Joseph is a fruitful vine, a fruitful vine near a spring, whose branches climb over a wall. 23 With bitterness archers attacked him; they shot at him with hostility. 24 But his bow remained steady, his strong arms stayed supple, because of the hand of the Mighty One of Jacob, because of the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel, 25 because of your father's God, who helps you, because of the Almighty, who blesses you with blessings of the heavens above, blessings of the deep that lies below, blessings of the breast and womb. 26 Your father's blessings are greater than the blessings of the ancient mountains, than the bounty of the age-old hills. Let all these rest on the head of Joseph, on the brow of the prince among his brothers.**

a)This is more of an accounting of his life and a personal blessing; in a sense, Joseph's tribes were already blessed when his sons received their blessing in Genesis 48

b)Prophetic elements fulfilled in Ephraim and Manasseh, from which many leaders came - Joshua, Deborah, Samuel, Gideon, etc.

c)Though Joseph was hated, he was still fruitful - why? **"because of the hand of the Mighty One of Jacob"**

(1)The idea is that God's hands were on Joseph's hands, giving him strength and skill to work the bow expertly.

(a)Joseph was certainly blessed in his posterity; his tribes were some of the most populous - in this sense, he receives the "material blessing," the double portion aspect of the inheritance of the firstborn

d)Jacob knew who God was! In his words about Joseph, Jacob lists five great titles for God: the Mighty One of Jacob, the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel, you father's God, and the Almighty.

(1)This is much better than when Jacob referred to God as the God of Abraham or the Fear of his father Isaac (Genesis 31:53); now he knows who God is for himself

12.(27) BENJAMIN: a ravenous wolf - **27 "Benjamin is a ravenous wolf; in the morning he devours the prey, in the evening he divides the plunder."**

a)This was the tribe with a reputation for fierceness; look at Ehud (Judges 3:16-23), Saul (1 Samuel 14:47-52), and Paul (Acts 8:1-3); their great cruelty is shown in Judges 19 and 20

13.(28) Jacob concludes his blessing of the sons - **28 All these are the twelve tribes of Israel, and this is what their father said to them when he blessed them, giving each the blessing appropriate to him.**

B.JACOB'S DEATH

1.(29-32) Jacob makes his sons promise that he be buried in Canaan - **29 Then he gave them these instructions: "I am about to be gathered to my people. Bury me with my fathers in the cave in the field of Ephron the Hittite, 30 the cave in the field of Machpelah, near Mamre in Canaan, which Abraham bought as a burial place from Ephron the Hittite, along with the field. 31 There Abraham and his wife Sarah were buried, there Isaac and his wife Rebekah were buried, and there I buried Leah. 32 The field and the cave in it were bought from the Hittites."**

- a)Though Jacob is now in Egypt, he knows that he is a son of the promise, an heir of God's covenant with Abraham, and he will be buried in the land promised to Abraham by that covenant
- b)Jacob could have been buried like a Pharaoh, but he wanted to be buried in an obscure cave in Canaan, because that was the land of promise
- c)Notice that Leah finally got Jacob all to herself!

2.(33) The death of Jacob - **33 When Jacob had finished giving instructions to his sons, he drew his feet up into the bed, breathed his last and was gathered to his people.**

XXXIX. GENESIS 50 - THE BURIAL OF JACOB; THE DEATH OF JOSEPH

A. JACOB IS BURIED IN CANAAN

1.(1-3) Jacob is embalmed and mourned - **1 Joseph threw himself upon his father and wept over him and kissed him. 2 Then Joseph directed the physicians in his service to embalm his father Israel. So the physicians embalmed him, 3 taking a full forty days, for that was the time required for embalming. And the Egyptians mourned for him seventy days.**

a) Jacob is mourned for 70 days among the whole nation of Egypt; a royal mourning period was 72 days - Jacob is obviously a greatly honored man

2.(4-14) Jacob's body is brought to Canaan - **4 When the days of mourning had passed, Joseph said to Pharaoh's court, "If I have found favor in your eyes, speak to Pharaoh for me. Tell him, 5 `My father made me swear an oath and said, "I am about to die; bury me in the tomb I dug for myself in the land of Canaan." Now let me go up and bury my father; then I will return.'" 6 Pharaoh said, "Go up and bury your father, as he made you swear to do." 7 So Joseph went up to bury his father. All Pharaoh's officials accompanied him--the dignitaries of his court and all the dignitaries of Egypt-- 8 besides all the members of Joseph's household and his brothers and those belonging to his father's household. Only their children and their flocks and herds were left in Goshen. 9 Chariots and horsemen also went up with him. It was a very large company. 10 When they reached the threshing-floor of Atad, near the Jordan, they lamented loudly and bitterly; and there Joseph observed a seven-day period of mourning for his father. 11 When the Canaanites who lived there saw the mourning at the threshing-floor of Atad, they said, "The Egyptians are holding a solemn ceremony of mourning." That is why that place near the Jordan is called Abel Mizraim. 12 So Jacob's sons did as he had commanded them: 13 They carried him to the land of Canaan and buried him in the cave in the field of Machpelah, near Mamre, which Abraham had bought as a burial place from Ephron the Hittite, along with the field. 14 After burying his father, Joseph returned to Egypt, together with his brothers and all the others who had gone with him to bury his father.**

a) This is a dramatic burial - the entire clan gathers together to pay tribute to this man who was the last link with the patriarchs; the man whose grandfather's life overlapped with the sons of Noah

(1) "Luther remarks that there is no burial recorded in the Scriptures quite as honorable as this or with such wealth of detail." (Leupold)

B. JOSEPH COMFORTS HIS BROTHER'S FEARS

1.(15-17) The fears of Joseph's brothers and their unlikely story - **15 When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "What if Joseph holds a grudge against us and pays us back for all the wrongs we did to him?" 16 So they sent word to Joseph, saying, "Your father left these instructions before he died: 17 `This is what you are to say to Joseph: I ask you to forgive your brothers the sins and the wrongs they committed in treating you so badly.' Now please forgive the sins of the servants of the God of your father." When their message came to him, Joseph wept.**

a) They fear that Joseph will turn on them now that Jacob is dead [like Esau's threats against Jacob].

b) Their story sounds concocted; perhaps they didn't feel they had a right to ask for mercy, since they'd sinned so greatly against him - so they put the request for mercy in the mouth of their father

c) Why did Joseph weep? Probably because it grieved him that his brothers were still wrestling with their sense of guilt.

2.3. (18-21) Joseph's comfort to his brothers - **18 His brothers then came and threw themselves down before him. "We are your slaves," they said. 19 But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? 20 You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. 21 So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children." And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.** (Genesis 50:18-21).

a) They back up their plea for mercy by throwing themselves down before Joseph.

b) Joseph understood that he was not in the place of God; it wasn't his job to bring retribution upon his brothers.

(1) cf. 45:5 - "And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you."

(2) "Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord." (Romans 12:19)

c) Joseph does not romanticize the wrong his brothers had done; however, he plainly sees that the greatest truth is - God meant it for good

d) Every Christian should know that no matter what evil man may bring against us, God can use it for good

(1) **"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."** (Romans 8:28)

(2) Joseph did not have the text of Romans 8:28, but he had the truth of it!

(3) Ultimately, our lives are not in the hands of men, but in the hands of God, who over-rules all things for His glory

(a) There was an old minister who had a unique gift to minister to the distressed and discouraged. In his Bible, he carried an old bookmark that was woven of silk threads into a motto. The back of it, where the threads were knotted and tied, was a hopeless tangle. He would take the bookmark out and show the troubled person this side of the bookmark, and ask them to make sense of it - they never could. Then the pastor would turn it over, and on the front were white letters against a solid background saying, "God is love." When events in our life seem tangled and meaningless, it is because we can see only one side of the tapestry

(b) Because Joseph could trust the over-arching hand of God, even in all the evil that had come upon him through his brothers, he could show the kind of love and compassion to them that he did

(c) Often, the problem we have in loving others, and in freeing ourselves from bitterness, is really a problem of not knowing who God is and trusting Him to be who He says He is

C. THE DEATH OF JOSEPH

1. (22-25) Joseph is still in Egypt; but his heart was in Canaan - **22 Joseph stayed in Egypt, along with all his father's family. He lived a hundred and ten years 23 and saw the third generation of Ephraim's children. Also the children of Makir son of Manasseh were placed at birth on Joseph's knees. 24 Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die. But God will surely come to your aid and take you up out of this land to the land he promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." 25 And Joseph made the sons of Israel swear an oath and said, "God will surely come to your aid, and then you must carry my bones up from this place."**

a) This mention of Israel's departure from Egypt places Joseph in the Hebrews 11 "hall of faith"

(1) "By faith Joseph, when his end was near, spoke about the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and gave instructions about his bones." (Hebrews 11:22).

2.(26) The death and embalming of Joseph - **26 So Joseph died at the age of a hundred and ten. And after they embalmed him, he was placed in a coffin in Egypt.**

a) Joseph's coffin was a silent witness that Israel was going back to the Promised Land, just as God had said

(1)i. All during that time, when a child of Israel saw Joseph's coffin and asked what it was there for, they could be answered, "Because the great man Joseph did not want to be buried in Egypt, but in the Promised Land God will one day lead us to"

b) This command to carry up my bones from here was fulfilled some four hundred years later, when Israel left Egypt.

(1) "Moses took the bones of Joseph with him because Joseph had made the sons of Israel swear an oath. He had said, "God will surely come to your aid, and then you must carry my bones up with you from this place." (Exodus 13:19).

- Some promises of God take a long time to fulfill. Will we persevere in trusting God? George Mueller was a remarkable man of faith who ran orphanages in England. In a sermon he preached when he was 75 years old, he said that 30,000 times in his fifty-four years as a Christian he had received an answer to prayer on the same day that he prayed it. But not all his prayers were answered so quickly. He told of one prayer that had been brought to God about 20,000 times over eleven and a half years, and he was still trusting God for the answer: "I hope in God, I pray on, and look for the answer. Therefore, beloved brethren and sisters, go on waiting upon God, go on praying."
- This command, showing where Joseph's heart was, also showed him to be a man of great faith, who could trust in things unseen (Hebrews 11:22)
- Genesis, the book of beginnings, ends looking forward - to the continuing plan of God's redemption as it unfolds