

"The righteous . . . shall grow
like a cedar in Lebanon"

Psalm 92:12

Reading Companion

to the Book of

Genesis

"So they read in the book in the law of God . . .
and caused them to understand the reading"
Nehemiah 8:8

By

Bill Daniels

Preface

The contents of this book were the essence of a course taught in the Bible College at New Germany Baptist Church in 2005. In order to make these materials more easily available for further class use we have kept the class divisions used in the course, as listed in the Table of Contents.

Because of the size of the book we are dealing with in working through Genesis we were not able to deal with every verse in this study, nor do we handle every section with equal detail. But what you will find here is a helpful start in your own further quest for more.

How vital to our understanding of the whole of the Bible is this blessed book of beginnings. May your study of it indeed be a blessed beginning for you as well. Genesis is an account of God at work in the hearts and lives of men, graciously at work. Look for His grace as you study and you will see it everywhere, even in the most unexpected places.

Bill Daniels

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"In the beginning
God created
the heaven
and the earth"

(Genesis 1:1)

Class 1 – Introduction

Genesis is such a fascinating book, though sometimes a puzzling study. How greatly I have been stirred and helped over the years by treasures found in this first book of God. Genesis is a book of beginnings, as its name indicates. The word "Genesis" comes from Latin and Greek and means "origin" or "beginning". The name arises from the first word of the Hebrew text, *bereshith*, translated "in the beginning". Among many lesser beginnings recorded in this book we find the account of two fundamental origins in Genesis, of man (with earth and universe to sustain him), and of the nation of Israel. It is a testimony to God's grace, both that He would create man as the object of His love, and that He would raise up a chosen nation as a channel through which He would preserve His words and bring the only Saviour of mankind into the world.

Author

This book of beginnings was of course authored by the only One who was there at the time of creation, and therefore the only One who can accurately report on what really took place in that beginning of all beginnings. Peter explained how *"prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of*

God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (II Pet. 1:20-21). It was the Spirit of God who moved that holy man of God, Moses, to begin in these pages to reveal the truth about origins. Genesis is the first of a group of 5 books penned by Moses called the "Pentateuch" (Greek for "a book of five"), containing the books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The Jews commonly refer to these books as the "Torah" or "Law".

There can be little disputing Moses' authorship of these first five books of the Bible, at least from internal evidence. We see the compiling of these books in portions such as Exodus 24:4-8, Deuteronomy 31: 9-11, 24-26. We know that the Lord Jesus Christ later assumed Moses to be the writer of the Pentateuch from Luke 24:27 & 44. If it were not so Jesus surely would have told us. We see other New Testament (N.T.) writers referring to the Law of Moses as a valid part of the Old Testament (O.T.) in such portions as Acts 28:23 & I Corinthians 9:9. God's Book stands or falls as a single piece.

Themes

From a broader viewpoint the book of Genesis is many vital things to us. It is;

- God's faithful revelation of origins – of the world, man, Israel, etc.
- The revelation of God alone as Lord over history.
- The fair display of man's repeated failures before God;
    - In the Garden. Though man began there with a clean slate, without sin or a sin nature at all.
    - In the days of Noah.
    - At Shinar (Babel). Though all there descended from a righteous man (Noah) after the Flood. Showing the fault in the heart of man as *"deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked"* (Jer. 17:9).
- The faithful display of the Lord's long-suffering loving-kindness, in spite of man's failure and impurity.

Land

There are three main geographical areas of focus in the whole of the O.T. record. All three are visited in the book of Genesis;

- Mesopotamia, or the region around the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers (Gen. 1-11). The Garden of Eden and Babel were there, as well as Ur of the Chaldees, where Abraham first received his call and moved out for God.
- Canaan, or the Land of Promise (Gen. 12-45).
- Egypt, where Israel was held in bondage (Gen. 46-50).

Movements

There are three main movements or journeys in the books of Moses;

- Abraham's move from Ur to Canaan.
- Jacob and sons shifting from Canaan to Egypt.
- Moses moving the nation of Israel from Egypt to the verge of Canaan.

The first two moves take place in Genesis. The third leg is covered in the other four books of Moses. In addition to this;

- The book of Joshua describes Israel's actual conquest of Canaan.
- The book of II Kings relates the removal of

God's people to Assyria and Babylon.

- The book of Ezra relates the return of a remnant of Israel to Judah and Jerusalem.

People and Events

The main human characters in Genesis are;

- Adam & Eve (chapter 1-3).
- Cain & Abel (chapter 4).
- Noah (chapter 6-9).
- Abraham (chapter 11-25).
- Isaac (chapter 24-27).
- Jacob (chapter 27-50).
- Joseph (chapter 37-50).

In Genesis 1-11 *events* are pre-eminent, the four outstanding events being;

- Creation (chapter 1).
- Fall (chapter 3).
- Flood (chapter 7-8).
- Babel, with language confused and nations formed (chapter 11).

In Genesis 12-50 *people* are the focus, the four outstanding men being;

- Abraham.
- Isaac.
- Jacob.
- Joseph.

Note how only about 20% of the book of Genesis is given to such key events as Creation, Fall, Flood, and Babel, while some 80% of the book is devoted to the lives of those 4 patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, and the nation that developed around them. What does this tell us about the thrust or purpose of Genesis? The greater focus of the book, and therefore the great concern of God is upon the hope of blessing upon man through Abraham's seed (*"Seed",* which is Christ, in Galatians 3:16), and God's unfolding plan of human redemption through them.

Special Note

Because the first 11 chapters of Genesis are so foundational to our faith they have seen more attack from the unbelieving world than perhaps any other portion of the Bible. This is an interesting thing

since few tend to argue with the historic accuracy of Abraham and the nation descending from him, beginning in Genesis 12. Yet is it not evident that the narrative of Genesis moves from the first 11 chapters into chapter 12 without any change in nature? There can be only one reasonable conclusion. Clearly the first 11 chapters of Genesis are meant to be read and understood simply and literally, according to a normal reading, in the same way that we read the remaining chapters of this book, as a simple record of history beginning with the creation of all things.

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Ponder Points

Trace the promised Redeemer in Genesis;

- From mankind (3:15, seed of the woman).
- From the family of Abraham (12:3).
- Genesis 49:10 – From the tribe of Judah and from the royal line (*"sceptre"*).

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Consider God's self-revelation in Genesis;

- All-powerful (creation).
- Gracious and long-suffering.

- Severe (judgments of Flood and Sodom).
- All-seeing. He is not deceived nor does He miss anything, as evidenced at the Judgment Seat of Jacob in Genesis 49. He was aware even of Hagar in her need (Gen. 16:7ff). Compare Christ's awareness of the woman at the well in John 4.
- Promise-keeper. He did what He promised to Abraham in giving him a son, showing him the land, delivering Lot, etc.

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The following are some of the notes I hand out when teaching the "Walk Through the Old Testament", learned from Pastor John White in Bible college in 1978.

Walk Through the Old Testament

66 books in the Bible; 39 in O.T., 27 in N.T. (3 x 9 = 27)

O.T. covers a period of about 4000 years. Only 11 of the 39 O.T. books cover the time of this 4000 year period, called the "11 Books of Chronology". The rest of the O.T. books fit into these 11 chronological books. The 11 Books of Chronology are;

1) Genesis	4) Joshua	8, 9) I & II Kings
2) Exodus	5) Judges	10) Ezra
3) Numbers	6, 7) I & II Sam.	11) Nehemiah
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Of the 4000 years of O.T. history, the first 2000 years (first *half)* are covered in the first 12 chapters of Genesis.

I. First 2000 years of O.T. History

Genesis chap. 1 – Creation
2 – Special Events in Creation
3 – Temptation & Fall of Adam & Eve
4 – Story of Cain & Abel
5 – Genealogies
6, 7, 8 – Noah *and* the Flood
9 – Noah *after* the Flood
10 – Genealogies
11 – Tower of Babel
12 – Call of Abraham

II. Last 2000 years of O.T. History

Beginning with the call of Abraham (Gen. 12). Abraham was born in Ur of the Chaldees. The Lord said, *"Leave your country, kindred, father's house, and go into a land that I will show you, and I will make of you a great and mighty nation, and make your name great".* Abraham moved up around the Fertile Crescent to Haran. Four people came up. You can remember them by the word S-A-L-T, Sarah, Abraham, Lot, & Terah. They stayed in Haran several years until Terah died. Then Abraham moved south into Canaan, but he had a problem. He had no children. But eventually God gave him two "I's", for Sarah made a deal with Hagar, and Hagar had a son whose name was Ishmael, but he was *not* the son of promise. Finally Sarah had a son, whose name was Isaac, and he *was* the son of promise. Isaac had two sons, Esau & Jacob. Esau was *not* the son of promise, Jacob *was* the son of promise. Jacob had twelve sons and one daughter. The 2nd from the

youngest son, Joseph, was sold into Egyptian bondage by his brothers. Eventually the whole family moved down due to a famine. They were in Egypt for 30 years of prosperity [**Genesis Ends**]. Then came 400 years of cruel bondage. Finally they cried out to God, and God called Moses and told him to *"Go down to Egypt and tell Pharaoh to let My people go!"* Moses went, performed the 10 plagues, led the people through the Red Sea, and down to Mt. Sinai. There God gave the 10 Commandments [**Exodus Ends**]. God then said, *"Go up and take the land"*. They went north to Kadesh Barnea. 12 spies were sent into the land. 2 said *"Let's go"* and 10 said "*No go!"* The people voted *NO!* God said because they voted no everyone 20 years and older must die. The nation wandered in the wilderness for 38 years while that generation died. Moses then led the new generation to Mt. Nebo, where he died [**Numbers Ends**]. Joshua led the nation of Israel through the Jordan River, divided the land among 12 tribes, and he died [**Joshua Ends**]. There then followed several years of social, economic, and spiritual ups and downs under the Judges [**Judges Ends**]. Finally the people said "No more Judges! We want a king!" There were 3 kings who ruled over the united kingdom; Saul [**I Samuel**], David [**II Samuel**], and Solomon [**I Kings**]. After Solomon's death the Kingdom was split;

NORTH – 10 tribes – name, Israel – capital, Samaria – 19 kings – 0 good kings

SOUTH – 2 tribes – name, Judah – capital, Jerusalem – 20 kings – 8 good kings

Then in 722 B.C. Shalmanezer, King of Assyria took the 10 tribes of Israel and dispersed them. Then in 606 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, took the

2 tribes of Judah for the 70-year Babylonian Captivity [**II Kings Ends**]. After 70 years Ezra and Nehemiah led 50,000 Jews back to Jerusalem. They rebuilt the houses, temple [**Ezra**], and wall [**Nehemiah**]. Then came 400 silent years followed by the coming of John the Baptist.

"And the LORD God
formed man
of the dust of the ground,
and breathed into his nostrils
the breath of life;
and man became a living soul"

(Genesis 2:7)

Class 2 – Genesis 1-3

Chapter 1 – All Begun

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth". And so *time* began with that *"beginning"* of all beginnings. It was in fact the first beginning ever! For before this beginning it was only God, and God always was, having no beginning. This is implied in so simple and yet significant a statement that *"In the beginning God…"*. Throughout all eternity He has ever been the One who *is*. This truth is merely presumed here. It is not proven. God never feels the need to prove His reality to man. It is simply assumed that every honest soul understands the truth of this (Rom. 1:19-20). Indeed only a fool would say in his heart that there is no God (Ps. 14:1; 53:1). Note how John 1:1 carries the same presumption concerning the eternal existence of Jesus Christ, simply stating that *"in the beginning was the Word"*.

We must read these early chapters of Genesis as history, for such is the manner in which they are presented to us. We have no cause to read them as myth or allegory, except through the pressures of pagan society, backed by the father of lies.

Gen 1:2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.
Gen 1:3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.
Gen 1:4 And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.
Gen 1:5 And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.
Gen 1:6 And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.
Gen 1:7 And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so.

Now some believe Genesis 1:1 describes the original creation, followed by a vast gap in time between verses 1 & 2, a gap in which time enough might perhaps be found for the geological ages to write into the rocks evolution's life and death struggle. Such a view sees the earth come to ruin in those opening words of vs. 2, *"without form and void"*, followed by a sort of reboot, as the Spirit of God began again to move upon that scene of destruction. But could God look upon His creation (re-creation?) and proclaim it *"very good"* in 1:31 if a vast history of multiplied deaths were already earth's portion? And what of the Apostle Paul's proclamation that death only *later* entered the world through man's fall into sin (chapter 3; Rom. 5:12)? The evident truth is that vs. 2 merely relates God's first creative move in bringing the material earth into existence as a formless and empty mass. And then He began to form and fill it (in that order) within the following days of creation. In the first three days He *formed*

Gen 1:8 And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.
Gen 1:9 And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.
Gen 1:10 And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good.
Gen 1:11 And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.
Gen 1:12 And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

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the formless earth, making those three great separations;

- Day 1 – Light from darkness.
- Day 2 – Water from water vapour, with earth's atmosphere between.
- Day 3 – Land from sea (and all plant life).

In the last three days He *filled* the *"void"* earth;

- Day 4 – Sun, moon, and stars. Light-givers, answering to the creation of light on day 1, and filling the heavens created then.
- Day 5 – Sea creatures and birds. Filling the water and sky formed on day 2.
- Day 6 – Land creatures and man. Filling the dry land separated out of the seas on day 3.

Three days of forming, then three days of filling each

Gen 1:13 And the evening and the morning were the third day.
Gen 1:14 And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:
Gen 1:15 And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so.
Gen 1:16 And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also.
Gen 1:17 And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth,
Gen 1:18 And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good.

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aspect formed respectively. It is the simple sense of first the house, then the occupants. Do not let compromise with *"science falsely so called"* complicate things my friend (I Tim. 6:20).

Points of Interest in God's Creation

Again, no attempt is made to prove God's creative work, merely the statement of it.

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To deny the Creator and His creation is to deny the Bible as a whole. Note Hebrews 11:3 & Revelation 4:11 for example. Jesus Christ Himself assumed the creation of Adam and Eve in Matthew 19:4.

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The 6 days of creation cannot be anything but literal, 24-hour days. Some suggest that "day" here must be understood as ages, since;

Gen 1:19 And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.
Gen 1:20 And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.
Gen 1:21 And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good.
Gen 1:22 And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth.
Gen 1:23 And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

- "Days" were being counted before there was a sun and moon, and thus before any way of measuring literal days existed.

- In 2:4 the term "day" is used in the broader sense of the whole creation period, thus opening the way to a broader meaning for the word "day".

- Elsewhere in Scripture the word "day" refers to periods other than that defined by the sun's rising and setting.

Some answers to this Day-Age Theory;

- God's creative week forms the basis for our seven-*day* week (Ex. 20:8-11).

- Ask yourself why we *need* to put vast time periods between *"God said"* and *"it was so"*. Does our faith or our fear force it upon us?

- Consider how carefully the Author defines the

word *"day";*

- From the first it is the *"light"* contrasted with the time of *"darkness"* (vs. 3-4).
- It is a period continually limited by the phrase *"the evening and the morning".*
- Where else in all the Bible is a *"day"* that is defined by a specific beginning and ending ever anything other than one of 24 hours?
- Where else in all the Bible are days ever numbered, as here, without referring to the 24-hour type?

Dr. Henry Morris made the following astute observation; "If the reader asks himself this question: 'Suppose the writer of Genesis wished to teach his readers that all things were created and made in six literal days, then what words would he use to best convey this thought?' he would have to answer that the writer would have used the actual words in Genesis 1. If he wished to convey the idea of long geological ages, however, he could surely have done it far more clearly and effectively in other words than in those which he selected. It was clearly his intent to teach creation in six literal days."

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There are two Hebrew words used in this chapter for the idea of creating or making. These are *bara* and *asah*. *Bara* is used only three times;

- At the first (vs. 1).
- With the first of animal life (vs. 21).
- With man (vs. 27).

*Bara* apparently marks the introduction of the three great elements of existence; physical matter, life or soul, and man (body, soul, and spirit). *Asah*, used throughout the chapter, seems to describe God's use of already created materials.

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The 3rd creative day describes the separation and placing of a great water vapour canopy (vs. 6-8). Not clouds of water droplets, but apparently a transparent layer in the upper regions of earth's atmosphere. The benefits of such a layer would have been;

- To shield earth's inhabitants from the sun's harmful rays.
- To greatly extend human life in those days before the Flood.

Gen 1:24 And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.
Gen 1:25 And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good.
Gen 1:26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.
Gen 1:27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.
Gen 1:28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

- To cause a greenhouse effect, warming even the poles, and offering a much wider and more lush vegetation belt over the earth.

This was the upper reservoir of water that fell in the 40 days of rain, contributing to Noah's Flood.

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The creation of the dinosaurs, both sea and land, can be found in vs. 21 (*"great whales"* or great sea monsters) and in vs. 24 (behind the word *"cattle"* is the Hebrew word *behemoth*). All of the great dinosaurs not only existed with man, but were created on the very same day! These are what the Lord described to Job in chapter 40-41 of his book, not hippos and crocs! Be honest in your Bible interpretation.
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Man is the focus, end, and purpose of God's creation, as chapter 2 will underscore. The creation week leads up to man's creation as the crowning event. This exposes the lie of Mother Earth foolishness. We see here that earth is for man, not man for earth.

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Consider as well that this chapter;

- By proclaiming <u>*God*</u>, denies atheism.
- By <u>*proclaiming*</u> God, denies agnosticism.
- By proclaiming <u>*one*</u> God, denies polytheism.
- By proclaiming the Creator <u>*separate*</u> from His creation, denies pantheism.
- By proclaiming God *"in the beginning"*, denies materialism. God was before the material world.

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The word *"God"* is found 32 times in this chapter. This is as much the *Creator* chapter as it is the *creation* chapter.
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Chapter 2 – None Will Do

We find now a record of particular events in creation. Where the first chapter gave only summaries, we are now given greater detail on some aspects in this obvious sequel to the first. In chapter 1 the scope is creation as a whole, while here the attention turns to the pinnacle of creation; man created in the very image and likeness of his Creator. We begin here to see more clearly the whole thrust of the Bible. It is about man in his relation to God. Again, even the first chapter placed man as the end and ultimate work of God's creative week. And from here on, what else do we have in this whole Book of God but;

- God seeking the good of man.
- God seeking relation to man.
- God's restoration of man to Himself in His great plan of redemption.

What then should define *our* whole existence and purpose in life? Plants? Whales? Ecology? Back to nature? Monasticism? Sport? Pleasure? No! Our supreme focus, as our God's, must be all about *man!* And man restored to a right relation to God. As God's own ambassadors we plead with all men

Gen 2:1 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.
Gen 2:2 And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.
Gen 2:3 And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

"in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" (II Cor. 5:20).

2:1-3 – The Sabbath

God's creative week and His rest on the 7th day became the basis of Sabbath-keeping in the Law of Moses. Though the Sabbath is grounded in creation, its keeping was a particular aspect of the covenant between God and the nation of Israel (Ex. 31:12-17; Ezek. 20:12). Israel only began observing the Sabbath in Exodus 16:23 as they approached Sinai and their covenant relation to God to be established there. Sabbath-keeping is never made an issue in the N.T. epistles to the churches, where the 1st day of the week is highlighted. This is because the principle of Sabbath rest is fulfilled in Jesus Christ, in whom we entered our rest (Sabbath) at the moment of salvation. *"For we which have believed do enter into rest"* (Heb. 4:3).

2:4-7 – Man's Formation

Founded upon that first statement of man's creation

Gen 2:4 These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens,
Gen 2:5 And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground.
Gen 2:6 But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.
Gen 2:7 And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.
Gen 2:8 And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.

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as male and female (1:27), this section now gives the details.

Note the change from *"God"* to *"LORD God"* in this portion. *"God",* or the Hebrew word *Elohim*, describes God strong above all in His creative power. *"LORD",* the Hebrew word *Jehovah*, portrays that One seeking relation with man. God relating to man now begins (*restored* relation or redemption after chapter 3).

Vs. 5-6 – There was no rain on the earth at that time. Again, perhaps indication of a very uniform climate, the result of the water vapour layer of the 3rd creative day, as discussed earlier.

Vs. 7 – This *"breath of life"* from God, transforming a mass of matter into a *"living soul",* marks the line evolutionists cross only in their imaginations. Neither can the development of personhood be

described in evolutionary terms.

2:8-15 – Eden

Vs. 8-14 – The exact location of Eden is unknown. The mention of the Euphrates in vs. 14 seems to place it in Mesopotamia.

Vs. 15 – Note how God meant for man to work from the beginning. This principle the Bible elsewhere and often confirms, summarized so well in Paul's immortal words, *"If any would not work, neither should he eat"* (II Thess. 3:10). God has fitted us for few things more satisfying than a job well done, and done for His glory. How does the modern view of retirement square with this principle?

2:16-17 – Probation

This is an expansion of the Lord's words to man in 1:29. Adam was under clear command to avoid one particular tree within Eden. And this prohibition was in the context of everything else *"freely"* allowed. Rebellious man often fights God's vetoes

Gen 2:18 And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.
Gen 2:19 And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.

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while forgetting the vast abundance of things approved and *"freely"* given by God (I Tim. 6:17). From the beginning man's life was limited by God's command, and his blessing or cursing was determined by his response. To this day the same principle remains. What you choose to do with the details of God's words determines your blessing or cursing.

2:18-25 – Eve

Vs. 18 – Apart from those specially gifted otherwise, people as a rule were made by God with the need for the companionship marriage provides. It is generally *"not good that the man should be alone"*. And God's provision for the needs of man and woman within marriage is *all of grace.*

The English term "help-meet" is a perversion of the biblical phrasing here. The statement is that God determined to provide a helper who is *"meet"*, meaning fit or appropriate for Adam, thus defining the role of a wife in relation to her husband. By

Gen 2:20 And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.
Gen 2:21 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;
Gen 2:22 And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.
Gen 2:23 And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.
Gen 2:24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.
Gen 2:25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

God's design she is his helper, supporter, or counterpart who complements him.

Vs. 19-20 – This is an expansion on the mention of man's dominion over the natural world in 1:28. The future restoration of this dominion is expressed in that millennial picture of little children leading lions in portions like Isaiah 11:6.

Vs. 21-25 – This is now an expanded version of the woman's creation in 1:27. We do well to remember that Jesus pointed back to these earliest words of God in upholding the sacred institution of marriage, without divorce (vs. 24: Matt. 19:4-5).

Chapter 3 – Forbidden Tree

Here is such a pivotal chapter of the Bible! The whole forward movement is sharply deflected at this point, shifting the entire direction and nature of life

Gen 3:1 Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?
Gen 3:2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:
Gen 3:3 But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.
Gen 3:4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:
Gen 3:5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

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on earth. How could we understand all of the rest of God's purpose without this? Here is man's plunge into sin. And from here on the Bible is all about man's rescue from the mire he steps into here. Having soared to the heights of the "very good" prospect of God's creation, man now plunges the whole of pristine existence into the muck that rebellion against his God brings. Yet, as only God is able to do, this greatest of tragedies is turned to the greatest opportunity to behold the long-suffering grace of our God. This chapter is so full of vital lessons for our learning.

3:1-5 – The Temptation

The source of the temptation was Satan, working through the medium of the serpent (Rev. 12:9; 20:2). We do not know when Satan fell into the sin of pride (Isa. 14:12-14) and from his heavenly position (Rev. 12:3-4), and taking a third of the angel host with him. His fall was likely not long

before these events. Note how the angels in their creation and responses are much less God's focus than is man's.

We discover some things about sin here;

- God did not author sin.
- Sin came/comes through the outward influence of Satan's evil suggestion, combined with man's self-will.

Sin still arises in the same way today. N.B. the development of temptation to sin;

- Satan first stirred suspicion of God's words (vs. 1). The first recorded words ever leaving Satan's mouth formed the first question ever asked, and that only to question God's words!!
- Then he brazenly contradicted God's words (vs. 4). The second sentence Satan ever put together was the first lie ever told. How rightly Jesus called him the father of lies (Jn. 8:44). His questions;
    - How severe is God's judgment?
    - How true are His words?
    - How sound is His righteousness?

His suggestions;

  - God will not really do as He threatens.
  - He is too soft to be feared.
  - He does not care that much about His righteousness.

- Then he raised doubt over God's integrity (vs. 5), suggesting His restrictions were not toward man's best interests, but only held mankind back from his full potential.

Can you trace the same thoughts in modern thinking?

Eve was first intrigued to listen to Satan when she should have fled temptation. She was then led to doubt God and His words, that He really will do as He says and that He really does have our highest potential at heart. First *doubt* or unbelief, then *disobedience*. First shape the thoughts and beliefs, then influence the actions. Understand that the evil one always begins his attack at a soul's connection with God's Word, seeking to move us;

- To doubt through distortion of it.
- Then to denial through disbelief of it.
- And finally to dare to disobey it.

Gen 3:6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.
Gen 3:7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

3:6-7 – The Sin

Her first mistake was in being *too close* to that forbidden tree, for Satan made his approach when the tree was within her sight, even within her reach. Compare in Proverbs 7:7-8 the *"young man void of understanding"* who put himself near the corner of the temptress, *"and he went the way to her house"*.

Her second mistake was to be there *alone*, without the support and guidance of her husband. For *"every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed"* (James 1:14).

Her third mistake was to *remain* exposed to the tempter, to not *flee* from sin's contemplation. God says *"Flee also youthful lusts"* (II Tim. 2:22).

Her fourth mistake was to then *join* the tempter in distorting God's words;

- She left out that vital word *"freely"* (2:16), expressing the wealth of God's ample provision for her needs.

- She extended God's prohibition (*"neither shall ye touch it"*, vs.3).
- She left out that significant word *"surely"* (2:17), softening the certainty of divine punishment.

With the sharp edge of God's threat effectively dulled, her doubts made way for awakened lust. She looked upon wrong with a heightened awareness of the pleasure it might bring. A wish to disobey arose in her heart, and was not immediately driven out, as Nehemiah did Tobiah's evil presence (Neh. 13). She yielded her will to lust's siren call to sin. And finally she involved her husband in her treachery as well. And behold how quickly the initial sweetness of sin's deceitful bread turned to gravel in their mouths (Prov. 9:17-18; 20:17). What the pagan world calls "sweet surrender" is never so sweet as its promise. The answer she refused is the advice of God's apostle, *"resist the devil and he will flee from you"*. For the evil one is powerless without our consent. Eve gave her consent and lust was conceived in her, giving birth to sin, and the end of sin was death (James 1:15).

So, alas, mankind was immersed in the cesspool of sin. Now behold the answers to the age-old why's;

Gen 3:8 And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.
Gen 3:9 And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?
Gen 3:10 And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.
Gen 3:11 And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?
Gen 3:12 And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.
Gen 3:13 And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

- Why "good" people suffer.
- Why people must die.
- Why people can be so unimaginably wicked.
- Why you do not need to teach a baby to be selfish. That dark software comes installed in every new model. Every one of us is sin-bent and hell-bent from the start.
- Why every soul is born in need of a Saviour.

The true motive underlying all sin is seen in this first sin. It is a matter of man's self-willed desire to be independent of God and away from His restrictions (Ps. 2:3). His free-will in God's image made the possibility of this necessary.

3:8-19 – The Punishment

Vs. 8-9 – Their consciousness of sin and guilt is

immediately apparent in their attempt to cover up, and in their fear of and flight from God.

Vs. 10-13 – God first confronted the man, the one ultimately responsible. Adam sought to incriminate his wife, even subtly suggesting God was touched with the same brush, insinuating it was He who gave this unfortunate wife. The woman pointed to the serpent (Satan). Do not miss how every attempt at hiding or spineless blame-shifting proved futile. All involved were forced to stand utterly exposed before God, wearing their sin like the most vile and shameful garment. And see how God is *immediate* and *severe* in His judgment upon sin. Yet He is just as quick with His plans and promise of rescue. In 3:15 we find the first promise of the coming Redeemer.

3:21 – *"Coats of skins"*

Many things are taught in picture form by God's action of replacing the fig leaf coverings with animal skins;

- *Man's* attempts at covering his shame are inadequate.

Gen 3:22 And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:
Gen 3:23 Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.
Gen 3:24 So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

- Man can only be sufficiently covered by what *God* supplies.
- Only *covering* was available at that point, not *cleansing*.
- The covering of sin could only be through the shedding of blood or a life sacrificed.

3:22-24 – Paradise Lost

It just was not possible to remain a sinner in paradise. Even so, the new heavens, earth, and Jerusalem of Revelation 21-22 will only be for those from whom sin has fully and finally been removed through Jesus Christ.

Satan, in his temptation, forgot to mention that sin meant *separation* from God, and that the joys of paradise would be lost. For *"your iniquities have separated between you and your God"* (Isa. 59:2). Guilt, condemnation, and separation result from the choice to sin. But in Jesus Christ alone there is

forgiveness and cleansing and freedom from every guilt and stain.

"Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect" (Rom. 8:33).

Class 3 – Genesis 4-6

Gen 4:1 And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD.
Gen 4:2 And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.
Gen 4:3 And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD.

One simply cannot properly understand the Bible without a grasp of this book of Genesis. Just as Revelation is the book of endings, so Genesis is the book of beginnings. In fact Genesis is so clearly the book of beginnings and Revelation so evidently the book of endings that we obviously have in this Book of God a complete unit. This in itself is an evident exclusion of such supposed "additions" as the book of Mormon or the "last testament" of the Koran (as well as the vast abundance of charismatic "new revelations").

Chapter 4 – Death and More

We find in this chapter clearest indication of what was to come through the entrance of sin, for here is the record the very first first-born son becoming the first murderer.

4:1-8 – First Murder

Vs. 3-5 – Sacrifices. Here is one account upon which the world and worldly church chokes. Why would God accept Abel's offering and reject Cain's? The answer of course is in the nature of God and of Cain, expressed in their actions here. We must assume the Lord's prior communication of the nature of an acceptable sacrifice, first expressed in the animals killed to provide adequate covering for Adam and Eve (3:21). Thus Abel's offering indicated;

- *Faith* in the words of God. Faith rests upon God's words of promise. We are told in Hebrews 11:4 that *"by faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain"*.
- *Humble obedience* to the words of God.
- *Recognition* and *confession* of sin. Abel saw himself truly, as condemned under God's wrath for his sin.
- *Identification* with the sacrificed animal. Abel saw himself as worthy of the death he inflicted upon his sacrifice.
- *Substitution,* or his need for another to die in

his place.

- *Redemption*, that rescue from God's wrath must be purchased through blood shed in death.

"By which he [Abel] *obtained witness that he was righteous"* (Heb. 11:4).

Though Cain was first to bring his offering to God, the indications of his sacrifice were very different;

- He acknowledged God as a Supreme Being, and had some desire to please Him or he would not have so come.

- Yet he completely ignored God's prescribed way of coming, and came to God in his own way. This implied an attitude that proclaimed, "*I* demand the right to decide what is acceptable to God". This is arrogance!

- His gift was more *concession* than *confession*, which implied that he assumed himself worthy of God's presence and in a position to do God a favour rather than he being in desperate need of God's favour.

- He refused to accept his true status before God as under His just *wrath*.

The Apostle John later revealed the true nature of this man as being *"of that wicked one"* (I Jn. 3:12).

Note well the two basic attitudes of man as expressed in Abel and Cain. One fully submits his will to God's revelation. The other comes to God on his own terms. One wholly bows to God, while the other only nods to God. Cain's way is prideful independence from God. Abel's way is humble repentance before God. Cain, as every false religionist, brings to God something involving sacrifice. Yet he demonstrates his self-will in bringing his own selection. God, though willing in His grace to accept man, demonstrates His holiness by rejecting all but His one prescribed way to His acceptance. The same principle of course follows into our own day and every day. The world and worldly church so greatly stress their willingness to honour and bless God with their sacrifices, but God demands a specific type of sacrifice. The only one acceptable to Him. Jesus said, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life, no man cometh unto the Father but by Me"* (Jn. 14:6). The world, from Cain onward, is offended that God will not accept their beautiful gifts and "good" religion. But again, their gifts come with the assumption that they are in a position to bless God. They refuse to accept their shame before God, that they are in fact under His just wrath, that

Gen 4:5 But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.
Gen 4:6 And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?
Gen 4:7 If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.

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their sin is so bad that it deserves bloodshed and death, that their only hope for His pleasure is to earnestly seek *His* way to His pleasure in Jesus Christ alone. Cain graciously ignored God's words, as does the world and so much of modern religion. Abel faithfully heard and wisely responded according to what God said.

Vs. 5 – Cain's pride now comes to the surface in his anger over God's rejection (vs. 5). A right heart does not respond to God in this way. It looks for answers rather than lashing with anger. And note how it was pride, self-will, and anger that led on to discouragement. See and understand that rebellion against God is the true source of every such plummet to despair.

Vs. 6-7 – The great Counsellor asks astute and searching questions of Cain designed to expose his wrong heart. How good of the Lord to attempt to reason with such a one (Isa. 1:18). God's acceptance was still available to Cain if he really

wanted it. But the way of self-will leads only to sin's bondage. God would not accept the man with his self-will intact. Cain must turn fully from his sinful attitude and place his trust in the true God alone if he would know freedom from sin's bondage. The Lord pictures sin as a crouching beast here, ready to pounce (vs. 7). One ever has a choice of masters, either God or Satan, righteousness or sin (Rom. 6). Cain refused God's counsel even as he had refused God's lordship.

Notice how the first counsel, the finest of counsel from the finest Counsellor, was quite unsuccessful, at least upon the immediate target. *I am encouraged!* The fault and failure was in the counselee, not in the Counsellor. The first sermon was fruitless! And this was not due to bad preaching, but to bad hearing.

Vs. 8 – Consider this first murder;

- It was committed by the very first firstborn son.
- It was fratricide, or murder of one's own brother.

Gen 4:9 And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?
Gen 4:10 And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.
Gen 4:11 And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand;
Gen 4:12 When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.

- It had nothing to do with Abel's actions toward Cain, but was purely a matter of jealousy, *"Because his* [Cain's] *own works were evil, and his brother's righteous"* (I Jn. 3:12).

- It was *religious* persecution, or jealousy over matters relating to God.

Thus Abel's blood, crying from the ground, was an omen and pattern of all brutal persecution inflicted upon the righteous throughout the ages by the unsaved children of the devil, though calling themselves followers of God. Beware *"the way of Cain"* (Jude 11).

Oh how the far-reaching effects of sin must have come home with a shock to those first parents, with their first son so utterly corrupted and their second son now quite dead!

4:9-15 – Cain's Judgment

Gen 4:13 And Cain said unto the LORD, My punishment is greater than I can bear.
Gen 4:14 Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me.
Gen 4:15 And the LORD said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the LORD set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.

In God's confrontation of Cain this first man ever born of woman spoke the first human lie, and that to God (vs. 9). And his first recorded human question (*"Am I my brother's keeper?"*) carried many alarming elements;

- Brazen disrespect for the Almighty.
- Unmasked prideful arrogance.
- Loveless rejection of brotherly responsibility.
- Self-centred hatred for God and brothers.

Vs. 13-14 – Cain's reaction was grumbling complaint and self-pity. "You are being too harsh, too heavy-handed, too restrictive". It is the very thing the world says of a biblical view of God and His righteous way. Again, it was self-willed man fighting with God's decisions.

4:16-24 – Cain's Godless Line

Two distinct lines now become evident, lines traceable throughout human history down to the

present;

- 4:16-24 – Cain's godless line (the unsaved).
- 4:25- chapter 5 – Seth's godly line (the saved).

Both lines seem to come to the peak of their expression in their 7th generation.

Question

Who did Cain marry (vs. 17)? Who else but his sister or niece? Adam and Eve obviously continued to have children after the three sons highlighted here. Such marriage to close relatives was neither forbidden nor unadvisable in that day.

What do we now find in Cain's line? Just what we might expect;

- No evidence of devotion to God or humble repentance.
- Not a shred of concern for personal sin.
- Absence of any relation to God at all. They appear to live their lives utterly apart from their Creator.

Gen 4:23 And Lamech said unto his wives, Adah and Zillah, Hear my voice; ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech: for I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt.
Gen 4:24 If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold.

- Clever advances in natural human creativity, industry, and civilization, i.e. cities (vs. 17), agriculture (vs. 20), music or arts (vs. 21), metalworking and manufacturing (vs. 22). Oops! What happened to the "stone age"?

- Devoted only to earthly things, only to intellectual and cultural pursuits of human society.

Consider the very same spirit of the same line existing on earth today, those on *"the broad way that leadeth to destruction"*.

Vs. 23-24 – The focus now comes to rest upon Lamech, the 7th from Adam in the line of Cain, and one who seemingly was the very embodiment of godlessness;

- He was the first recorded polygamist (vs. 19), in defiance of God's established right of one man for one woman one time.

- He brags of his murder of someone who only wounded him.

Gen 4:25 And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth: For God, said she, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew.
Gen 4:26 And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the LORD.

- He arrogantly proclaims punishment on any who dared to touch him, punishment even greater than God promised on one touching Cain. Could Jesus have been referring to this picture of proud vengeance when instructing Peter to forgive offenders 70 x 7 in Matthew 18:21-22?

- He took "justice" (vengeance) into his own hands.

We see rebellion, pride, and independence in Lamech, all the marks of man without God (coming to the ultimate of earthly impressiveness in Antichrist at the last). Lamech is a picture of the self-made, macho, tough guy, so often the image of modern society's pin-up poster hero.

4:25-26 – Seth

What a contrast we find here in Seth, that one "appointed" of God *"instead of Abel"*. While the godless line of Cain was all about earth and irreligion, the line of Seth was founded on a heart

calling *"upon the name of the Lord".*

Chapter 5 – The Godly Side

Eight times throughout this chapter we hear the tolling of the bell, *"and he died",* pointing up the truth of God's first warning (2:17), and the lie of Satan's denial of it (3:4).

See how with this line of Seth we hear nothing of their arts, clever inventions, or natural abilities. We hear only of that matter most vital to God. These were men who walked with God and called upon Him. The message? What difference does it make what you achieve on this earth if you do not walk with God here? What difference does it make if you gain the whole world, with the reputation of sole possessor, and lose your own soul?

Note how the founding of this godly line upon true devotion to the Lord sets the direction through the ten generations from Adam to Noah in chapter 5. The first, second, seventh, and tenth in the line are given as samplings of a heredity that loved God, just as Cain founded a line altogether as godless as himself. Behold how we send an influence rippling into the following generations by our choice to walk with God…or not.

Gen 5:21 And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah:
Gen 5:22 And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters:
Gen 5:23 And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years:
Gen 5:24 And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.

Vs. 21-24 – Again, as in Cain's line, there is a rising to the peak in the 7th generation. Enoch stands out in this genealogy as one who did not just live *"after he begat",* as all others, but *"he walked with God after he begat".* It is the one characteristic repeatedly highlighted in this man (vs. 22 & 24). God's unique action in taking Enoch to Himself, exempting him from the universal rule of death, seems related to his close walk. Hebrews 11:5 confirms this suspicion, that Enoch left earth in such a manner because by faith *"he pleased God".* Lamech, the 7th through Cain, is never heard of again, as if cast to the oblivion such an arrogant, boastful life deserves. But this 7th through Seth is honoured both in heaven and earth. Conclusions are obvious! Will you believe it? It would have been no easy time to live and preach godliness with the likes of Lamech about. When has it ever been easy to preach on judgment to the ungodly? Yet Enoch so boldly walked and preached for 300 years (Jude 14-15). And when has the Lord not been there with honour and reward for all who walk with Him in this way? *"The eyes of the LORD run to and fro*

throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him" (II Chron. 16:9).

It seems odd now to see some of the names chosen for sons of the godly line. Both Enoch and Lamech (vs. 26) would have been names known among the ungodly in that day (4:17, 23). Why the choice of such names among the godly? It would have been something like the pastor naming his child "Hitler"! An effort at concession perhaps, showing a will to impress the godless? An effort to become like them in order to win them? Could this apparent trend give a clue as to why we come to Noah's day with the godly line reduced to only a godly *man* and family? The lines of distinction were so sharp at the first. But in the 650 years from Enoch to the flood it seems there was a breakdown of clear distinction between godly and ungodly lines. To mingle holy with unholy is so ruinous, for it only ever results in the holy defiled (Hag.2:11-13). Compromise always drags down the godly line and seldom lifts the ungodly. God's people and program have never really been hurt by the power of angry opposition, but compromise with evil always corrupts righteousness.

Gen 6:1 And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them,
Gen 6:2 That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.
Gen 6:3 And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.

Chapter 6 – A Boat to Fix

This chapter begins a 4-chapter section on the days and experiences of Noah.

6:1-7 – Compromise and Condition

Vs. 1-2 – What perhaps began with some indulgence of the ungodly line turned eventually to marriages with them.

Special Notice

Note well the influence of an unsaved wife. Such marriages handed Satan power to bring an entire race to ruin. Compare Israel's fall from glory through Solomon's godless wives. Now understand the zeal of Ezra in chapter 9 of his book and Nehemiah in chapter 13 of his to stop such marriages.

Gen 6:4 There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.
Gen 6:5 And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.
Gen 6:6 And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.
Gen 6:7 And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.

Some suppose *"the sons of God"* here in vs. 4 refer to angels (fallen) cohabiting with women, resulting in a race of half-human *"giants in the earth in those days"*. Such a view is fanciful, even fun, but foreign to the text. Such interpreters attempt to support their view with thoughts such as;

- The phrase *"sons of God"* always refers to angels elsewhere in the Bible (Job 1:6; 2:1).

- The godly line of men are never referred to in this way in the context. If these are to be understood as men descending from Seth, why not just say so and avoid all the confusion.

- Those of Seth's line were not all godly to be so termed *"the sons of God".* In fact most of them perished together with wicked in the flood.

- The historian Josephus, together with ancient Jewish interpreters, the writer of the apocryphal book of Enoch, and the early

Christians all understood this as a reference to angels.

- We seem to see particular punishment dealt to some angels in N.T. portions such as II Peter 2:4-5 & Jude 6, which perhaps refer to the context of these days of Noah (I Pet. 3:18-20).

- The term *"giants"* (the Hebrew word *nephilim*, from the root "to fall") is literally "fellers", either in the sense of those who fall upon or attack others in violence, or perhaps "fallers", i.e. those fallen, as rebellious angels.

In answer to such a view;

- God often referred to the people of Israel as His children and even sons (Deut. 14:1; Hos. 1:10; 11:1).

- In speaking judgment in this chapter, God deals only with *"man"* and *"all flesh"* (6:3,5,6, 7,12,13,17), without mention of angels.

- If the reference is to angels, why not just say so, avoiding all the confusion.

- Are angels motivated as men by attraction to physical beauty as indicated here (vs. 2)?

- Christ's words in Matthew 22:30 seem to suggest that angels do not even have sexual capacity let alone physical constitution.

- Such a notion of angels and humans producing some kind of 3rd race violates God's concept of reproduction *"after his kind"*, so highlighted in chapter 1.

- The principle follows in God's forbiddance of Israel to intermarry with the heathen nations around them, and of an unequal marital yoke for N.T. believers (II Cor. 6). Not people with angels, but godly people with ungodly people.

- The *nephilim* of vs. 4 likely refer to giants among men, not fallen angels. The term is only found elsewhere in Numbers 13:33, and there it clearly refers to huge men.

- It is not stated that these *nephilim* are the result of the intermarriages of vs. 1-2.

The obvious indication here is that there comes a limit to God's grace (vs. 3), and they were brimming the edge of that limit in that day. Therefore the Lord limited their remaining years of opportunity to 120 (vs. 3).

Behold the goodness and severity of God. His

Gen 6:8 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.
Gen 6:9 These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.

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judgment is announced, not immediately sent. It was sure, but not for right now. Time was allowed because *"the Lord is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance".* Compare the *"forty days"* of Jonah's warning to Nineveh, which was God's gracious gift of opportunity for repentance and deliverance. Even that God is willing to hold back His hand until man becomes so utterly corrupt reveals His longsuffering grace. Compare Sodom and Gomorrah left until there were fewer than 10 righteous left (Gen. 18). In His mercy God warns, even as He has given promise and warning to mankind in our current age that *"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him"* (Jn. 3:36). And such longsuffering we see here even when *"the wickedness of man was great"* and *"every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually"* (vs. 5). *What unspeakable ruin sin has brought!*

<u>6:8-22</u> – *"Noah found grace"*

Noah presents such a bright study in such an

exceedingly dark day. The sinister backdrop God has so carefully painted for us in the summary descriptions of sin's permeating progression through the entire race of man;

- All but consuming even that line of the devout.
- To the point of almost complete human corruption and ruin.
- To the verge of almost the complete destruction of *"all flesh"* by the Lord.

On the Side

Evident from this true account of beginnings is the fact that mankind has not "risen" from cannibalism to culture, as secular anthropology might propose. Neither has man culturally matured from animism to polytheism to monotheism. Man's tendency is not upward but downward, from a righteous walk with the only true and living God to the religious perversions evident in the societies of men today.

It is in this context that the life of Noah shines forth so brilliantly;

- Vs. 8 – *"Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord"* – He had received God's grace, the only basis upon which man can find God's favour.

- Vs. 9 – *"Noah was a just* [righteous] *man"* – He had received God's righteousness and displayed it in his life.

- Vs. 9 – *"Noah was…perfect"* – The idea of "perfect" is upright and sincere like Job, not sinless perfection like Jesus.

- Vs. 9 – *"In his generation"* – Such a man in such a day is a work of God and a marvel to behold!! As Enoch, Noah was *"a preacher of righteousness"* who *"condemned the world"* by the testimony of his life and words (II Pet. 2:5; Heb. 11:7).

- Vs. 9 – *"And Noah walked with God"* – He walked in fellowship with God, even in such a day. And if Noah could consistently walk with God in his day, then no man has valid excuse for not walking with God in any day. To walk with God in such a day meant to walk with God *alone.*

- Vs. 22 – *"Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he"* – He believed and obeyed God's words, with attention to the

detail of it. The obedience of the man is underscored by repetition here. It is what is highlighted about Noah in that "Hall of Faith" of Hebrews 11 as well. Noah heard and heeded God's warning, he being *"moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house"* (11:7).

Perhaps more than anything else the lesson of Noah's life is that under no circumstance is it ever impossible to walk with God.

God clearly laid out the facts before Noah;

- That He *would* judge *"all flesh"*, and that it would be Him doing the judging (vs. 13).
- *How* He would judge *"all flesh"* (vs. 17).
- *Why* He would so judge the earth (vs. 11-13).
- *What* Noah must do to prepare (vs. 14-16).
- The *purpose* of the ark (vs. 18-21).
- And that Noah and family were included in the ark's saving purpose (vs. 18-21).

The ark was merely a floatation devise for the preservation of man and animal. There was only one ark built, with only one door of entrance. The

ark is a type of Jesus Christ, in whom alone we may find refuge today from God's coming wrath upon the ungodly. There is only one way of entrance into that one way of preservation or deliverance. ***Are you in?***

"And they that went in,
went in male and female of all flesh,
as God had commanded him:
and the LORD shut him in"

(Gen. 7:16)

Class 4 – Genesis 7-9

Noah and His Ark

At the end of chapter 6 the Lord instructed Noah concerning the construction of the ark for the preservation of human and land animal life on earth. The ark was basically a huge enclosed barge, designed for the purpose of floating a great multitude of creatures with stability. It was constructed of dense *"gopher wood"* and then covered with pitch inside and out (6:14). The ark's dimensions are given in 6:15;

- Length – 300 cubits = 137 metres = 450 feet.
- Width – 50 cubits = 23 metres = 75 feet.
- Height – 30 cubits = 14 metres = 46 feet.
- Proportions = approximately 10 x 1.7 x 1.

A box of such proportions would be quite stable on water.

There were three *"stories"* (levels or decks) within the ark (6:16), serving to utilize the inside space more efficiently, and providing greater rigidity to the whole. Each of these decks were divided into *"rooms"* or stalls (6:14). Henry Morris equates the volume within the ark to approximately 522 railroad

boxcars, and then goes on to relate the feasibility of the ark for its purpose. Since one railroad boxcar can carry 240 sheep, 522 boxcars could carry over 125,000 sheep. There were to be two of every kind of animal, and seven each of *"clean"* animals (7:2), apparently indicating animals for domesticating or for use in sacrifice. Biology tells us that there are less than 18,000 species of land creatures and birds upon earth today. Suppose we double this to account for extinctions since the Flood, thus 36,000 different species. Thus with 2 of each (male & female) there were perhaps about 72,000 animals on the ark. Now the average size of all land creatures, factoring in the abundance of small ones, comes to something much less than the size of a sheep, but let's suppose the average size equal to a sheep. Thus the ark had room for about 125,000 animals, but needed only to accommodate about 72,000. Less than 60% of the ark's available volume was actually needed to accommodate animals, leaving plenty of room for people, food (6:21), and the few spare clean animals. Actually very little animal food or waste would have been involved, since the Lord likely put all the animals into a state of hibernation over the months they were afloat. This also would have served to calm the more vicious nature of the carnivores. Water would have been abundantly available from the rains. As

well, the relatively few larger animal species (elephants, mammoths, dinosaurs, giraffes, etc.) would surely have been represented by smaller juveniles. Far from being the joke of the sceptics, the dimensions and provisions of the ark were utterly appropriate in every way. The Lord easily moved the animals to the ark through migratory instinct, for He had told Noah that the animals *"shall come unto thee"* (6:20). He who made them can move them. As well, the geography of the earth would have been very different in Noah's day, likely with only a single continent rather than several as today. All animals of earth would have had access to the Middle East, that centre point of the world, where Noah's ark awaited. *Be no longer faithless but believing!* If not by virtue of simple faith in God's eternal Word then through the practical possibility of this historical event faithfully reported to us by God.

Chapter 7 – Rain from Heaven

We find now a surprising amount of detail on the Flood of Noah, in comparison to the more summary report of previous events. Chapters 7-8 both describe the days of the Flood upon earth. The particular focus of chapter 7 is the water rising and prevailing, and the focus of chapter 8 is the water

Gen 7:1 And the LORD said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation.
Gen 7:2 Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female: and of beasts that are not clean by two, the male and his female.
Gen 7:3 Of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and the female; to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth.
Gen 7:4 For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth.
Gen 7:5 And Noah did according unto all that the LORD commanded him.
Gen 7:6 And Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth.

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abating.

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Chapter 6 – The reason for the water.
Chapter 7 – The rising of the water.
Chapter 8 – The receding of the water.

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We come into chapter 7 at the beginning of the final week before the rain began (vs. 4, *"for yet seven days"*, vs. 10, *"after seven days"*). It was the final call for boarding! With vs. 11 the rain began to fall. Understand that this was the first rain ever to fall on earth (2:5-6), and this sent in the judgment of earth's first Flood. Not only did the rain fall for over a month as the water vapour canopy of the earth's upper atmosphere fell to earth, but as well *"all the fountains of the great deep"* or great subterranean seas began to gush forth their water to the earth's

Gen 7:7 And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood.
Gen 7:8 Of clean beasts, and of beasts that are not clean, and of fowls, and of every thing that creepeth upon the earth,
Gen 7:9 There went in two and two unto Noah into the ark, the male and the female, as God had commanded Noah.
Gen 7:10 And it came to pass after seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth.
Gen 7:11 In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.
Gen 7:12 And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.

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surface. In the last verse of the chapter we are told that the rising and prevailing stage of the great Flood involved 5 months or 150 days.

Now many have raised the question of whether Noah's Flood covered the *whole* earth or just a portion of it. Please understand that the answer to this largely depends on whether we "interpret" Genesis 7 or simply read it normally. Upon an uncomplicated consideration of 7:17-23, can we honestly come to a difference of opinion as to what the Lord is describing to us? As with the creation account in chapter 1, if the Lord meant to describe a worldwide universal Flood could there be another way He might have put it more clearly? Observe;

- Vs. 19 – *"All the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered".*
- Vs. 20 – *"The mountains were covered"* – Could this even happen on a local scale

without universal effect?

Now from another angle to remove all doubt;

- Vs. 21 – *"All flesh died that moved upon the earth".*
- Vs. 21 – *"Every creeping thing that creepeth upon earth".*
- Vs. 21 – *"Every man".*
- Vs. 22 – *"All in whose nostrils was the breath of life".*
- Vs. 22 – *"All that was in the dry land, died".*
- Vs. 23 – *"Every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground".*

And from a more positive slant;

- Vs. 23 – *"<u>Noah</u> <u>only</u> remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark".*

I am afraid it would take a very different kind of man than me to see this flood as a local affair. Some among the *"fools and slow of heart to believe"* might say, "Agh no man, it is a 'spiritual book', not meant to be historically or scientifically accurate. Leave science to the scientists, and let's just look for

spiritual significance and meaning here. Do not let yourself get all wrought up with wooden literalism. It will run you into all kinds of tangles with science and the really smart people of earth". But is this account given as mythical, allegorical, spiritual, or some such? Is it not written as if relating legitimate history? Be honest! Only *people* (faithless people) make such an account difficult. God did not! God's obvious purpose here is to state how He accomplished His resolve to destroy every last man and air-breathing creature, except those on the boat!

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Scattered Thoughts on Noah's Flood

One writer made the interesting statement that the story of the Flood is a "universal tradition in all branches of the human family, with the sole exception of the black race". The universal nature of the account among men must tell us something of the believability of it.

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The Lord said to Noah *"come thou…into the ark"* (7:1), suggesting the Lord's presence was there with them in that place of refuge and rescue.

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The Lord assured Noah that He had *"seen"* him *"righteous before Me"* (vs. 1), again indicating the Lord's watchful awareness of man. It is a truth that is the delight of the saved and the frustration of the wicked.

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Not only does the Flood display the awful severity of the Lord's judgment upon the wicked, but we see His grace and tender care in preserving the righteous as well. He took the initiative to shut Noah into His place of safety (vs. 16). In fact God's judgment upon evil and evildoers is at the same time His grace upon those who share His hatred of evil.

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The ark pictures the redeemed secure in Jesus Christ, and lifted above the day of God's wrath, even as the church of all true believers in Jesus will be raptured before the Great Tribulation and carried beyond the days of God's judgment to a wonderful new world.

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Gen 8:1 And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark: and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters asswaged;
Gen 8:2 The fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained;
Gen 8:3 And the waters returned from off the earth continually: and after the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters were abated.
Gen 8:4 And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat.
Gen 8:5 And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month: in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, were the tops of the mountains seen.

Chapter 8 – Floods Abate

Now in this chapter it is the account of the Flood receding, and the ark and those within returning to solid ground. But what about all the water of such a worldwide Flood? Where could this have gone for land to appear again? There are many means by which God exposed dry land;

- Ocean basins deepened.
- Continent(s) lifted.
- Evaporation.
- Ice caps formed.

Look well to the patience of Noah in this chapter, to wait until the time was right, until he had clear guidance from the Lord to leave the ark (8:15-19). When we are willing to endure discomfort and wait upon the Lord for His programme and guidance the

Gen 8:20 And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.
Gen 8:21 And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done.
Gen 8:22 While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.

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timing is always perfect. As Noah displayed careful obedience in the difficult doing of what the Lord had spoken (6:22; 7:5), so he now displays the same in waiting on the word the Lord had not yet given.

And consider that dove returning to Noah with an olive branch (vs. 11). It is a symbol so loved by the world as an emblem of peace. Yet one cannot remove such a placid picture from its context. Peace only came after the *storm*. True peace can only come after God's just judgment. Men cannot know peace outside of righteousness, and a righteousness that actively purges out evil and evildoers. Indeed this is just what the Flood was all about. Folks tend to avoid confrontation of those in the wrong under the false banner of "keeping the peace". But peace only ultimately comes through the trauma of right dealing with wrong, and the removal of those who stubbornly embrace evil or error (I Cor. 5). God's right must *overwhelm* every rebellious enemy of righteousness and peace.

Gen 9:1 And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.
Gen 9:2 And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered.
Gen 9:3 Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.
Gen 9:4 But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat.

8:20-22 – Worship

The firstfruits of Noah's existence in the new world were given to worship, thus offering his thanks and expressing his need for the Lord and dependence upon Him. As well Noah expressed his givenness to his God in such burnt offerings. The whole burnt offering of the later levitical system (Lev. 1) would communicate the same, whole-hearted consecration to the Lord. The Lord accepted Noah's offering and purposed in Himself to never so curse man with a flood again (vs. 21-22). He established seasons while the earth remains, and perhaps now more distinct seasons due to the climatic changes.

Chapter 9 – Sunshine

9:1-7 – New Beginning

This chapter comes as the beaming sun after the passing storm. Noah now becomes the new head of the human race in this new beginning for mankind, with every man on earth descended from him (9:18-

Gen 9:5 And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man.
Gen 9:6 Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.

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19). The expressions here are similar to man's beginning in 1:28. As with Adam, the Lord blessed Noah, commanded his fruitfulness (vs. 1, 7), and ensured his dominion over all creatures (vs. 2). This last aspect carried the added feature of the fear of man in animals, which we have not seen before this. And as with Adam in 1:29, so the Lord speaks of His provision of food in vs. 3. In comparing these two verses we assume that men were not meat-eaters before the Flood. In fact it seems there were no flesh-eaters at all before the fall (chapter 3), since there was no death before that time. Man's fall into sin with the groaning and travailing it brought to all creation must have brought an entirely new balance to nature, with the entrance of death and creatures for the first time preying upon other creatures. And now as well, with the introduction of flesh eating, we find the first prohibition against the eating of blood, later entrenched in the Mosaic Law.

Vs. 5-6 – The basis of human government – Knowing the nature of man (8:21), the Lord now initiated the death penalty or capital punishment. Those who

Gen 9:11 And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth.
Gen 9:12 And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations:
Gen 9:13 I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth.

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deny the value of capital punishment, at least for murder, deny the value of *God's own counsel*, for it is He who first proclaimed it a useful deterrent to the evil way of man. The principle is still meant to be in effect today, for human government *"beareth not the sword"* for the purpose of empty threats (Rom. 13:1-7).

9:8-17 – God's Covenant

We find such a lengthy expression here of God's promise or covenant that He will never again destroy the creatures of earth in a worldwide flood. The repetitive emphasis of this promise perhaps reflects the horror of the Flood and thus the need for such strong reassurance. This was an unconditional covenant, with no aspect to be kept by man to ensure God's fulfilment of His promise. It is God's grace that He would remove from man the fear of another such Flood, especially in view of man's failures up to that point. In the same way, it is all of God's grace that He would remove all fear

of death and hell for those believing His promise of life in Jesus Christ (Heb. 2). As a token or symbol of His promise the Lord put the rainbow *"in the cloud"* (vs. 13-17).

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Thoughts on God's Rainbow

It is a small, faded glimpse into the surpassing splendour of God's own presence (Ezek. 1:28; Rev. 4:3).

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It is produced by a combination of storm and sunshine, a reminder of the sunshine of God's grace after the storm of His wrath poured out upon human sin.

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The multi-coloured beauty of the rainbow relates the inexpressible beauty of the many facets of God's grace.

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As Jacob's ladder, the rainbow touches both heaven and earth, suggesting the wonder of Jesus Christ, He who alone is both God and man, therefore reaching both to heaven and earth, the only way

Gen 9:18 And the sons of Noah, that went forth of the ark, were Shem, and Ham, and Japheth: and Ham is the father of Canaan.
Gen 9:19 These are the three sons of Noah: and of them was the whole earth overspread.

God has given for man to find connection with Himself in His exceeding grace.

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Though through lack of sun and abundance of clouds we often cannot see the rainbow, yet God can *always* see it where the sun ever shines above the clouds. As one writer said, "It is not our sight of the rainbow, but God's, that constitutes the power and peace of this covenant". Even so, we often cannot see the assurance of God's promises with our physical eyes, especially when the storms of life are crashing around us. It is at such times that we are forced to remember and believe what *God* says and sees, despite our own inability to see it.

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9:18-29 – Noah and Sons

With such a fresh new start and such gracious promises from God we might expect all to turn out well now. But we are in for a disappointment! How the bright prospects for mankind so soon turned to

Gen 9:20 And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard:
Gen 9:21 And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent.
Gen 9:22 And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without.

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trouble. It becomes the story of man. For though so harsh and far-reaching the divine judgment of the Flood might have been, it could not reach to the depths of corruption man carries in his sin nature. The Lord might very well lament as He later did over Israel in His parable of the vineyard (Isa. 5:4), *"What could have been done more to My vineyard, that I have not done in it?"* And, as if to highlight the depth and deception of human sin, it was in Noah himself that the evil begins, that one so held up to us before the Flood as one who *"found grace in the eyes of the Lord…a just man and perfect…and walked with God"* (6:8-9). One walking with the Lord today carries no guarantees concerning his future walk. The sin nature remains deep within, and therefore the need of every believer to keep his heart with all diligence before the Lord is an ongoing work to the grave. As with Israel in their conquest of Canaan, when we stop fighting the enemy within, it soon takes over.

Note here how God does not hide the vices, even of his great ones. He is as impartial as He is honest in

Gen 9:23 And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness.
Gen 9:24 And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him.
Gen 9:25 And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.

His reporting, even as He will be in dealing with every man at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Such an open approach is evidence of God's authorship as well. For human authors, particularly those reporting on the exploits of their own race, would tend to hide the faults of such a national hero.

Vs. 21 – Noah first fell to drunkenness. The Bible has much to say on the evil of this vice (Prov. 20:1; 23:20-21, 29-35; Isa. 5:11, 22; Rom. 13:13; I Cor. 5:11; 6:10; Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:18). His drunkenness then led to shameful immodesty, with Noah lying naked and exposed in his tent. Much of the evil of drink is its ability to separate a man from all dignity and turn him into an absolute imbecile! *"Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise"* (Prov. 20:1).

Vs. 22-25 – Several uncertainties now arise in this account;

- What evil did Ham commit with relation to his father (vs. 22, 24)?

- Was it merely a case of failing to hide his father's shame?
- Was there an indecent desire or act involved?
- Was it a case of gloating over his father's shame, or slanderously calling attention to it?

It seems certain that Ham's wrong had something to do with his attitude. The fact that he told his brothers instead of quietly and appropriately taking the situation in hand himself showed a wrong heart in him. Though such an evil response may seem insignificant to us, it obviously was not to God. And why did Noah then curse Ham's son, Canaan, rather than Ham (vs. 25)? What part did Canaan have in Ham's sin? No reason for this is given in the context. Perhaps since Ham was already blessed by God (9:1) he could not now be cursed. Perhaps it is God's grace that only one portion of Ham's line was so cursed, and not the whole. Perhaps the characteristics of Ham were already evident in Canaan. And it must be noted that this was a curse of servanthood on Canaan's line, not of eternal damnation. Individuals could still be saved, as Ruth out of cursed Moab. Canaan was to be made *"a servant of servants"*, describing an underscored servanthood or slavery. We can trace the fulfilment of this in history, with the land of

Gen 9:26 And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.
Gen 9:27 God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.

Canaan's descendants ultimately taken by Israel, the descendants of Shem (Semitics), and the Canaanites forced into slavery (Josh. 9:23; I Ki. 9:20-21). Perhaps in some small way we can see something of the principle of this curse extending to the rest of Ham's descendant, who settled in Africa, in their many centuries of slavery to the descendants of Japheth, who settled Europe and Russia (see the genealogies of these three sons in Genesis 10).

Do not miss the fact that Noah's sin became the occasion for Ham's. Our life choices never involve only ourselves. Our every choice either pulls others up or down. The fact that I am indeed *"my brother's keeper"* ever beckons me to choose to walk in righteousness before God and man.

In contrast to the dishonouring activities of Noah and Ham, Shem and Japheth show greatest concern for their father's dignity (vs. 23).

Vs. 26 – The blessing of Shem's descendants would involve their relation to their God. The blessing of

Japheth would in some way piggyback Shem's blessing. Perhaps this refers to the descendants of Japheth receiving that blessing of the Messiah first offered to Shem's descendants, Gentiles entering into that unique relation to God by faith in Jesus Christ which was first offered to Israel. With the death of Jesus the Acts account records how God first sent the message of life in Christ north and west throughout the Roman Empire (Europe).

On the Side

Jesus made the point in Matthew 24:37-42 that the days of His coming to judgment will be as the days of Noah;

- Mankind's thoughts only continual evil.
- The people of earth completely without thought of God, and consumed with the earthly things of *"marrying and giving in marriage".*
- His judgment utterly unexpected, with the people of earth clueless that the end of their days had come.
- All living in apparent security.
- The word of God preached but ignored, with

little responsiveness and few converts, as in Noah's day when only a *"few, that is, eight souls were saved"* (I Pet. 3:20).

They *"knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be"* (Matt. 24:39).

Will your soul be found safe in that Son of Man, Jesus Christ, in His coming?

"Verily, verily I say unto you, he that hears My word, and believes on Him that sent Me, has everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death into life" (Jn. 5:24).

"Now the LORD had said
unto Abram,
Get thee out of thy country,
and from thy kindred,
and from thy father's house,
unto a land that I will show thee"

(Genesis 12:1)

Class 5 – Genesis 10-13

Chapter 10 – Line of Shem

This chapter gives the genealogies of Japheth, Ham, and Shem, populating the flood-washed world and founding the nations of earth. Attention is first given to the beginnings of all nations here before turning to greatest focus on the line of Shem, for out of Shem would arise that chosen Hebrew race through which the Redeemer of man will come. This is the particular track the Lord is keen to trace, yet He highlights here at the very outset Israel's one-blood connection with all nations of earth through Noah (as well as her share in sin with all mankind in Adam). It was meant to be a short leash on Israel's national pride, and it was meant to indicate that from the beginning God had an eye to *all* people of earth. Thus the old Jewish hatred of Gentiles was never God's hatred, for Israel, as the church, were meant to be God's channel of grace to all nations. Even as Jonah's mission displayed.

10:2-5 – The Family of Japheth

Many of these names are found again in Ezekiel 38, when describing the future invasion of Israel by Gog and Magog from *"the north quarters"* (38:6), indicating regions north of the Middle East. The

Gen 10:8 And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth.
Gen 10:9 He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD.
Gen 10:10 And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.
Gen 10:11 Out of that land went forth Asshur, and builded Nineveh, and the city Rehoboth, and Calah,
Gen 10:12 And Resen between Nineveh and Calah: the same is a great city.

Jewish historian, Josephus, states that Japheth settled north of the Black Sea. Word etymologies point to Russia, Germany, and Europe as the land of the Japhethites. Tarshish (vs. 4) was somewhere across the Mediterranean (Jonah 1), perhaps the area of modern Spain.

10:6-20 – The Family of Ham

Arab and African nations are represented in Ham. Mizraim is Egypt. Cush (vs. 6) seems later to be associated with Ethiopia, Ludim (vs. 13) with Libya, and Phut with North Africa. And of course vs. 14 makes the source of the Philistines clear. There is focus and certainly great clarity on the land and descendants of Canaan in vs. 15-19.

Another key focus among Ham's line is Nimrod and *"his kingdom"* in vs. 8-12. This man is described as one who *"began to be a mighty one in the earth"* (vs. 8), and *"a mighty hunter before the LORD"* (vs. 9). So great was this one as *"a mighty hunter"* that he

became proverbial as a standard of comparison (vs. 9). Nimrod began the city of Babel and other cities of the Fertile Crescent to the north, in what later became Assyria.

The Hebrew word translated *"mighty"* is the same used in Genesis 6:4, carrying no good connotation there to be sure. There, as here, it seems to speak of one mighty *against the Lord.* In fact Nimrod's name means "rebel", perhaps epitomizing the same spirit of independent rebellion so unbridled in the days before the Flood. Imagine naming your child "Rebel". It speaks of an attitude. Something ugly was happening there.

"The beginning of his kingdom" in vs. 10 is the first time a "kingdom" is ever mentioned in the Bible. From this beginning, and throughout the Word of God, the name and kingdom of Babel or Babylon comes to represent everything godless. The infamous false religion and idolatry stemming from that place became the circling pack of wolves, snapping at the heart of Israel throughout O.T. history, and broadcasting its noxious seeds of pagan religion around the globe. We will see a bit more in chapter 11.

10:21-32 – The Family of Shem

Gen 11:1 And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech.
Gen 11:2 And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there.
Gen 11:3 And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them throughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for morter.
Gen 11:4 And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.

As in the genealogy of chapter 5, the featured son is listed last. And this will lead on to the Lord's particular attention to Shem's line in the next chapter, and throughout the rest of the Bible.

Significance is given to Shem in vs. 21 as *"the father of all the children of Eber"*. Apparently it is from the name Eber that the term "Hebrew" stems. Eber gave birth to his son, Peleg (meaning "division"), in the year the earth was divided into the nations from Babel (vs. 24). And from Peleg's branch the sons of Eber or the Hebrew nation arose.

Chapter 11 – Tower to Heaven

11:1-9 – Tower of Babel

Now we find an expansion on the mention of Nimrod's kingdom in 10:10, with more insight into the nature of that first human empire.

Vs. 1-4 – The resolve of the people – The people of

earth had yet to disperse around the world after the Flood. They were all dwelling in one place between the rivers (Mesopotamia), and all were of one language. Their purposes (vs. 4) were to build a city, to build a tower *"unto heaven",* to make a name for themselves, and to avoid being scattered. Undaunted by the lack of stone in the area, they produced bricks from clay. In fact the ruins of old Babylon show this form of construction. Did you notice how we hear no mention of the Lord in the purposes or project of this lot? It is all about *"us…us…us".* Natural man does *"not like to retain God in their knowledge",* ever attempting to get along without his Creator. The driving force behind their little clay kingdom was pride, in their desire to be known. But for whose sake? It was only man glorifying man, running the same track that brought Satan down (Isa. 14:12-14). It was the same spirit that later so characterized King Nebuchadnezzar who brought Babylon to its greatest glory before being humbled by the Most High (Dan. 4:29-37). Their purpose was expressed in the very name of their leader – *rebellion.* For there seems to be here a wilful determination to oppose the Lord's repeated command to *"replenish the earth"* (vs. 4; 1:28; 8:9:1, 7). Did they think their combined strength sufficient to oppose God's purpose? Man united under a mighty human leader

Gen 11:5 And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded.
Gen 11:6 And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do.
Gen 11:7 Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.
Gen 11:8 So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city.
Gen 11:9 Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.

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will make the same blunder again at Armageddon under Antichrist. Man without fear of God fears all else, and thus finds courage only in human multitudes.

Vs. 5-9 – The Lord's resolve – Note the touch of irony in vs. 5 in that *"the Lord came down"*. They had not quite made it *"unto heaven"* it would seem!

Vs. 6-7 – The Lord discerned the simple solution to their supposed strength through unity in the sudden, miraculous confusion of languages. Like separating a couple of bad boys so the trouble stops, or separating two logs burning together so the fire goes out.

Vs. 9 – And so the name of the place became *"Babel"* (Hebrew) or "Babylon" (Greek), meaning "confusion". Behold how the great name they would make for themselves was turned only to "confusion",

and that for all time. Babylon has become a name noted for human grandeur, but tainted with rebellion and folly.

How easily the Lord put paid to their purposes, forcing the dispersion they were so determined to avoid. He is so capable of forcing a man to what he would avoid in his defiance (as Jonah). All that man *proposed* here in his proud independence and rebellion the Lord *disposed* of in vs. 5-9. Their pride was *"an abomination to the Lord"*, and as Wisdom promises, *"though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished"* (Prov. 16:5). Their proud hand-in-hand unity was no strength at all against the Almighty. All who dare attempt to so lift themselves up in pride against the Lord will be brought down to shame. Do not ever be fool enough to fight against the Lord, for He has promised that He will abase the proud (Prov. 29:23). Do not ever be fool enough to seek the honour of people, *"for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ"* (Gal. 1:10).

Part of the Lord's purpose in man's scattering was to separate out a people for Himself, which is precisely where the attention of the text now returns.

11:10-32 – Generations of Shem

God's lens now begins to zoom in on one man. In fact the whole pursuit of the remaining verses of this chapter are the introduction of that man in many ways holding centre stage throughout the rest of the O.T. The line of Shem, through Eber and Peleg, leads on to Abraham (Abram).

On the Side

Notice how human longevity begins to fall off in these days after the Flood. So much so that;

- Noah lived longer than,
    - His great, great, great grandson, Peleg!
    - His great, great, great, great, great, great grandson, Nahor!
- Noah died when Abram was 60 yrs old(?).
- Shem saw nine following generations die before him.
- Shem lived 35 years beyond Abraham's death (25:7-8, Abraham was 175 yrs at death).

This falling human life-span likely resulted from the collapse of that protective water vapour canopy in the earth's upper atmosphere during the 40 days of rain, thus leaving the earth greatly exposed to the

Gen 12:1 Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:
Gen 12:2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:
Gen 12:3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

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harmful effects of the sun's rays.

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Chapter 12 – Go & Dwell

The great prominence of Abraham can be seen in the 14 chapters devoted to his life (chapter 12-25, more than ¼ of Genesis). The biblical record of world history has been greatly abbreviated up to this point. Half of O.T. history has been covered so far from a time perspective (about 2000 years), as if hurriedly pressing on to this account of Abraham, as if what has gone before merely laid the foundation for this.

Abraham is the only Bible figure described as God's friend (Isa. 41:8; II Chron. 20:7; James 2:23). He was a man of tremendous faith and follow-through, though beginning with a halting, partial obedience, and then growing into a fuller measure of faithful obedience with maturity.
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12:1-3 – God's Call

Here is God's key call and pivotal promise, commonly referred to as the *Abrahamic Covenant.* God called Abraham while he yet lived in Ur of the Chaldees (Acts 7:2-4), promising him a land, a seed, and blessing, and calling him to leave his country. As always in God's dealing with man there was a *call* to some obedience, combined with a *promise* of some blessing. Abraham was to leave his country, kindred, and father's house and go to a land the Lord promised that He would show him. His call involved not only motion but separation, even as God's call to salvation in Jesus Christ.

Yet we are told in 11:31 that Abraham's father (Terah) and nephew (Lot) came up with him out of Ur, intending to emigrate to Canaan as well it would seem. But instead all stopped short and dwelt in Haran, north of Canaan on the rivers. Though Abraham had begun with a step of faith in God's promise and obedience to His call, yet he failed to follow through. For he landed in Haran with a part-way obedience of leaving yet still cleaving to his kindred and father's house, and stopping short of the land God would show him. Perhaps it was the Lord who then took Terah out of the way in death (11:32), removing his *"father's house"* from Abraham, and prodding him on to the Promised

Gen 12:4 So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.
Gen 12:5 And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.
Gen 12:6 And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land.
Gen 12:7 And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him.

Land. The Lord is quite willing to remove from us what we cling to above His perfect will. There is no record of any altars or communion with God in Haran, that place of only part-way obedience.

12:4-9 – On to Canaan

Abraham did finally move south into Canaan, but unfortunately Lot went with him. The point is underscored by repetition in vs. 4-5, for Lot's inclusion still represented partial disobedience, indeed the final element in a full response to the Lord's original call. It seems likely it was for this cause that the Lord so very briefly announced Abraham's arrival in the land (vs. 7), as He had promised He would do (*"a land that I will show thee"*).

Yet see now how the promise had grown, from a land to be *shown*, to a land to be *given* to Abraham's descendants. It was Abraham's reward for his

Gen 12:8 And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the LORD, and called upon the name of the LORD.
Gen 12:9 And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the south.
Gen 12:10 And there was a famine in the land: and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine was grievous in the land.
Gen 12:11 And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon:
Gen 12:12 Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive.
Gen 12:13 Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee.

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obedience. The Lord is always pleased with every step of faith. He is ever faithful to reward every obedience (Heb. 11:6).

Vs. 8 – *"Pitched his tent"* – *"By faith he* [Abraham] *sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles* [tents]" (Heb. 11:9). Abraham's altar and tent describe our own existence on this earth, as worshippers of God, while *"strangers and pilgrims on the earth"*, for we *"desire a better country, that is, an heavenly"* (Heb. 11:13-16).

12:10-20 – Famine and Trek to Egypt

The Lord now, for the first time, sent famine upon His people in their Promised Land, seeking to move Abraham to recognize the one outstanding aspect of His command Abraham had yet failed to obey. His *"kindred"* was still with him in the presence of Lot.

Gen 12:14 And it came to pass, that, when Abram was come into Egypt, the Egyptians beheld the woman that she was very fair.
Gen 12:15 The princes also of Pharaoh saw her, and commended her before Pharaoh: and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house.
Gen 12:16 And he entreated Abram well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and menservants, and maidservants, and she asses, and camels.
Gen 12:17 And the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai Abram's wife.

And further, would it not have been wiser for Abraham not trust the Lord through the famine? Was he going to die there while holding such promises from God? But alas, he chose the easier (?) route so many would choose after him, to run from hardships in the land, instead of looking to God for His reasons and provisions through the trial. Abraham fell to a faltering faith, to a near-sighted preoccupation with the fearful circumstance of the famine, rather than keeping his focus and trust on the Lord of all circumstances. Again we read of no altars in Egypt, because God's man did not belong there any more than he did in Haran. He belonged in that place of promise, pleading with the Lord for the reason why, for His lessons in the lean times. We read of no communication with the Lord in the days of David's fearful flight from Saul to the Philistines either (I Sam. 27-29). And when the Lord at last brought David low enough that he finally looked up (I Sam. 30:1-8) he was not long in returning to that land of promise. Unless bidden by the Lord or forced to it by captivity, no son of

Abraham ever left the land without coming to trouble across the border. And he never stayed out for long when at last his heart was right with his God.

How quickly Abraham, the man of faith, has fallen to distrust and fear and forgetfulness, and then ultimately to dishonesty, with all the trouble such brings. And how weak-hearted was Abraham's lie, showing little concern for his wife, even forcing her to take part in his lie. It seems his one concern was for his own safety. How the man is now so diminished from our previous esteem of him. Each slippery step led down to another. *Remember the lesson!*

Vs. 17 – Now the Lord is forced to step in, both to bring rescue to Sarah and rebuke to Abraham, even through the mouth of a pagan king. What a red-faced humiliation when the world must rightly rebuke the child of God! Oh it certainly is possible for a righteous man to fall before the world, so low in fact that the world must pull him up short, to his shame. We have already seen Adam and Noah fall into the practice of evil. Again, the Lord gives an honest record of both the victories and defeats of His children. Abraham even fell at the point of his greatest strength, for he lost faith in his God to

Gen 13:1 And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south.
Gen 13:2 And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold.
Gen 13:3 And he went on his journeys from the south even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Hai;
Gen 13:4 Unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the LORD.

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preserve him that He might fulfil His promise to him. Is our life ever really in danger when we are resting on God's promises in the hollow of His hand? Did you notice that Abraham did not see in the famine what Pharaoh could easily see in the plague, the Lord's warning and rebuke? It is time to sit up and take notice when the world is more perceptive than the Lord's own.

And do not miss how others were hurt by Abram's wrong (Pharaoh and his house, Sarah). Compare the same with the sailors in Jonah chapter1. Yet those so touched are always at least impressed with the Lord's greatness beyond their own gods. Pharaoh's god did him no more good than did the sailors' gods in Jonah's storm, leading them on to acknowledge who alone is God.

Chapter 13 – Problems Herding

13:1-4 – The Return

Abraham's return was both physical and spiritual.

Gen 13:5 And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents.
Gen 13:6 And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together.

The point is made in vs. 2 that he returned *"unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning",* to Bethel. He went back to where he began with God in the land, perhaps with a renewed assurance of God's faithfulness to His promises. Compare this man's future grandson, Jacob, returning to this same place (Gen. 35). It was a place marked by Jacob and family leaving behind all their worldly intrigues. It was that place where they returned to the Lord, even as Abraham left Egypt with stinging rebuke for his wrong ringing in his soul, coming here to renew his walk with the Lord his God. When you are finally heartsore and sick of your backsliding, it is time to come back to the old place and paths of humble worship and faith. In returning to *"the place of the altar"* Abraham showed his longing for a return to the Lord's fellowship, and so the Lord now stepped in to remove the one final impediment standing in the way.

13:5-13 – Separation of Abram and Lot

Vs. 5-7 – As a result of their combined wealth attained in Egypt strife now arose between the

Gen 13:7 And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land.
Gen 13:8 And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren.
Gen 13:9 Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.
Gen 13:10 And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar.

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herdsmen of Abraham and Lot.

Vs. 8-9 – Abraham nobly begged an end to the strife and offered first option on the land to his young nephew. By rights the first option was Abraham's, since he was the older and the one promised the land. See how the man's faith has returned, his integrity now on the rise. He can trust God now with the outcome without fear of loss. Those who are true possessors of eternal life may dip into wrong for a time, but soon bounce back to the Lord to whom they belong. Even so those who are mere professors but no true possessors of eternal life may blip into apparent Christianity for a time, but eventually bounce back to the world to which they had always belonged.

Vs. 10-13 – Lot's choice – Lot was motivated purely by financial advantage, seemingly without a thought

Gen 13:11 Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other.
Gen 13:12 Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom.
Gen 13:13 But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly.

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to the weightier moral and spiritual concerns involved. The nature of the place he chose was a known thing in those days (vs. 13). How often Christians make their choices in a similar way, wholly concerned with some perceived earthly advantage, without sufficient regard for spiritual benefits or the moral environment. As if they alone are responsible for their keeping, unwilling to trust the Lord (even through famine) despite His sure promises that He *"will never leave thee nor forsake"* His own, and *"all these things shall be added unto"* those who put the King and His things first. Modern Christianity must be very careful about pointing to fault in Lot. Oh how Lot ever after suffered the devastating results of this most ill-advised decision of his life, as all who follow his foolish example!

13:14-18 – The Lord's Heart Poured Out

See well and understand how the Lord now comes to pour out all the fullness of His heart to this man

Gen 13:14 And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward:
Gen 13:15 For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.
Gen 13:16 And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered.
Gen 13:17 Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee.
Gen 13:18 Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the LORD.

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of faith, now that *"Lot was separated for him",* now that all aspects of the Lord's call were finally, fully obeyed. Do you see? How the Lord had longed to say all of this to Abraham, but could not until now, because the flag of Abraham's obedience had stood only at half-mast. Do not miss how the Lord is not impressed with generalities and close-enough's when it comes to the matter of His will. *Men* think this way, that a general following of God's way is good enough, without much concern for specifics. "After all", fools will say, "what difference does it really make what we call Him (Jehovah, Allah, Krishna, etc.), or whose book or tradition leads us to that same higher power". But the Lord is a God of specifics. Such things *do* make a difference to Him.

For the first time the Lord actually said of the land *"to <u>thee</u> will I give it"* (vs. 15, 17). How the promise has grown with Abram's growing obedience

(compare 12:1 & 7).

Ponder Points

Note well the striking contrast in these two men, Abraham and Lot. As Lot *"lifted up his eyes"* from a sensual viewpoint (vs. 10), contrast Abraham, bidden by the Lord to *"lift up now thine eyes, and look"* to all that the Lord would give him for his faith. How incredibly much greater, wider, purer, nobler, and more glorious was Abraham's prospect than what Lot found in his grasp! When we are willing to wait on the Lord for His choice, the result will always be of such surpassing worth, so far beyond the dry husks of the world's paltry offerings. Peter later clarified what should never have become an uncertainty, that Lot was actually a righteous man (II Pet. 2:7-8). Yet how very differently this believer lived his life from his uncle Abraham. Lot lived by sight instead of by faith. He followed the call of worldly intrigue rather than the call of God. He sought his own advantage instead of God's. And so Lot illustrates the worldly, uncommitted Christian, who is carnal and vexed and unhappy, as Peter describes this righteous soul, wanting to keep a good standing with the world, enjoying *"the pleasures of sin for a season"*, while at the same

time maintaining some relation to God. Obviously the Godward part of such a life suffers, resulting ultimately in the earthward part coming to ruin as well.

Yet Abraham lived for God by simple faith in God's promises, and he worshipped and walked with God. And so Abraham illustrates the *committed* Christian who more generally puts the Lord first in his life. Just look and see how such a one is so blessed, both now and forever! Those truly consecrated will never come to regret putting the Lord first. Believe it?

"I have lift up mine hand
unto the LORD,
the Most High God,
the Possessor
of heaven and earth"

(Gen. 14:22)

Class 6 – Genesis 14-17

Chapter 14 – Dealing with Kings

Chapters 12-13 highlight God's demand for complete obedience. The lesson of this chapter seems to be one of *possession*, that God owns all. While the cities of the plain refused to be possessed by others, displayed in their refusal to pay tribute, Abraham showed God's possession of all through his paying of a tithe.

14:1-12 – Attack of Eastern Kings

Vs. 1 – These attacking kings were from the general area of Abraham's homeland of southern Mesopotamia.

Vs. 4-5 – The cities of the Dead Sea valley had been subject to these eastern kings, but then rebelled. This attack was the reply, seeking to punish and return them to submission. Their concern likely involved the vital trade route along the Jordan to Egypt, known as "The King's Highway".

On the Side

This chapter is one of the many Bible portions once

Gen 14:11 And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their victuals, and went their way.
Gen 14:12 And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.
Gen 14:13 And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the Hebrew; for he dwelt in the plain of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner: and these were confederate with Abram.

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scorned as wholly unhistorical, for archaeology had yet to find any record of these kings or events…until they dug up the record! With the shining light of new evidence, the creepy critics quickly scurried back into silence.

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We must understand this event partly as the Lord's dealing with the evil of these cities, and even with Lot's compromise, for he and his family were now dwelling right among men who were well known as *"wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly"* (13:13).

14:13-16 – Abraham on the Attack

Abraham could have concluded Lot worthy of his woes for the folly of his compromise. But the same large-heartedness that gave Lot first choice on the land in chapter 13 now unselfishly runs to his rescue at greatest risk of life. With only a small band of 318 armed servants Abraham immediately
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Gen 14:14 And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan.
Gen 14:15 And he divided himself against them, he and his servants, by night, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus.
Gen 14:16 And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people.

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set out in pursuit, catching up with the captors in northern Palestine near where Dan would one day be, some 200 kms away. This was a four-king confederacy of apparently prominent city-states, a force sufficient to crush and capture the five cities of the plain. It was no wimpy war party! Abraham's defeat of this considerable force was nothing short of miraculous, comparable to Gideon's defeat of the Midianites in Judges 7-8, and the Philistines falling to Jonathan and his armour-bearer in I Samuel 14. Abraham used a measure of strategy, dividing his force for a two-pronged attack and hitting them at night when most likely to throw them into confusion. And he showed tremendous courage to confront so strong an opponent. As *"bold as a lion"* is the Abraham we now see when living in the centre of God's will (Prov. 28:1), in contrast to the wayward, lying coward we saw in Egypt. Amazingly he won the victory, recovering all and sending the attackers fleeing for home. It is a stunning revelation of the capabilities of this man. God's blessing on a life gifts men in many ways, but

Gen 14:17 And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale.
Gen 14:18 And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God.
Gen 14:19 And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth:
Gen 14:20 And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.

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mostly faith rids a man of all fear when convinced he is doing right. Though meek, true Christianity is by no means weak. A courageous and fierce demand for right is as much a Christian quality as is humility.

14:17-24 – Meet Melchizedek

Behold Abraham now trafficking among kings (of Salem and Sodom) as something of a celebrity, yet with never an indication of pride in him.

There are some notable Bible first-mentions in this portion;

- The first *"priest"*, and long before Levi's birth.
- God first named as *"the Most High God"* (El Elyon in Hebrew), defined as *"Possessor of heaven and earth"* (vs. 19). The sense of this title is not that the true God is the highest among many gods, but that He is the Strongest Strong One. It is an uncommon

Gen 14:21 And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself.
Gen 14:22 And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the LORD, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth,
Gen 14:23 That I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich:
Gen 14:24 Save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men which went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion.

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title in the O.T., though found 4 times here.

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On the Side

Whether in Old Testament or New, the names of God are very significant. It is why putting the true God of the Bible together with Allah or Krishna is such foolishness. The true God never owns such names in His true Word, and He is jealous of His name. God's names describe various aspects of His nature and His relation to man. Therefore His names are as important to Him as His nature. There is a lesson for us in God's highest esteem of His own name. We should highly esteem our own name and nature in the same way.

Three new and significant names of God are found in chapters 14, 16, & 17. El Elyon is the first.

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- The first *"tithe"* [tenth]. Abraham's tithe

acknowledged the Most High as Owner of everything, indeed *"possessor of heaven and earth".* We give of our possessions to the Lord in grateful recognition of the same, that He owns all. It is the height of legalism to say this is mine and that is His.

- First occurrence of the Communion elements of bread and wine. As in the ordinance of Communion, so the context here is worship and thanks.

This man, Melchizedek, arising now at this point to bless Abraham, is a strange figure. The N.T. book of Hebrews offers a bit more information.

- He was King of Salem. Likely a reference to Jerusalem, which name means "city of Salem" or "city of peace". Thus he was the King of Peace. This meaning is underscored in Hebrews 7.
- He was a priest, and of the Most High God.
- He blessed Abraham.
- He received from Abraham *"a tenth"* (tithe) of the spoils.
- His Hebrew name, *"Melchizedek"*, means king (melech) of righteousness (zedek). Again, the

significance of this name is underscored in Hebrews 7.

- He was without father, mother, or genealogy (Heb. 7).
- He was without *"beginning of days"* (birth) or *"end of life"* (death).
- He remains *"a priest continually"* (Heb. 7).

Who was this man? Melchizedek was likely a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus Christ (Christophany), for He is the only true King of Righteousness and Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6-7; 11:4-6; Jer. 23:6; Ps. 45:6-7; Heb. 1:8-9). And the things Melchizedek is *"without"* (father, mother, genealogy, beginning or end of days) point to One who is more than a mere man.

Hebrews 7:4-10 makes the point of Melchizedek's greatness above Abraham and Levi, in that Abraham paid tithes to him and was blessed by him. The point is made there that the one of greater honour is the blesser of the lesser. Though Abraham had received God's promises in an unconditional covenant, he was still Melchizedek's inferior. And the sons of Levi, though exalted among their people to be priests and to receive tithes, actually paid tithes (and thus homage) to

Melchizedek when still in Abraham's loins. Because this man's priesthood does not come from human descent, it is eternal, and thus better than Aaron's (Ps. 110:4, *"a priest forever"*). As Jesus Christ, Melchizedek was/is *Aaron's* priest, the priest of priests. From the start God was showing that nation of Israel, which would arise from Abraham, that Aaron's future priesthood was already trumped in importance by a *better* priesthood. And the Lord Jesus Christ is a Priest after the better order of this man, Melchizedek (Heb. 7), thus ultimately replacing Aaron's priestly line.

Vs. 24 – In trusting the Most High God alone, Abraham would not take support from or be dependent upon an evil source. While acknowledging the superiority of the King of Salem, one after his own heart, Abraham would not even allow the appearance of dependence upon the King of Sodom. This perhaps in the same way that Zerubbabel would allow for no help from the Samaritans in Ezra 4, and Paul would not have the promotion of the demon-possessed girl in Acts 16. A heart of faith has a natural affinity to those of like faith and an aversion to those of the world. Contrast Lot, who was willing for life in Sodom! We should neither seek nor allow for help from or affiliation with evil sources or methods or incomes

in forwarding the Lord's work.

Chapter 15

The Lord vividly reaffirmed His covenant to Abraham of the land and seed in this chapter, as He will do again in chapter 17.

15:1-6 – God's Promise Believed

Vs. 1 – Perhaps Abraham feared a return of those eastern kings aimed at him next time, and so the Lord came with assurance of His protection and provision, His refuge and reward. God's child need not concern himself with earthly threat when the Lord is his protection. And he need not concern himself with earthly loss when the Lord is his reward and fulfilment. Perhaps the thrust of this chapter is just this, that Jehovah Himself is the ultimate fulfilment. We own the same happy promise in Jesus Christ, that in Him we have all the reward we could ever want. This is probably much of what fasting is meant to express. I do not need food, pleasure, or any other earthly benefit as much as I need the Lord for my fulfilment. And every time

Gen 15:2 And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?
Gen 15:3 And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir.
Gen 15:4 And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.

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we choose sin we show that the Lord is not all of our satisfaction.

Vs. 2 – Abraham's complaining question (*"what wilt Thou give me"*) is far from a clever one, in view of the Lord's surpassing assurances in His opening words. Abraham was seeking fulfilment in something *from* the Lord, rather than wholly *in* the Lord. Men so often see the Lord only for what they might get out of him. The Lord would later put Abraham to the test in the offering of Isaac, to see if the Lord was his all in all.

Vs. 3 – Abraham's concern was that he was childless still, now many years after his arrival in the land. He suggests that perhaps he misunderstood the Lord, that in fact he was not to have children at all, but that his "seed" would perhaps come through one of his servants.

Vs. 4-5 – The Lord assured Abraham that his seed would come through his own body.

Gen 15:5 And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.
Gen 15:6 And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

As with the Lord's current prophesies of things yet future, His delays are not to be read as denials. He will do as He says, for He cannot allow His words to fall unfulfilled. The Lord's delays tend to cast us upon Him in dependence, which is precisely what He seeks.

The Lord used metaphors to illustrate Abraham's multiplied descendants;

- *"The stars of the heaven"* (15:6; 22:17).
- *"The dust of the earth"* (13:16).
- *"The sand which is upon the sea shore"* (22:17).

Vs. 6 – Abraham believed God and his faith was imputed to him for righteousness. In exchange for his faith in God's promise God granted Abraham a condition of being completely right with Him and thus fit for His presence. The exchange taking place here is used by the Apostle Paul in Romans 4 as an early example of justification by faith, or a righteous standing received from God through the simplicity

Gen 15:7 And he said unto him, I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it.
Gen 15:8 And he said, Lord GOD, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?
Gen 15:9 And he said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon.
Gen 15:10 And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not.
Gen 15:11 And when the fowls came down upon the carcases, Abram drove them away.
Gen 15:12 And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him.

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of a man's faith in God. The doctrine of the imputation of God's righteousness was an O.T. doctrine first (Ps. 32:2; 106:31).

15:7-21 – God Cut a Covenant

Vs. 7-8 – In view of who made the promise, again Abraham's question in vs. 8 is a bit lame. Why is proof needed when *the Lord* has spoken? Is there surer proof than God's Word? Yet the Lord graciously accommodated Abraham, not striking him dumb for his doubt, as Zacharias in Luke 1. The Lord cut a covenant with Abraham after the common manner of that day. Animals were killed, cut in half, and laid on the ground to either side, making a passageway between the divided parts. Those binding themselves in the covenant would then pass between. The agreement was thus solemnly sealed by sacrifice as a blood covenant.

Gen 15:13 And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years;
Gen 15:14 And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.
Gen 15:15 And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age.
Gen 15:16 But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.
Gen 15:17 And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces.

Vs. 10-12 – Abraham divided the animals in preparation, but the Lord made him wait until the sun was going down. This perhaps symbolized the way the Lord would fulfil His promise to Abraham, making him wait for a son until the sun of his life was setting.

Vs. 13-14 – Israel's bondage and affliction in Egypt was predicted. Was this perhaps a form of punishment for Abraham's doubts?

Vs. 17 – The furnace and lamp symbolized the Lord's presence passing *alone* between the divided animals. The meaning was obvious. God's promise of the land to Abraham was an unconditional promise, not based on any response in man. Only the Mosaic covenant was conditioned upon man's works. The New Covenant, the extension of the promise of blessing in Abraham's covenant, is not conditional upon man's keeping either.

Gen 15:18 In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates:
Gen 15:19 The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites,
Gen 15:20 And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims,
Gen 15:21 And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.

Gen 16:1 Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar.
Gen 16:2 And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai.
Gen 16:3 And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife.

Vs. 18-21 – From the Nile to the Euphrates is the land God will ultimately give to Israel.

Chapter 16 – Sarah's Sad Scheme

16:1-3 – Arm of Flesh

God had promised Abraham a son through whom He would multiply his descendants into a great nation. But still Abraham and Sarah were unable to have children. It was a time for waiting on God, for Him to do His will His way. How often His will and way involve patient waiting. But the Lord had said that a son would come from Abraham's body, while not specifically mentioning his wife Sarah. And so, because it was a common custom of that culture and day, and because their impatience grew with their increasing age, Abraham and Sarah

Gen 16:4 And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes.
Gen 16:5 And Sarai said unto Abram, My wrong be upon thee: I have given my maid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes: the LORD judge between me and thee.
Gen 16:6 But Abram said unto Sarai, Behold, thy maid is in thy hand; do to her as it pleaseth thee. And when Sarai dealt hardly with her, she fled from her face.

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stooped to a human, arm-of-flesh means to provide a son and heir through Abraham. Sarah gave to Abraham her Egyptian handmaid, Hagar, that he might have a child through her in Sarah's place. As with Adam and Eve, the temptation came to the man through his wife, but he too was involved. Did God really need help? Does He ever? The very essence of compromise is to give God "help" He neither wants nor needs. The compromise of God's holiness usually involves man proposing to do God's programme a "better" or "quicker" way, avoiding the patient wait. It was a right end sought in a wrong way and leading to heartache and such a mess. Look well to the lessons here! How God's children are given to impatience. The modern quest of charismatics for instant spirituality without a walk in maturity is evidence of the same.

16:4-6 – Hagar Fled

Vs. 4 – Hagar's arrogance toward Sarah rose with her belly in her pregnancy.

Gen 16:7 And the angel of the LORD found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur.
Gen 16:8 And he said, Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence camest thou? and whither wilt thou go? And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai.
Gen 16:9 And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands.
Gen 16:10 And the angel of the LORD said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude.
Gen 16:11 And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the LORD hath heard thy affliction.
Gen 16:12 And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.
Gen 16:13 And she called the name of the LORD that spake unto her, Thou God seest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me?
Gen 16:14 Wherefore the well was called Beerlahairoi; behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered.
Gen 16:15 And Hagar bare Abram a son: and Abram called his son's name, which Hagar bare, Ishmael.

Vs. 5-6 – Sarah, her pride stung, complained to Abraham and was given freedom to deal firmly with Hagar, with the result that Hagar ran away. We can well imagine her disappointment. She was likely thinking she shared her master's affections now, but found it was not so, that it was not a love thing at all.

16:7-16 – Hagar Found

The Lord found and spoke to Hagar, sending her back to Sarah.

Vs. 13 – The name given to the Lord by Hagar here is "El Rai", meaning God Who Sees Me.

Vs. 14 – She named the place "Beer la hai roi", meaning something like "Well of my living Seer". Can you imagine the surprise and wonder in Hagar upon meeting the God who actually *lives* and *sees*? She could understand the Lord's attention to an important man like Abraham. But that He would notice a homeless, friendless servant-girl was a revelation to her. In her own experience she knew only the stony idols of Egypt, with hard eyes and ears and lips and hands of stone, seeing and hearing nothing, and able to speak no word of comfort or provide for her. But Hagar now met the living God, who saw her and cared and came to her and comforted her troubled heart! *Stunning revelation of the God of grace!*

Never is there a moment when a child of God is so oppressed and abused and seemingly neglected that the living God does not see. It would later look like the Lord had forgotten His people in the land of Egypt, when they languished so long under the yoke of bondage there. But then the Lord called Moses to go down and lead them out, saying, *"I have surely seen the affliction of My people"* (Ex. 3:7). For a very long time it had seemed as though God did not see, or that He just did not care. But it was simply not so. *It never is so!* There are times when it seems like God forgets His people or His particular child,

or that He could not care less. But He *did* see that lowly servant-girl. And He did not miss captive Israel in Egypt. No detail escapes the attention of the God who sees. He may allow trouble to continue. In fact He may *bring* trouble to punish or purge. But never is He unseeing or indifferent.

We must also remember that He who sees all looks deep into the hidden places of our hearts as well (*every* heart). Every "secret sin" among men is known as if emblazoned in brilliant light. There is no hiding from the God who sees. Compare Hebrews 4:12-13, where we hear again that all is laid bare before Him. The only way of wisdom with this God who sees all is to come clean with Him! Cast yourself upon His grace and seek His pardon, which He has shown Himself so willing to give in Jesus Christ. Though He sees all, yet still He has loved you in spite of you, through His priceless gift in Christ's death in our behalf.

Chapter 17 – Sign of Circumcision

17:1-8 – Covenant Renewed

Thirteen quiet years have passed since Ishmael's birth (16:16). Yet neither many years of silence nor the illegitimate birth of Ishmael had in any way affected God's purpose concerning Abraham.

Gen 17:1 And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.
Gen 17:2 And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.
Gen 17:3 And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying,
Gen 17:4 As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.
Gen 17:5 Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.
Gen 17:6 And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee.
Gen 17:7 And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.
Gen 17:8 And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.

Vs. 1 – The Lord now appeared to Abraham as El-Shaddai, a name meaning *"the Almighty God"*. Here is another important name of God. It is a name that seems to express the inexhaustible store of God's bounty, that the Lord is the Comforter, Satisfier, bountiful Giver, and Nourisher of His people. In this name we see God as the All-Sufficient One, who never tires of giving or pouring out, and who is more ready to give to us than we are to receive from Him. This name seems most often to be used of the Lord in His purging of men for fruitfulness, as the One whose goal for His children is greatest fruitfulness and blessing, and whose means is the hardship of discipline. Therefore it is understandable that this name of God is most commonly found in the book of Job. When El-

Gen 17:9 And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations.
Gen 17:10 This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised.
Gen 17:11 And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you.
Gen 17:12 And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed.
Gen 17:13 He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.
Gen 17:14 And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.

Shaddai chastens you, understand that He may not be punishing, but rather purging or pushing or prodding you that you might bring forth more fruit.

17:9-14 – Sign of Circumcision

Circumcision was given, like a wedding ring, as *"a token of the covenant betwixt Me and you"* (vs. 11). As well it was meant to describe a people circumcised of heart and ears, attentive and sensitive to their God. Circumcision came before the covenant of works through Moses, and is tied rather with the covenant of promise through Abraham. It was given as *"a seal of the righteousness of the faith which"* Abraham received while *"yet being uncircumcised"* (Rom. 4:11).

17:15-22 – Through Sarah, not Ishmael

Gen 17:15 And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be.
Gen 17:16 And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her.
Gen 17:17 Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?
Gen 17:18 And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee!
Gen 17:19 And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.

It seems Abraham came to believe Ishmael would be the channel of God's promises. He probably had it all worked out in his own head around this illegitimate son. But Ishmael was *Abraham's* way, not *God's* way! God's way must ever be our one concern or we are sure to end up with the heartache this man faced.

Vs. 15-16 – Sarah is now stated as the channel of the promised son, for the first time and emphatically so.

Vs. 17 – Abraham's laughter was born of incredulity and initial doubt. Sarah would also later laugh (18:9). For this cause God named the child "Isaac", meaning "Laughter", as a forever reminder of man's foolish doubt in the God of the impossible. As Abraham's obedience, even so his great faith saw moments of wavering. But he is later noted for the greatness of his faith (Rom. 4).

Vs. 18 – Why not Ishmael? Would Abraham suggest to God a more reasonable way of doing things? As if to say Ishmael was close enough? Does God do close-enough's, imitations, or substitutes? No! We have already seen how the Lord is quite particular about doing things His way.

What are the "Ishmaels" in your life? What are the arm-of-flesh compromises you have allowed because God cannot make your life work through His way and timing alone? What corners have you cut on holiness, the small violations of right, in order to help God help you? Need to display a bit of the flesh to attract a man? Need to lie and swear with the boys to attract business or keep your job? Need to cheat to make life work (just a little "Christian" cheat)? Does the church need a small dose of unrighteousness to "bridge the gap" with the world? Does a Christian wife need a touch of unrighteousness to make her religion more attractive to her unsaved husband, when the Lord says "pure" in I Peter 3? It must ever be God's right way, from the right *end* all the way back to the right *means*.

17:23-27 – Abraham's Obedience

Vs. 23 – Note how Abraham fully and immediately did what God had said, even *"the selfsame day"*. He

had learned the way of blessing.

"Therefore Sarah laughed
within herself, saying,
After I am waxed old
shall I have pleasure,
my lord being old also?"

(Genesis 18:12)

Class 7 – Genesis 18-19

Gen 18:1 And the LORD appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day;
Gen 18:2 And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground,

Chapter 18 – Supplicating

We learn much about a believer's fellowship with God in this chapter, and much about quite the opposite in the next.

18:1-8 – Abraham's Hospitality

Vs. 1-2 – *"The LORD* [Jehovah] *appeared unto"* Abraham, not *"in a vision"* this time (15:1) or merely as a voice, as in chapters 12 & 17, but in the form of a man. This again is a Christophany or appearance of Jesus before He later received a body (as Melchizedek). We discover later that two of the *"three men"* (vs. 2) with the Lord were angels (compare vs. 22 & 19:1). Thus Abraham was perhaps the first to have *"entertained angels unawares"* (Heb. 13:1).

What an unspeakable honour to have the Lord Himself come to visit! Yet is this not the very

Gen 18:9 And they said unto him, Where is Sarah thy wife? And he said, Behold, in the tent.
Gen 18:10 And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him.
Gen 18:11 Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women.
Gen 18:12 Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?

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privilege every child of God knows in this age? Jesus Christ Himself comes, not only to visit but to abide, through the indwelling Spirit (Jn. 14:15-23).

Vs. 3-8 – Abraham's response seems at first to be simple hospitality toward strangers, then later dawning to a realization of who his guests were. He is very much the picture of a servant-host here, running to meet the needs of his guests. Such humble servanthood and hospitality is greatly prized by the Lord (Rom. 12:13; I Tim. 3:2; Heb. 13:2; I Pet. 4:9; III Jn. 5-6).

18:9-15 – God's Purpose for Sarah

Vs. 9 – The first clue was that the stranger knew Sarah's name.

Vs. 10 – With these words it became obvious who this One was (17:15-21).

Vs. 11 – By this time Sarah had aged into

Gen 18:13 And the LORD said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old?
Gen 18:14 Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.
Gen 18:15 Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid. And he said, Nay; but thou didst laugh.
Gen 18:16 And the men rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom: and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way.
Gen 18:17 And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do;

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menopause, beyond the ability to even have children from a human perspective. Therefore her chuckle of unbelief. Did you notice how Abraham did not join in the laughing this time? He seems to have grown past such doubting, to a strength of faith his wife had yet to achieve.

Vs. 13 – Though her laughter was only *"within herself"* (vs. 12), the Lord heard, teaching her of His omniscience or ability to see all things.

Vs. 14 – The Lord's question here taught her of His omnipotence, His power or ability to do anything.

Vs. 15 – The Lord's denial of her denial taught her His righteousness, His unwillingness to tolerate deception.

18:16-22 – God's Purpose for Sodom

Vs. 16-19 – As the "men" arose on their way down to Sodom the Lord seems to ponder aloud whether

Gen 18:18 Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?
Gen 18:19 For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.
Gen 18:20 And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous;
Gen 18:21 I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know.

He should let Abraham in on His purpose for the cities of the plain. Hear the Lord's words here as He expresses His awareness of Abraham, that *"he will"* command those for whom he was responsible, and that they would *"keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment".* There was not in Abraham our weak modern approach to parenting, using little more than suggestions and efforts at manipulation, for this man would *"command his children and his household after him".* And his would not be an unfair, hypocritical approach to parenting, attempting to force upon the children what he himself would not abide, for *"he will command his children and his household after him".* He would provide strong home leadership in a faith and faithfulness that was his own. Compare Proverbs 23:26.

Vs. 20-21 – Because Abraham was the friend of God it was deemed his right to know the secrets of God's

intention, that the Lord, as at Babel, had come down to examine and deal with the wicked lowland cities. Even so the right and ability to perceive God's purposes belongs to all of His true children, particularly to those walking in fellowship with Him, with spiritual eyes open to understand God's words (Ps. 25:9, 12, 14; Jn. 7:17; 15:15, cf. Jn. 13:25-26).

18:23-33 – Abraham's Supplication

Word of the Lord's purpose concerning Sodom set Abraham to praying, describing the role and demonstrating the approach of a true intercessor. Here is both the privilege and responsibility of a soul in fellowship with God. Abraham's knowledge of the Lord's purpose and opportunity to so stand *"before the LORD"* (vs. 22), and even to draw near to Him (vs. 23) in Sodom's behalf, was only through his right spiritual relation to God. Hebrews 10:22ff makes it clear that in this current age boldness to so draw near *"into the holiest"* is only for those who *"enter…by the blood of Jesus".* Compare John 15:7.

On the Side

Consider some elements of effective intercession;

Personal – This scene of a man communing with the Lord was simply as a person to a person. We hear no lofty, sacred tones, tired religious catchphrases, or standard verbal formulas here. Just as a man would speak with his friend.

Humility – Abraham evidenced supreme humility throughout his intercession (vs. 27, 30-32). Though having the Almighty God for a Friend, this man never forgot his lowly place and dependence. We do well to nurture a *low* self-esteem (*"but dust and ashes"*) in our high *God*-esteem. The world and worldly church merely endorse selfishness in promoting a child's self-worth. Every soul is reduced to Abraham's true self-estimation in the presence of the Most High (Isa. 6:5; Job 40: 4; 42:6).

Bold & Earnest – Though humble, Abraham was bold to press the Lord for what he must have and could only have from Him. And the Lord willingly allowed him this, graciously answering his every request (6 times). It is a demonstration of the importunity in prayer Jesus later taught in Luke 11 & 18. Compare also Romans 12:12 & I Thessalonians 5:17. Abraham was completely

earnest, undistracted, and relentless. How many souls have been found by the Lord due to the relentless pleading of some unknown soul in right relation to his God?

Selfless – Abraham was concerned for the Lord's righteous name if He should *"slay the righteous with the wicked"*. It is a wise approach indeed, for the Lord is very much concerned for His name. Somehow in the Lord's purpose He raises up faithful, praying men to pray in what He Himself would purpose to do. And Abraham was motivated by genuine love for others, without potential benefits for himself. The deliverance Lot experienced in the next chapter could only be due to this prayer. It was the second time Lot's good uncle saved his life!

Is there any higher purpose for man than communion or fellowship with God (I Jn. 1:3)? Is there any greater love for fellow man than to so plead in their behalf? Is there any activity so highlighted in the N.T. epistles (especially Paul's) yet so neglected by the Lord's children? Is there any more important responsibility? Samuel felt so strongly about his duty to intercede for his people that he spoke of the *"sin"* of its neglect (I Sam. 12:23)!

Why did Abraham limit himself with *"I will speak yet but this once"* (vs. 32) and then stop his pleading at 10 when the Lord was still willingly giving? Perhaps he felt he was pushing things or wearing out his welcome by going too far. Yet do not miss how it was Abraham who limited himself in his asking of the Lord. The Lord was responding, not limiting. Perhaps it is often true that it is *only <u>we</u>* who limit all that the Lord would further give and do for us, if we would just keep on trusting and asking Him. Perhaps the world has yet to see a soul fully plumbing the depths of all the God of the impossible would do, if asked. Compare James 4:2, *"ye have not because ye ask not"*.

Did you notice that the two angels with the Lord were already on the way to Lot's rescue (vs. 22) before Abraham even began his supplication? Shades of Isaiah's millennial vision of the Lord's answer before a man even calls (Isa. 65:24).

Consider the huge significance of that little phrase at the end of vs. 26, *"for their sakes"*, speaking of the unrighteous city preserved for the sake of the righteous present there. See again the influence of the godly remnant in preserving society from God's

judgment. In spite of the multiplied evil of the city involved, it would be spared from destruction if as few as fifty righteous could be found there. The godless seldom grasp the vastly vital preserving effect of the hated godly remnant among them.

Chapter 19 – Flight so Frightening

Lot's life is one of the saddest stories in God's Book. And this chapter records the end of the story as far as God's attention is concerned. Some sons finish better than they began with the Lord (Matt. 21:29), such as Abraham, Jonah, and John Mark (Acts 15:37-40; II Tim. 4:11). Some sons finish poorer than when they began (Matt. 21:30), such as Kings Saul and Solomon, Lot and Demas (II Tim. 4:10). It is difficult to imagine a life descending to greater shame than Lot's does in this chapter. Trace his downward slope before he hits the bottom here;

- Lot *looked* with interest and desire upon the Dead Sea valley (13:10).

- He *"chose him all the plain of Jordan"* for his home (13:11), in spite of the known reputation for wickedness there (13:13).

- He *"pitched his tent toward Sodom"* (13:12). His leaning was beyond just the lush fields of the plain from the start.

Gen 19:1 And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground;
Gen 19:2 And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night.

- He *"dwelled in the cities of the plain"* (13:12).
- He *"dwelt in Sodom"* in the days when those cities were taken by the kings from the east (14:12).

Peter later tells us that the evil lives of the people of Lot's city *"vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds"* (II Pet. 2:7-8). His grief was on a daily basis living among such filthy people. So why did he stay? Obviously because in his estimation the earthly benefits outweighed eternal concerns. In this regard Lot's life is full of warning for us, highlighting the serious consequences of our choices, and the grave dangers in living too close to the world. He is a picture of the carnal, defeated Christian.

19:1-3 – The Angels Visit

Vs. 1 – We now discover that the two "men" with the Lord in the previous chapter were in fact angels. We also discover that *"Lot sat in the gate of Sodom",* likely as an official or judge in the city. It seems he

Gen 19:3 And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat.
Gen 19:4 But before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter:
Gen 19:5 And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them.

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rose to prominence within decadence, begging the question of how this could happen without a great deal of compromise. Lot certainly did not arise to such a standing in such a context through openly righteous living!

Vs. 2 – Lot offered his hospitality, but the angels at first refused, stating their plans to *"abide in the street all night"*. Such an impossible arrangement in that context was likely intended to point up and press upon Lot's conscience the vile nature of this city, and the shamefulness of his choice to make such a place home sweet home.

19:4-11 – The Men Visit

Vs. 4-5 – Before bedtime the men of the city were at Lot's door, demanding access to the strangers that they might sexually abuse them. The wickedness so clearly implied here still bears the name of Lot's chosen city – sodomy.

Gen 19:6 And Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after him,
Gen 19:7 And said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly.
Gen 19:8 Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof.

Vs. 7-8 – Even Lot's shameful offer of his two daughters for public abuse was rejected in their burning lust for the men. Compare the similar account of Gibeah where the offer was accepted (Judges 19). How shockingly revolting! Behold the unimaginable depths to which unrestrained sin can take humanity. Compare the slippery slope into increasingly greater godlessness in Romans 1. Despite modern society's endorsements, God proclaims homosexuality wicked (13:13) and worthy of His judgment. *"Men with men, working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet"* (Rom. 1:27).

19:12-14 – Wasted Warning

Vs. 14 – There appears to be no hesitation in Lot to believe their warning. Perhaps this incident finally brought home to him how ripe for wrath was his city and how believable that its time had come. But to his godless children Lot's warning seemed only laughable. The dawning of Lot's realization was a

Gen 19:14 And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law.
Gen 19:15 And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.
Gen 19:16 And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city.

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bit too late for them. It is likely that their response had much to do with a compromising life in Lot. Certainly one's *life* is believed over his *lips*. More likely their response was just an expression of their own faithless, carnal hearts. The unsaved world responds to the warning of God's coming judgment in a similar way, laughing at the graphic events predicted in a book like Revelation.

19:15-26 – Fearful Flight

Vs. 15-16 – Lot and family were so reluctant to leave that the angels had to physically remove them from the doomed city. They were that attached! *"The Lord being merciful"* indeed, for these appear far from worth the trouble. God's mercy is a *marvel!* How long and continually He has borne with frustrating souls who deserve none of His grace. You and I included. Yet how impatient we can be with others.

Vs. 17 – At the city's edge the angels commanded

Gen 19:17 And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.
Gen 19:18 And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so, my Lord:
Gen 19:19 Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die:
Gen 19:20 Behold now, this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one: Oh, let me escape thither, (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live.
Gen 19:21 And he said unto him, See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for the which thou hast spoken.
Gen 19:22 Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither. Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar.

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their flight to the mountains, forbidding them even to look back.

Vs. 18-20 – Lot pathetically pled for escape to the city of Zoar rather than to the mountains. And though stepping upon the Lord's mercy again, he was granted this concession. The Lord is tolerant far beyond what we deserve.

The name Zoar means "little", perhaps carrying some symbolic significance. Having left everything behind that so drew him to that exceedingly sinful land, all lost to the flames, Lot fled to the city of "little", for his choice to compromise with evil had indeed left him clipped quite small.

Vs. 26 – Mrs. Lot's loathing to leave her wicked city moved her to disobey the angels' command, bringing her immediate death. There comes a point

when tolerance runs out! She expressed her carnal heart and love for this passing world in her act of disobedience. In the same way many a soul who professes Jesus Christ as Saviour looks back after *"having put his hand to the plough"* (Lk. 9:62), showing himself as no true child of God and thus unfit for God's kingdom. As one writer put it, "a ship in the water is perfectly right, but the water in the ship would be perfectly wrong". Christians in the world are not wrong, but the world in Christians always is. The Lord has chosen to leave us *"in the world"* (Jn. 17:11), yet He insists that we are not *"of the world"* (Jn. 17:14, 16), for we are saved *"out of the world"* (Jn. 17:6), sent *"into the world"* (Jn. 17:18), and are to live as though ready to be taken out of the world. In Luke 17 Jesus warned His people away from the same cling to the things of the world that took Lot's wife (vs. 32).

Lot lived too cosy with the evil of the world, and it cost him his family, wealth, honour, and happiness. It was the total ruination of his name. For the record leaves Lot holed up in a mountain cave, with only the shirt on his back and enough booze on hand for his daughters to get him drunk and thus

themselves pregnant by him! Such is the way of those who live according to carnal interests, refusing to put the Lord first. Though the carnal life may look the easiest way, it is the hardest in the end. The initial sweetness of fleshly sins so soon turns to the revolting distaste of gravel (Prov. 20:17; 9:17-18).

N.B. how we see nothing in Lot of any relation to God in the account. Again, as the line of Cain in chapter 4, Lot seemed to live below the sun, without a walk with the Lord. Such a contrast we see in Abraham, who actively walked with the Lord and was blessed beyond measure and time. Compare how Abraham's life shows spiritual growth to maturity, while those around him seem quite left behind. Which kind of believer have you chosen to be?

On the Side

Look well at the unerring *certainty* of God's wrath and judgment upon evil. He is so mindful of it all. Nothing escapes His attention. It is surely seen and is a concern to the Lord. If the horror of an eternal hell underscores the vast repulsiveness of sin in God's sight, requiring the most tragic heartbreak of

Gen 19:27 And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the LORD:
Gen 19:28 And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace.
Gen 19:29 And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt.

Christ's death to bring the remedy, then every soul refusing Christ will most certainly be held accountable for his sin.

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19:27-29 – Abraham's Answer

Vs. 27 – Abraham was up early and standing again at the place where he had interceded before the Lord for His people the day before.

Vs. 28 – The billowing smoke rising as from a furnace told him that the Lord had brought what He promised.

Vs. 29 – But the Lord did not fail to hear this old intercessor standing up in the hill country looking out over the burning cities of the plain. It is an image of Moses on the hill, with arms upraised, interceding for his people as they fought the Amalekites (Ex. 17), and of our great High Priest who *"ever liveth to make intercession"* for us (Heb.
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Gen 19:33 And they made their father drink wine that night: and the firstborn went in, and lay with her father; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose.
Gen 19:34 And it came to pass on the morrow, that the firstborn said unto the younger, Behold, I lay yesternight with my father: let us make him drink wine this night also; and go thou in, and lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father.
Gen 19:35 And they made their father drink wine that night also: and the younger arose, and lay with him; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose.
Gen 19:36 Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father.
Gen 19:37 And the firstborn bare a son, and called his name Moab: the same is the father of the Moabites unto this day.
Gen 19:38 And the younger, she also bare a son, and called his name Benammi: the same is the father of the children of Ammon unto this day.

7:25).

19:30-38 – Moab and Ammon

Lot morally bottoms out in this final scene, passing then into biblical oblivion. We could barely stomach much more of him. The nations arising from these sons/grandsons of this man of bad choices became relentless adversaries of the nation of Israel throughout their history.

Ponder Points

Note how the second time drunkenness is found in the Bible the shame of nakedness is again involved (9:21-22), and now with the disgrace of immorality and even incest. Note a similar association in Proverbs 23:20-35. Would a godly saint still dare

defend his dabbling with drink?

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With such a notorious beginning, so steeped in immorality, it is not surprising to see the resulting nation of Moab become what it became – *immoral!* Their religion was centred on vile Babylonian fertility concepts. And it was the subtle approach of sexual immorality that the Moabite women used when from a human perspective they almost won the day for Moab and Balak and Balaam against the nation of Israel in Numbers 25. Theirs was a crafty way of seduction, rather than military confrontation, *"For they vex you with their <u>wiles</u>, wherewith they have <u>beguiled</u> you..."* (Num. 25:18). When every other nation sought a military solution, these sought a sensual solution, using the immorality of their carnal religion. It was in them from their origin!

Ruth came of this nation conceived in a mountain cave above Zoar. But though such was the way of her people, God changed Ruth! By His grace, He delivered her from filth by faith. The carnal influence of generations fell away like the scales from Paul's eyes, and Ruth was found *"a virtuous woman"* (Ruth 3:11), walking in God's transforming grace. The Lord can so gloriously change a soul in whom there is found a heart of faith!
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"And the LORD visited Sarah
as he had said,
and the LORD did unto Sarah
as he had spoken.
For Sarah conceived,
and bare Abraham a son in his old age,
at the set time of which
God had spoken to him"

(Gen. 21:1-2)

Class 8 – Genesis 20-22

Gen 20:1 And Abraham journeyed from thence toward the south country, and dwelled between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourned in Gerar.
Gen 20:2 And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister: and Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took Sarah.

Chapter 20 – Lie for Safety

In this chapter is tumble number 2 for Abraham and Sarah into the lie of Sarah's identity, testifying to the power of the sin nature within us.

20:1-2 – The Lie

Abraham travelled south into the land of Abimelech, *"king of Gerar"*. Gerar was between Gaza and Gath in the land of the Philistines. And again, as in Egypt in chapter 12, not knowing the nature of the people there, Abraham chose to lie about his relation to Sarah, saying she was his sister. It was self-preservation he sought at the expense of integrity, showing fear of man over faith in God. There was a goodly measure of selfishness in Abraham's dishonesty, as there always is. This seems so strange in view of the great faith and spiritual strength we have so recently seen in this man, with his victory over the eastern kings in chapter 14, justifying faith in God's promise in chapter 15, and

successful intercession for the righteous in chapter 18. It has been an up and down story with this man of God, for we have seen as well his selfish lie in chapter 12, carnal compromise with Hagar in chapter 16, and doubt of the Lord in chapter 17. Though justified by faith in his *position* before the Lord, Abraham's *practice* was often quite another story. As one writer put it, "While God's people are *'accepted in the Beloved',* they are not all equally *acceptable* to the Beloved". Is it not true of our human nature, that we so easily fall back into the old sinful tracks we were freely running before the Lord so graciously drew us to a love of righteousness? We grow weak or weary. We drift away from the Lord, forgetting the sharpness of His past rebukes. We leave a *"walk in the Spirit",* where alone there is strength and promise that *"ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh"* (Gal. 5:16). Yet still there is such high praise for the life and faith of Abraham in the N.T. To fall to sin is not to fall-out with God. It is just time to return! *"The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and He delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with His hand"* (Ps. 37:23-24).

Now Sarah would have been rather an old woman by this time. What was Abimelech's interest in her?

Gen 20:3 But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold, thou art but a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she is a man's wife.
Gen 20:4 But Abimelech had not come near her: and he said, Lord, wilt thou slay also a righteous nation?
Gen 20:5 Said he not unto me, She is my sister? and she, even she herself said, He is my brother: in the integrity of my heart and innocency of my hands have I done this.

Of course, we do not know what she looked like at that stage. She may have carried her age much better than most of us. Perhaps there had been some revitalizing or preserving of her vitality from the Lord, with His plan still to give Isaac through her. It may have been largely an alliance thing, Abimelech seeking alliance with Abraham through marriage, since Abraham was recognized as a force to be reckoned with. Remember those defeated kings from the east in chapter 14. Abraham likely held something of the celebrity status of King Hezekiah after Assyria's defeat on his doorstep.

20:3-7 – God's Rebuke

Vs. 4-5 – Abimelech comes across as a man of integrity. In fact his character is somewhat more attractive than Abraham's at this point. It is indeed true that the unsaved can often evidence finer qualities than some among God's own children, certainly when His child refuses to walk with Him in fearless faith. We see something of the same in

Gen 20:6 And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her.
Gen 20:7 Now therefore restore the man his wife; for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live: and if thou restore her not, know thou that thou shalt surely die, thou, and all that are thine.

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the sailors seeking to preserve Jonah, when he cared little about putting them in harm's way. And we see the same in the repentant Ninevites, resigned to the Lord's will, while Jonah, the grumpy prophet of God, sat up on the hillside hoping for their doom, quite angry and unresigned to the Lord's will.

Vs. 7 – Note how the Lord still honoured Abraham here, calling him a prophet despite his glaring weakness. In the Lord's grace and long-suffering He honoured the man who so dishonoured Him through distrust.

20:8-18 – Abimelech's Rebuke

Again, as with Pharaoh in chapter 12, it was another sad day when the world must come to a child of God with fair rebuke.

Vs. 11-13 – In defending his actions Abraham revealed his foolish, faithless fear of man. By stating Sarah's relation to him as a half-sister he did little to excuse his dishonesty.

Gen 20:14 And Abimelech took sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and womenservants, and gave them unto Abraham, and restored him Sarah his wife.
Gen 20:15 And Abimelech said, Behold, my land is before thee: dwell where it pleaseth thee.
Gen 20:16 And unto Sarah he said, 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.
Gen 20:17 So Abraham prayed unto God: and God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maidservants; and they bare children.
Gen 20:18 For the LORD had fast closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech, because of Sarah Abraham's wife.

Vs. 14-16 – Abimelech gave gifts and showed grace to Abraham and Sarah as a conciliatory gesture for his wrong. Again, his character rises higher than Abraham's here. There is perhaps a touch of sarcasm in his words to Sarah, *"I have given <u>thy brother</u> a thousand pieces of silver"*.

We are wise to remain on our guard, remembering our natural tendency to fall back into old sinful habits. Though we may have left our evil ways in Christ, those ways have not entirely left us. As the N.T. confirms, in Christ our old sin nature is not removed, but shares residence in us with our new nature. And see again how our choice to sin always involves others, casting wide the darkness of a bad influence. Could it be that Isaac's fall to the same sin of weakness (26:7) had something to do with this tendency in his father?

Gen 21:1 And the LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did unto Sarah as he had spoken.
Gen 21:2 For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him.
Gen 21:3 And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac.

Chapter 21 – The Promised Son

21:1-8 – Isaac at Last

Vs. 1-2 – Look well at the emphasis upon the Lord's work according to His words. He did just what He said He would do, even after it had become humanly impossible. And He did it *when* He said He would do it (vs. 2). It is such a forceful reminder of the Lord's faithfulness to His words. Here is that foundational event, which sent a *guarantee* throughout the following generations of the Jewish nation and all nations, that the Lord most assuredly keeps His words, though the keeping of it may look impossible and involve a long wait! *"As He had spoken"* will be the celebration theme of the redeemed throughout eternity, as we affirm with Joshua that *"not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake…all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof"* (Josh. 23:14). And are you hearing it? *"As He had spoken"*;

- Not as He had *implied* in the cryptic coding

Gen 21:4 And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac being eight days old, as God had commanded him.
Gen 21:5 And Abraham was an hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him.
Gen 21:6 And Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me.
Gen 21:7 And she said, Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given children suck? for I have born him a son in his old age.
Gen 21:8 And the child grew, and was weaned: and Abraham made a great feast the same day that Isaac was weaned.

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carefully concealed in the Bible wording.

- Not as He subtly inferred through allegorical insinuation.
- Not as He had hidden behind the simple sense on the surface.

"As He had <u>spoken</u>"!! Never forget that the true God did and does *"as He had said"* and has recorded in the sure words of His Bible.

Vs. 3-4 – Abraham carefully did as he was told, in naming and circumcising his son.

Vs. 6-7 – Sarah's laughter was very different now from her scorning laugh of chapter 18.

Vs. 8 – The day Isaac was weaned was made a great day of celebration. Isaac would have been 3-4 years old.

Gen 21:9 And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking.
Gen 21:10 Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac.
Gen 21:11 And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son.
Gen 21:12 And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called.
Gen 21:13 And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed.
Gen 21:14 And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread, and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and the child, and sent her away: and she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba.

21:9-21 – Ishmael and Hagar Cast Out

Vs. 9-10 – Ishmael was observed on this celebration day *"mocking"* or persecuting Sarah's son, Isaac (Gal. 4:29). Ishmael's actions are understandable. Perhaps a boy of 17 years by now, he had always been the focus of his father's attention. But now he was forced to share that focus with Isaac. And not only was it shared attention, but he was now shunted to 2nd place! For Isaac was now understood to be the son of promise. The hope of that privileged position passed over Ishmael entirely, to his great disappointment. And so Sarah, with the Lord joining her (vs. 12-13), forced Abraham to reluctantly remove Ishmael and his mother from their home.

Vs. 14 – Abraham *"rose up early"* to obey at once, though it was a task so *"very grievous"* to him, perhaps the hardest thing he had ever done.

Compare Galatians 4:21-31, where Paul used this historical situation as an allegory, contrasting the way of bondage to the law with the way of blessing through the promise;

- Ishmael illustrates our fleshly first birth by man's power and design, that brings us under sins bondage.
- Isaac illustrates spiritual second birth by the miraculous power of God, according to faith in God's promise, making us God's child.
- Abraham began with Sarah (promise), then Hagar (law) was added later. But when the promised son (Isaac/Christ) miraculously came, that which was added, Hagar and Ishmael, picturing the law of Moses, was to be cast out.
- Ishmael persecuted Isaac, even as our old nature joins those under law (Jews/legalists) in persecuting those justified freely by faith.

On the Side

Do not miss the true sense of an allegory in this Galatians 4 passage. While an allegory expresses a subtle, secondary meaning, it never voids the historical nature of the original account.

Gen 21:17 And God heard the voice of the lad; and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is.
Gen 21:18 Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand; for I will make him a great nation.
Gen 21:19 And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink.
Gen 21:20 And God was with the lad; and he grew, and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer.
Gen 21:21 And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran: and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt.
Gen 21:22 And it came to pass at that time, that Abimelech and Phichol the chief captain of his host spake unto Abraham, saying, God is with thee in all that thou doest:
Gen 21:23 Now therefore swear unto me here by God that thou wilt not deal falsely with me, nor with my son, nor with my son's son: but according to the kindness that I have done unto thee, thou shalt do unto me, and to the land wherein thou hast sojourned.

Vs. 15-21 – Again, the Lord was there to rescue Hagar and son, as in chapter 16.

21:22-32 – Covenant with Abimelech

This further contact and covenant between Abraham and Abimelech seems to be based upon their meeting in chapter 20.

Vs. 22-23 – Despite Abraham's failings, it became evident to this perceptive neighbour that *"God is with thee in all that thou doest".* Our life is a witness in spite of us, answering to the prayer I often pray, "Lord please use me in spite of me". Therefore Abimelech sought an alliance of peace with this man of God, fixed in a formal covenant.

Gen 21:24 And Abraham said, I will swear.
Gen 21:25 And Abraham reproved Abimelech because of a well of water, which Abimelech's servants had violently taken away.
Gen 21:26 And Abimelech said, I wot not who hath done this thing: neither didst thou tell me, neither yet heard I of it, but to day.
Gen 21:27 And Abraham took sheep and oxen, and gave them unto Abimelech; and both of them made a covenant.
Gen 21:28 And Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves.
Gen 21:29 And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What mean these seven ewe lambs which thou hast set by themselves?
Gen 21:30 And he said, For these seven ewe lambs shalt thou take of my hand, that they may be a witness unto me, that I have digged this well.

Vs. 25 – Abraham used the occasion to confront Abimelech concerning a well he had dug, which had been taken with violence by Abimelech's servants.

Vs. 26 – Of this matter Abimelech confessed no shred of knowledge, suggesting that Abraham should have told him.

Vs. 27-30 – With their covenant, the matter of the well was settled at the same time.

Abraham did well to state his concern, for it seems he had wrongly assumed Abimelech's hand in that aggression. Such simple misunderstandings are so often at the root of soured human relations. The appropriate answer, as here, is to attempt to settle the matter with maturity through open discussion. At least be sure your bitterness is based on something truly bitter and not just your mistaken

Gen 21:31 Wherefore he called that place Beersheba; because there they sware both of them.
Gen 21:32 Thus they made a covenant at Beersheba: then Abimelech rose up, and Phichol the chief captain of his host, and they returned into the land of the Philistines.
Gen 21:33 And Abraham planted a grove in Beersheba, and called there on the name of the LORD, the everlasting God.

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perception.

"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men" (Rom. 12:18).

21:33-34 – El Olam

Vs. 33 – A new name of the Lord is found here. *"The LORD, the everlasting God"* is "Jehovah El Olam" in the original Hebrew behind the English. It is a name that describes the Lord as the unchangeable, forever dependable God. He who does *"as He had spoken".*

Name List

Names of God we have come across so far in Genesis;

1:1 – *"God"* (Elohim) – The strong One.

2:4 – *"LORD"* (Jehovah) – The self-existent One, who seeks relation with man.

Gen 22:1 And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am.
Gen 22:2 And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

14:18 – *"The Most High God"* (El Elyon) – The strongest strong One.

16:13 – *"God Who Sees Me"* (El Rai) – The God who is living and aware of us.

17:1 – *"The Almighty God"* (El Shaddai) – The all-sufficient One, who chastens us toward our greater fruitfulness.

21:33 – *"The Everlasting God"* (El Olam) – The God who is unchangeable forever.

Chapter 22 – Anyone But You!

Few portions of the Bible carry the emotional power of this summit of Abraham's spiritual experience. It is a premier lesson on faith and obedience that we find in this chapter. And through it God would bring us to understand something of the terrible price He paid for our redemption.

22:1-2 – God's Command

Vs. 1 – *"After these things"* – Isaac was perhaps a teenager by this point.

"God did tempt Abraham" – This was not as Satan tempts a soul to do evil, but in the sense of *testing* to display the good in a soul, that generations to follow might learn through their example.

This father's attachment to this child, so dear to his soul, is seen in the Lord's reference to *"thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest".* This expression of Abraham's love for his son is the first mention of "love" in the Bible. The Lord well knew the intensity of Abraham's love for his son, but He would know and show the world how much more Abraham loved his God.

"And offer him there for a burnt offering" – The Lord was demanding Abraham's very best, the thing he most cherished in life. There is an obvious reflection here of God the Father one day sending the *"only begotten Son"* of His love, His most cherished, to His death on Calvary.

"Into the land of Moriah…one of the mountains" – II Chronicles 3:1 reveals that what became known as Mount Moriah is the mount of the temple site, that threshing floor David one day purchased from

Gen 22:3 And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him.
Gen 22:4 Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off.

Ornan (I Chron. 21). It is the same mount where God's most precious Son, Jesus Christ, would die in sacrifice for man's sin.

22:3-10 – Abraham's Obedience

Vs. 3 – *"And Abraham rose up early in the morning"* – The complete absence of resistance, reluctance, hesitation or doubt in Abraham, even of such a command, comes to our attention here and beckons our following. Though everything rode on Isaac, yea all of God's promises, reasons were neither offered nor asked. Abraham understood what every wise parent must grasp, that his child *was not his own, but God's*. A parent is merely a steward, caring for the souls God has given to his trust for a time. And that happy appointment comes with no guarantees on times involved. As well, no parent therefore has the right to train "their" child in ways other than of the Lord's way.

Vs. 4 – *"On the third day"* – The journey must have been an absolute agony for Abraham, though strangely the account is completely void of his

Gen 22:5 And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.
Gen 22:6 And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together.

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emotions. For three days that beloved son was as good as dead in the father's heart. Again, the symbolism of three days is obvious here, for Jesus, the Son of God, was actually dead until raised to life *"on the third day".*

Vs. 5 – Upon leaving the servants, in sight of the mount afar off, Abraham spoke of *both* Isaac and himself returning. The Hebrew verbs translated *"go yonder", "worship",* and *"come again"* are all written in the plural. Hebrews 11:17-19 explains what was in Abraham at this point. He fully expected the Lord to raise Isaac to life after his death, and that they would then return together. Consider the magnitude of Abraham's faith in light of the fact that resurrection had no historical precedent at that time. Yet Abraham was *"accounting that God was able"* to restore Isaac to life without any previous example to look to. Except that Isaac, that child of the impossible, was in himself a picture of rising to life where there was no life, he having been born when Abraham and Sarah were as good as dead. *"From whence also he received him in a figure"*, for

Gen 22:7 And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?
Gen 22:8 And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together.

Isaac is indeed a type or *"figure"* of our resurrected Saviour.

Vs. 7-8 – The conversation between these two who so dearly loved is so poignant, displaying Isaac's ignorance of the plan at this point, and displaying something else. Isaac knew what was involved in worship. He had seen his father do so before this. Do your children see your acts of worship. Do they witness the reality of your relationship with God? Abraham perhaps did not realize how prophetic was his cryptic assurance that *"God will provide Himself a lamb".* The Lord did just that, both immediately and ultimately in *"the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world"* (Jn. 1:29).

Can you imagine the heaviness of Abraham's heart as *"they went both of them together"* (vs. 6 & 8), knowing that on the mount they must be separated? Knowing that up there Abraham must in a sense become the *enemy* of his beloved son. In the same way God the Father became the enemy of His beloved Son in those hours of darkness on the

cross, when man's sin was laid upon Jesus Christ. He became there both the *"scapegoat"*, carrying sin away into death, and the goat *"for the LORD"*, shedding His blood in death for man's sin (Lev. 16:7-10).

Vs. 9 – At some point it became obvious to Isaac that *he* was to be the sacrifice, yet we see not the slightest resistance in him either. He wholly accepted what his father must do, without the least indication of reluctance. As the *type*, so the *antitype*. As Isaac, so Jesus Christ permitted Himself to be put to death in willing submission to His Father's will.

Can you picture this obedient father looking down upon this tender child of his love, who was gazing up through tears? Whose heart is not drawn out for these with such love for each other, yet loving God more? And then understand that it is a picture of God the Father, allowing His most cherished Son to be put to death for your sin and mine! His own hand as well in the slaying! And that loving, submissive Son of God allowing it to be so! Whose

heart is not drawn out for that Father and Son, who so love each other, and yet *"so loved the world"*?

Now this was not child sacrifice, as some of the pagan religions around were busy with, for the Lord knew that He would not allow Isaac to be offered. He neither wanted nor needed Isaac's death. It was *Abraham's* death (to self) He was after. This is the difference between heartless false religion and the true worship of God. What the Lord wanted was Abraham's whole heart, proof of complete loyalty, full faith in God's promise. And this is indeed what He found in His servant. Abraham's faith in God's promise, of a nation through this son, never failed.

A true worshipper holds nothing back from the Lord, even though perhaps not fully understanding or seeing the way clear through to the end. In this incredible man we see worship that cost him dearly, sacrificing his *very best*, his dearest treasure upon the altar of love for God. Even as God the Father offered His dearest treasure upon the altar of love for man. ***Priceless sacrifice!!*** It is so utterly beyond the likes of us! How staggering and humbling! As Abraham did not withhold his only son, so God *"spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all"* (Rom. 8:32). Even so we should

Gen 22:11 And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I.
Gen 22:12 And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.
Gen 22:13 And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son.
Gen 22:14 And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovahjireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.

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spare nothing in our devotion to Him.

22:11-19 – God's Answer

Vs. 11-12 – At the very last moment the Lord called His servant off from doing what he fully intended to do. And that full intention was seen by the Lord as if the very act (vs. 16, *"because thou hast done this thing"*). *"Now I know that thou fearest God",* in that Abraham was willing to give his very best through faith in God's words of promise.

Vs. 13-14 – The Lord provided a ram to be offered *"in the stead of his son".* This provision of course pictures the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ for all men on that same mount of Moriah. In naming the place Jehovah-Jirah, or "the Lord will see/provide", again Abraham prophesied of God's ultimate provision for mankind's greatest need in that same place.

Gen 22:15 And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time,
Gen 22:16 And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son:
Gen 22:17 That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;
Gen 22:18 And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.
Gen 22:19 So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba.

Faith lives in obedience, waiting for the Lord to provide for our needs, and not cutting corners or cheating. But the Lord did not provide until personal sacrifice had been made. And blessing followed on the heels of sacrifice. Do not expect the Lord to bless you with His provision until you have shown your full intention or willingness to slay your "Isaac's". Even as Ruth gave up all hope of "rest" in marriage when coming to the Lord and His land, yet met the finest there in Boaz. In fullest *sacrifice* of self for the Lord she found fullest *satisfaction* in the Lord's very best.

Vs. 15-19 – In these last recorded words of the Lord to Abraham, the Lord so solemnly renewed his vow to His servant and friend, in a way we have seldom seen the Lord speak with such intensity. The Lord was so deeply stirred by such faith and sacrifice lived out in this man. Faith is simply taking God at His word, trusting God's words as a man might

trust a parachute. God was real to Abraham, and His promises certain. God said it, he believed it, ordered his life accordingly. Whether or not I am aware of reasons for what the Lord requires of me is His business. Without such simple faith, taking God at His word, it is impossible to please Him.

22:20-24 – Family News

This will become important in chapter 24, when a wife is sought for Isaac.

Ponder Points

Consider some parallels between Jesus and Isaac;

- Both were promised sons.
- Both were miracle born.
- Both brought joy to their father's heart.
- Both were persecuted by their jealous brothers.
- Both were willing to give their life to please their father.
- Both went willingly to that place of sacrifice.
- Both carried the wood upon which they would be killed to the place of their death.

Class 9 – Genesis 23-24

Gen 23:1 And Sarah was an hundred and seven and twenty years old: these were the years of the life of Sarah.
Gen 23:2 And Sarah died in Kirjatharba; the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan: and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her.
Gen 23:3 And Abraham stood up from before his dead, and spake unto the sons of Heth, saying,
Gen 23:4 I am a stranger and a sojourner with you: give me a possession of a buryingplace with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight.

Chapter 23 – Dealing Nobly

23:1-2 – Sarah Died

Sarah was 127 years old when she died. She was a godly woman held high in the N.T. as an example of faith to be followed (Heb. 11:11-13; I Pet. 3:5-6). *"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints"* (Ps. 116:15). Though their marriage was far from perfect, Sarah remained Abraham's companion throughout the decades of their life together. The tears of this old man are quite understandable and so utterly appropriate. Abraham and Sarah present a noble picture of a man and woman happily united in the Lord, and in marital love throughout their lives on earth.

23:3-16 – Bartering for a Burial Place

Vs. 4 – Abraham's desire to bury Sarah in Canaan

spoke of his heart connection to that Promised Land, reflecting his faith. He clearly planned that he and his people were there to stay. This is the first piece of ground actually owned in Canaan by Abraham and the nation descending from him.

Vs. 10 – The sons of Heth were Hittites, thus descendants of Canaan, son of Ham (10:15).

Things to note in this interchange;

- Abraham was a gracious gentleman in his dealings with men.
- He was an old saint so greatly respected by his neighbours. While Lot had character-crashed through his carnal choices, Abraham went out a truly noble man.
- He wanted a piece of land of his own that cost him. He would not receive the land as a gift, but insisted on buying it (vs. 9, 13, & 16).
- All was conducted properly and before witnesses. Though he knew all the land would eventually belong to his descendants, he would not allow even the appearance of impropriety.

23:17-20 – Sarah Buried

Gen 23:17 And the field of Ephron, which was in Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the field, and the cave which was therein, and all the trees that were in the field, that were in all the borders round about, were made sure
Gen 23:18 Unto Abraham for a possession in the presence of the children of Heth, before all that went in at the gate of his city.
Gen 23:19 And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre: the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan.
Gen 23:20 And the field, and the cave that is therein, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession of a buryingplace by the sons of Heth.

Gen 24:1 And Abraham was old, and well stricken in age: and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things.

Six were eventually buried in this cave at Hebron (49:31) – Sarah, Abraham (25:9), Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob (50:13), and Leah. Jacob's preferred wife, Rachel, was not buried here, for she died while giving birth to Benjamin and was buried where she died, just north of Bethlehem.

Chapter 24 – Daughter of Nahor

These next 4 chapters deal with the life of Isaac, beginning with Rebekah becoming his wife in this chapter. In the very interesting process of finding Isaac's bride we are given a vision of true servanthood in Abraham's messenger.

24:1-9 – The Oath

Vs. 1 – Again, we look upon such a picture of honour in this man coming to his old age still walking in the richness of the Lord's blessing. *"The blessing of the*

Gen 24:2 And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh:
Gen 24:3 And I will make thee swear by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell:
Gen 24:4 But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac.

Lord, it maketh rich" (Prov. 10:22). Isaac was about 40 years old (25:20), and thus Abraham about 140 (21:5).

Vs. 2 – This *"eldest servant"* may have been Eliezer of Damascus (15:2), though he is not named. Why do we not know the name of such a key figure in this account? Perhaps because a servant's name does not matter. His significance is not in his *identity*, but in his *service*. A true servant lives neither for himself nor for his own name, but for the name of his master.

"Put…thy hand under my thigh" or loins – The only other place we see this interesting form of oath is in 47:29 when Jacob sought assurance that they would not bury him in Egypt. The meaning of the method has been lost with time, but the solemnity of it is apparent. Abraham was calling his servant into a binding promise that he would do his master's will.

Gen 24:5 And the servant said unto him, Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land: must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou camest?
Gen 24:6 And Abraham said unto him, Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again.
Gen 24:7 The LORD God of heaven, which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence.
Gen 24:8 And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath: only bring not my son thither again.
Gen 24:9 And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and sware to him concerning that matter.

Vs. 5 – The servant asked an astute question, wanting to understand the extent of his oath before giving his word. His question suggests the wise caution of intelligent service. *"He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him"* (Prov. 18:13).

Abraham repeatedly expressed concern that Isaac not be allowed to go to his home country to find a wife (vs. 6, 8). Abraham would not leave God's place of blessing, nor would he let his son leave, as a wisely protective parent. He perhaps feared the attractions or distractions of the world outside the land of promise. He clung by faith to God's revelation of that Promised Land and his seed planted there.

24:10-14 – The Fleece

Gen 24:10 And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his master, and departed; for all the goods of his master were in his hand: and he arose, and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor.
Gen 24:11 And he made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water at the time of the evening, even the time that women go out to draw water.
Gen 24:12 And he said, O LORD God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham.
Gen 24:13 Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water:
Gen 24:14 And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master.

Vs. 10 – *"The city of Nahor"* was near Haran, where Abraham had delayed on his way to Canaan. Notice that, as with Jonah, there is no mention of the long, arduous trek of some 900 km. The servant is not the issue, nor the troubles he endures in his service of the master. The greater focus in this account is upon Rebekah and Isaac, the bride and bridegroom on either end of the servant's labours. It is the way a true servant would have it to be, with all attention upon the objects of his service. True humility glories in the good of others, not in its own humility or hardships.

Vs. 12-14 – The servant graciously sought the Lord's guidance through a type of fleece. He is a picture of dependence on God. This fleece is unlike Gideon's in that the Lord had already given command in Gideon's case (Judges 6). Gideon was looking for a way out, not a way forward as here. Note well the

Gen 24:15 And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder.
Gen 24:16 And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her: and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up.
Gen 24:17 And the servant ran to meet her, and said, Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher.
Gen 24:18 And she said, Drink, my lord: and she hasted, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink.

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sound characteristics in this servant's request for guidance;

- His fleece wisely highlighted good qualities in a young woman. He was looking for a mature, happy servant. One willing for the demanding task of watering 10 camels would be a saint indeed!
- He was asking for *specifics* in guidance.
- His prayer was expectant. He was expecting one appointed by the Lord, in answer to his master's assurance.
- From beginning (vs. 12) to end (vs. 14) his one concern was the good of *"my master"*.

Blessed indeed is the master of such a servant!

<u>24:15-31</u> – The Answer

Vs. 15 – *"Before he had done speaking"* – Compare

Gen 24:19 And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking.
Gen 24:20 And she hasted, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels.

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again Isaiah 65:24. The Lord did not allow His answer to be confusing, but made it quite obvious. The Lord was there with an answer because this man's actions showed he was committed to an answer from Him. He was in with both feet, seeking his master's will.

"Rebekah came out…with her pitcher upon her shoulder" – This was surely a daily duty, which might have been somewhat of a drag, and thus easily done with a wrong attitude. Had Rebekah been grumpy about such chores she would not have been so quick to add to her task. Especially with a perfect stranger. Especially with the big job of 10 camels. Especially with such alacrity (*"hasted…hasted…ran",* vs. 18-20). This could only have been done with a smile in her heart, indicating an attractively outgoing, hospitable, humble way about this girl. Great traits to seek in a mate! Greater still to imitate!

Vs. 21 – *"And the man wondering at her"* – It is always a difficult thing to look upon such an obvious, immediate answer to prayer without

Gen 24:21 And the man wondering at her held his peace, to wit whether the LORD had made his journey prosperous or not.
Gen 24:22 And it came to pass, as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden earring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold;
Gen 24:23 And said, Whose daughter art thou? tell me, I pray thee: is there room in thy father's house for us to lodge in?
Gen 24:24 And she said unto him, I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, which she bare unto Nahor.
Gen. 24:25 She said moreover unto him, We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in.
Gen 24:26 And the man bowed down his head, and worshipped the LORD.

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surprise. Compare Peter's release from prison in Acts 12, where those praying it into reality were *"astonished"* (vs. 16).

Vs. 23-24 – *"Whose daughter art thou"* – Here was the crucial question. Nahor was Abraham's brother. Can you imagine his further amazement as he heard her answer? She was precisely from the right family! See how the Lord did exceeding abundantly above all that was asked in giving a girl who was rightly related, but more. He provided one who was kind, energetic, strong, humble, and with a right heart (even pretty, vs. 16). Do you believe the Lord still answers prayer like this?

Vs. 26-27 – He bowed right there in front of Rebekah and gave thanks to the Lord for this beginning of answered prayer. He later did the same again before the family when his purpose was confirmed (vs. 52).

Gen 24:27 And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth: I being in the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master's brethren.
Gen 24:28 And the damsel ran, and told them of her mother's house these things.
Gen 24:29 And Rebekah had a brother, and his name was Laban: and Laban ran out unto the man, unto the well.
Gen 24:30 And it came to pass, when he saw the earring and bracelets upon his sister's hands, and when he heard the words of Rebekah his sister, saying, Thus spake the man unto me; that he came unto the man; and, behold, he stood by the camels at the well.
Gen 24:31 And he said, Come in, thou blessed of the LORD; wherefore standest thou without? for I have prepared the house, and room for the camels.
Gen. 24:32 And the man came into the house: and he ungirded his camels, and gave straw and provender for the camels, and water to wash his feet, and the men's feet that were with him.
Gen. 24:33 And there was set meat before him to eat: but he said, I will not eat, until I have told mine errand. And he said, Speak on.

Do not forget this response when the Lord answers your prayers. Christ made a point of the common ungratefulness of men when the 10 lepers were healed and only one returned to express thanks. This servant's relation to the Lord was on the surface, not a secretive, hidden thing. He was so united in heart with his master that he responded in the same way, with the same joy before God as his master would.

Vs. 27 – *"I being in the way, the LORD led me"* – As we get going the Lord leads us. The steering wheel is of little use until the car is rolling.

<u>24:32-60</u> – Deal Closed

Vs. 33 – Business before pleasure. This servant was

Gen 24:61 And Rebekah arose, and her damsels, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man: and the servant took Rebekah, and went his way.
Gen 24:62 And Isaac came from the way of the well Lahairoi; for he dwelt in the south country.
Gen 24:63 And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide: and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels were coming.
Gen 24:64 And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel.
Gen 24:65 For she had said unto the servant, What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant had said, It is my master: therefore she took a vail, and covered herself.
Gen 24:66 And the servant told Isaac all things that he had done.
Gen 24:67 And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

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so committed to his master's cause that he would not enjoy refreshment until he knew if his purpose was fulfilled. Here is singleness of heart, the supreme sincerity of a true servant.

24:61-67 – The Introduction

Vs. 67 – *"He loved her"* – Their love was a quick and easy thing, because the Lord's leading was clearly in their union. Love is good and true and lasting when it is of the Lord and according to His way.

"Isaac was comforted after his mother's death" – It seems he was greatly moved by Sarah's death. It speaks of a close-knit family. And it speaks as well of Sarah's character, for she was one who was a great loss in her passing. Peter held Sarah up as an example of humble submission in marriage (I Pet. 3).

Ponder Points

Consider the qualities that made this old servant of Abraham a great man (vs. 2) in a great man's house, making him a supreme model of true servanthood;

- He was unselfish, living and giving all for the master, as if he were seeking to provide for himself or his own son. If Isaac remained childless the servant became heir (15:2). Thus this one seemingly worked toward his own loss in his devotion to another's gain.

- He was careful about his words or oaths. So many in our day make their words cheap by failing to keep their word.

- There was no fanfare about his service. He was quietly given to his master's best.

- He was dependent upon the Lord for direction. His faithfulness to the Lord made him faithful to men. The two will always go hand in hand.

- He was wise to look for indications of character in a woman.

- He was as courteous and generous as Abraham would have been in person.

- He was a thankful man. His gratitude was never an afterthought, but always immediate.

- He showed drive and momentum. He got up and got moving, and allowed himself no rest until he had secured his purpose. His master's purpose was his primary concern. He was nothing like the proverbial sluggish messenger, so painful to send (Prov. 10:26;25:19). This one was rather as the refreshment of ice-water in the heat of the day (Prov. 25:13). He refreshed the soul of his master with a task accomplished, and done in the manner of the master himself.

- He drops from sight with his task completed, leaving the focus upon the bride and bridegroom.

- His key characteristic was his *total identification* with his master's desires, as if sincerely delighted to lose his will in the will of his master.

While the world highlights *self*-service attitudes of assertiveness or detached coolness or brazen haughtiness, the Lord highlights a servanthood of humble respect and initiative.

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The Father's own Son is the greatest Servant of all, so identifying with the will of His Father and the need of man, even unto death (Ps. 40:6-8). Remember that prominent title of Jesus in Isaiah, *"the Servant of the Lord"*. Remember as well the behind-the-scenes service of the Spirit as He serves the Father in glad exaltation of the Son (Jn. 16:14, *"He shall glorify Me"*). God Himself, the ultimate Leader, is the greatest of Servants. No great leader ever skipped that key developmental stage of first becoming a great follower. No great master was never a great servant. These are lessons first and best learned in the home and church.

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Abraham produced after his kind. As he was a man of faith who sincerely worshipped the Lord, and as he was a man of finest character, so we see the same in his son and servant (Gen. 18:19).

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Consider the evident typology behind this historical account (while exercising caution neither to lose sight of the history nor to overstress the symbolisms);

- As Abraham in this chapter, so God the Father's central purpose in this age is to seek a bride for His Son.

- In that search He has sent His faithful Servant, the Holy Spirit, to carry His words and accurately represent Him to the world.

- Christ's bride is the church, now being drawn out from among the people of earth.

- As Abraham's servant, so the Servant Holy Spirit comes advertising the wealth of the Father, and the Son as Heir (vs. 35-36), and the rich opportunity of relation to Him. Compare John 16:14-15; 15:26. Compare the Shulamite's winning portrayal of her beloved in Song of Solomon 5:10-16.

- By so lifting up the Son to the bride she was led to believe and follow, even without physical sight of Him but based solely upon the Servant's faithful words of promise (Jn. 12:32).

- The bride ventured all to embrace the unseen Son.

- She was not disappointed, finding in Him that pearl of greatest price (Matt. 13:45-46).

- She left the house of deception (Laban's) to enter a house of love (vs. 67).

"And the LORD appeared
unto him the same night, and said,
I am the God of Abraham thy father;
fear not, for I am with thee,
and will bless thee,
and multiply thy seed
for my servant Abraham's sake"

(Gen. 26:24)

Class 10 – Genesis 25-26

Gen 25:7 And these are the days of the years of Abraham's life which he lived, an hundred threescore and fifteen years.
Gen 25:8 Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years; and was gathered to his people.
Gen 25:9 And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, which is before Mamre;
Gen 25:10 The field which Abraham purchased of the sons of Heth: there was Abraham buried, and Sarah his wife.

Chapter 25 – Death & Life

25:1-4 – Abraham's 2nd Wife

Abraham married Keturah in his old age, and apparently had concubines as well (vs. 6).

25:5-10 – Abraham's Death

Abraham was 175 years old when he died. It was seventy-five years after Isaac's birth (21:5), thirty-five years after Isaac's marriage to Rebecca (25:20), and fifteen years after the birth of Jacob and Esau (25:26).

Vs. 8 – That Abraham was *"gathered to his people"* is an interesting ponder. This cannot refer to his body in the grave, for only Sarah's body was in the family burial place at that time, while the term here is plural. They were the beginning of their "people"

or nation. Nor can it refer to the souls of his idolatrous ancestors of Mesopotamia. The obvious indication is of life after death together with those who have received the righteousness of God by faith (Lk. 16:23).

Abraham died an old man of faith. Though not without faults, this was a man who took God at His word, both acting and resting upon it in his life. And by this simple means, a way available to the simplest of souls, Abraham found God's supreme blessing. Paul's thrust in Romans 4 is that it was through Abraham's faith in God's promise, without works, that he was made righteous before God. In this sense he becomes the father of every true believer, all those justified by faith among men. As well, Abraham demonstrates to us faith's walk in fellowship with God, the very highest privilege of man.

25:12-18 – Generations of Ishmael

Vs. 13-16 – Ishmael had 12 sons, as did Jacob.

25:19-28 – Isaac and Sons

It is interesting how prominent is the focus upon the lives of Abraham and Jacob in comparison to Isaac.

Gen 25:21 And Isaac intreated the LORD for his wife, because she was barren: and the LORD was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived.
Gen 25:22 And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to enquire of the LORD.
Gen 25:23 And the LORD said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.

Vs. 21-22 – They were a praying couple. Rebekah, like Sarah, was barren at first. They were 20 years together waiting for a child. Again, God's delays are merely opportunities for quiet, patient dependence upon Him. The Lord was keeping His hand on the Messiah's line, demonstrating that its development was *His* doing, not merely a matter of natural means. Isaac and Rebekah were wise to take their concern to the Lord, for they found the solution there.

Vs. 23 – The firstborn of the twins would serve the second-born in contrast to the normal practice among men to give prominence to the firstborn. God follows His own purposes, not man's conventions. Even so Isaac was not Abraham's firstborn, neither was Joseph the firstborn of Jacob, though it was he who received the double portion. Neither was David the eldest of Jesse, nor Solomon of David, though these both attained to highest honours. For *"the Most High Ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will"* (Dan.

Gen 25:24 And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb.
Gen 25:25 And the first came out red, all over like an hairy garment; and they called his name Esau.
Gen 25:26 And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel; and his name was called Jacob: and Isaac was threescore years old when she bare them.
Gen 25:27 And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents.

4:25).

Vs. 25 – From Esau's birth he was a hairy thing, thus his name, Esau, meaning "hairy". He was probably using his Dad's razor before leaving pre-school.

Vs. 26 – Jacob was born with his brother's heel in his grasp, thus his name, Jacob, meaning something like "seizing by the heel" or heel-grabber or supplanter, one tripping another in order to take his place. The manner of their birth would come to characterize their lives.

Vs. 27 – Esau became a clever hunter and man of the fields, his life seemingly more adventurous! He appears every bit a man, a man's man. Outwardly, Esau seems more in possession of traits looked up to by natural man. Jacob on the other hand was *"a plain man",* mild or placid of disposition, with the comparative softness of living in the shelter of a

tent, a mama's boy. He was much more the Clark Kent than the Superman. When Esau later threatened Jacob's life, Jacob was not equal to the challenge, choosing rather to run. Apparently, Esau was a man to be feared.

Vs. 28 – As well, Esau was favoured by Isaac, because he fed his father what he enjoyed. Good food appears to have been a significant motivation in Isaac's life. He will exchange his blessing for a nice meal in the next chapter. Perhaps Esau's high priority placed upon food (vs. 30-32) was partly learned from his father. We see such significant turning points around food in these two chapters. Again, we reproduce after our kind, both in strengths and weaknesses. No man lives to himself, but leaves a trail of influence behind him for better or for worse.

Jacob comes across as far more crafty and complex of character as well, dishonest in fact, even with his own father! Esau seems much more direct and simple of nature. He does more forgiving of Jacob than Jacob of him in their lifetime. We find Jacob often given to deception, later returning the same to

Esau's honesty when returning to the land. This was pictured even in their births, with Esau the leader and Jacob the tripper. From a human perspective it is Esau who commands our respect more than Jacob. But the Lord sees not as man sees, *"for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart"* (I Sam. 16:7). It is a vital lesson for us here. The Lord in fact said, *"Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated"* (Malachi 1:2-3; Rom. 9:13). The Lord looks to something else, something higher than the traits men consider attractive. That heart of faith in Jacob was the key issue with the Lord. For all his faults, Jacob valued and sought God's blessing and was determined to get what God had promised. As we shall see, Esau had no faith that God could or would deliver on His promises, resulting in his later despising of God's promise, and God then despising him. Faith is the matter of crucial importance to the Lord, a soul's simple confidence in His word. Understand that the worldly, attractive, outward characteristics of Esau meant absolutely nothing to the Lord. In this regard consider a few modern things meaning nothing to the Lord but scoring high among people of earth;

- The physique and fame of a rugby star.
- The stunning talents of an Olympic gold medallist.

- The lightning-fast reactions of the finest cricketer.
- The brilliant batsman.
- The macho, cool and tough.
- Those draped with designer duds or displaying a wealth of gold or driving an expensive car.
- The sharp wit of those supremely clever.
- The impressiveness of those exceptionally talented.

Those having everything…but God! Should not such meaningless things carry less meaning for us as well? Who are your heroes, and those of your children? It may be that David's oldest brother looked more like a king, tall and broad of shoulders and impressive to the sight (I Sam. 16). But David had a king's heart, a heart after God's. Esau took after Nimrod's attractive character, that *"mighty hunter before the LORD"*. Three times he was called "mighty" in chapter 10 (vs. 8-9), but he was a rebel by name! Samson was another such hero, strong, tough, brave, and cool as an ice-lolly, but oh so carnal! Those mighty *"men of renown"* of Noah's day are another case in point (6:4), men fit only for

destruction in God's sight. The fearful giants of Canaan another example. Great impressive men they were, yet with their cup full of wickedness and ripe for God's ruin. God is unimpressed with *"men of renown"*, and neither should we be. Such souls much more readily meet with God's judgment, for *"Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called"* (I Cor. 1:26). Such proud hearts seldom overcome the handicap of their renown. All such earthly repute is so many clumps of dung on the manure pile of human celebrity, that same smelly pile onto which Paul pitched all of his earthly merits (Phil. 3). Be wise to embrace what God hold dear. True faith in His words and faithfulness to Him.

Far better it would have been, of course, for Jacob to leave the fulfilling of God's promise with God. In Jacob we see a faltering faith. His was an early example of an "end justifies the means" philosophy, though his underlying motive was good. See the contrast in David, who also carried God's promise of leadership from the time he was anointed to be king. Yet David waited for God to take Saul out of the way in His own time and way, though twice meeting with opportunity and even counsel to act in his own behalf (I Sam. 24 & 26).

Gen 25:29 And Jacob sod pottage: and Esau came from the field, and he was faint:
Gen 25:30 And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint: therefore was his name called Edom.
Gen 25:31 And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright.
Gen 25:32 And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me?
Gen 25:33 And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob.
Gen 25:34 Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright.

25:29-34 – Despised Birthright

Vs. 32 – It is unlikely that Esau was actually at the point of death here. His response rather expressed his disregard for the privileges of the birthright. The actions of both brothers display the measure of their regard for God's blessing. Hebrews 12:16 gives the sum of Esau's character; *"Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright"*. *"Profane"* means sensual or unspiritual. It is the very opposite of holy or godly or dedicated to God. Esau showed his ungodly disregard for God's blessing when he sold his birthright to satisfy his physical appetite.

The blessing of the birthright carried the great spiritual privileges of being ancestor to the promised Seed or Messiah. It involved;

- A double portion in the inheritance.
- Headship of the family.

- Priestly leadership of the family.
- And in this case it meant being heir of the promise of blessing in Abraham's covenant.

Jesus follows in this birthright, becoming;

- Head of heaven and earth as King of kings.
- Our Great High Priest.
- Heir of the double portion of both Israel and the church.

But Esau looked at such privileges and said, "What good does this do for me *here* and *now*?" Their was in him no faith to see the afterward. But people of faith are people of the afterward. Esau;

- Would not / could not wait!
- Would rather have gratification now than satisfaction later.
- Lived for the body, earthly.
- Showed that he viewed God's eternal things as small compared to his own momentary desires.

Esau displays again that trait so characteristic of

Cain's line, choosing to live life utterly thoughtless of the surpassing value of God and His things. At the very heart of it, Esau put himself and his interests over God. Though he later accused his brother of living down to his name in being a tripper (27:36), it really was Esau who tripped himself, throwing away spiritual privilege for one meal. As if horrified, the writer of Hebrews stressed how really dumb the deal (12:16), using the word *"morsel"* rather than "meal", *"for one morsel of meat!!"* For such a ridiculously momentary pittance, he threw away eternal things of unimaginable magnitude!! In the same way that Judas sold out Jesus Christ (and his own soul) for a handful of silver, even so Esau for a morsel of food. And in letting go of such spiritual treasure he showed himself for what he was inside; profane, secular, ungodly!

Hebrews goes on to say, *"For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears"* (Heb. 12:17). When God was willing and offering, Esau was not, and so *"afterward",* when Esau was earnestly willing, God was not, and it was too late, *"though he sought it* (the blessing) *with tears".* This refers to that later incident when Rebekah and Jacob combined to trick Isaac, coming away with

that blessing Isaac had intended for Esau (27:30-41). Esau wept *"with a great and exceeding bitter cry",* and pled with his father that he might have some blessing as well. But the blessing went with the despised birthright. It was too late and *"he was rejected".* The most anxious sorrow and weeping and pleading could not bring it back.

When he *had* opportunity, it was despised.
When he *wanted* opportunity, *he* was despised,
While the man of faith walked away with the prize.

Oh look well to the terrible results of not grasping the opportunity for God's blessing when God is near and pleading at the closed door of your heart! For when God's door is finally closed, and it is you who are pleading, *it will be too late!* Compare Proverbs 1:24-33; Isaiah 65:12; 66:4. Any reason to reject the Lord will one day be found so hollow and silly in comparison to the eternal blessing trashed, like that infinite gap in value between Esau's morsel of food and the birthright. *"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul"* (Mk. 8:36). Please be wise to let nothing stand in the way of God's eternal blessing of life in Jesus Christ.

Beware as well Esau's wilful, profane grasp for gratification NOW. Do we not despise *our* birthright

Gen 26:1 And there was a famine in the land, beside the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went unto Abimelech king of the Philistines unto Gerar.
Gen 26:2 And the LORD appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of:
Gen 26:3 Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father;
Gen 26:4 And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed;
Gen 26:5 Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.

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every time we choose to sin? In so doing, are we not thinking the momentary tinsel Satan offers to be more important than the eternal gold of God's blessing and reward? Such a response will surely bring loss when the wood, hay, and stubble are burned away before the Lord. No amount of earnest weeping and pleading will avail then. It will just be too late!! Seek repentance *now* my friend, while it may be found. *"Behold, <u>now</u> is the accepted time; behold, <u>now</u> is the day of salvation"* (II Cor. 6:2). *"<u>Today</u> if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts"* (Heb. 3:15).

Chapter 26 – Dad's Old Tricks

<u>26:1-5</u> – Famine and Flight

Was Isaac right to escape to the land of the Philistines? The fact that he, like his father, ended up in trouble there, and that the Lord *"appeared*

Gen 26:6 And Isaac dwelt in Gerar:
Gen 26:7 And the men of the place asked him of his wife; and he said, She is my sister: for he feared to say, She is my wife; lest, said he, the men of the place should kill me for Rebekah; because she was fair to look upon.
Gen 26:8 And it came to pass, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out at a window, and saw, and, behold, Isaac was sporting with Rebekah his wife.
Gen 26:9 And Abimelech called Isaac, and said, Behold, of a surety she is thy wife: and how saidst thou, She is my sister? And Isaac said unto him, Because I said, Lest I die for her.
Gen 26:10 And Abimelech said, What is this thou hast done unto us? one of the people might lightly have lien with thy wife, and thou shouldest have brought guiltiness upon us.
Gen 26:11 And Abimelech charged all his people, saying, He that toucheth this man or his wife shall surely be put to death.

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unto him the same night" of his eventual return, indicates a "no" answer. There is no indication that he asked God whether he should go or stay. He was not sent by the Lord. It seems he was walking by sight rather than by faith here.

26:6-11 – The Lie

Isaac was the son of his father in this lie (chapter 12 & 20), demonstrating the same faithless cowardice of Abraham in similar situations.

Vs. 8-10 – This king of the Philistines displays the same integrity of the Abimelech before him. Again, the man of the world must rebuke the man of God for his lie.

26:12-22 – Prosperity and Envy

Gen 26:26 Then Abimelech went to him from Gerar, and Ahuzzath one of his friends, and Phichol the chief captain of his army.
Gen 26:27 And Isaac said unto them, Wherefore come ye to me, seeing ye hate me, and have sent me away from you?
Gen 26:28 And they said, We saw certainly that the LORD was with thee: and we said, Let there be now an oath betwixt us, even betwixt us and thee, and let us make a covenant with thee;
Gen 26:29 That thou wilt do us no hurt, as we have not touched thee, and as we have done unto thee nothing but good, and have sent thee away in peace: thou art now the blessed of the LORD.
Gen 26:30 And he made them a feast, and they did eat and drink.
Gen 26:31 And they rose up betimes in the morning, and sware one to another: and Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace.

As with Abraham in his return from Egypt in chapter 13, the Lord began to turn up the tap on Isaac's prosperity, forcing his separation from Gerar and return to the land of promise. Envy among the Philistines soon developed, building the pressure for Isaac to leave.

Vs. 15 – The Philistine herdsmen showed their jealousy by filling Isaac's wells, expressing in act what their king stated in words, *"Go from us"* (vs. 16).

Vs. 17-21 – Isaac went part-way, but not far enough for man or God, bringing further trouble.

<u>26:23-25</u> – Return

The immediateness of the Lord's approach (*"the same night"*), with His assurances and promise, underscore where Isaac belonged. He should have

Gen 26:34 And Esau was forty years old when he took to wife Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Bashemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite:
Gen 26:35 Which were a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah.

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trusted the Lord through the famine in the land.

26:26-33 – Covenant with Abimelech

Vs. 26 – The timing is highlighted in the opening words, *"then Abimelech went to him"* seeking to establish a covenant. Do not miss how the attractiveness of Isaac's testimony was strongest when separated from the world. The world is more likely to see *"that the Lord is with thee"* when God's child returns to walk in the place of his Father's will (Ps. 51:13). While with the Philistines Isaac knew nothing but trouble, being exposed, envied, and opposed. He lacked both peace and power with both God and men. Appropriate separation from the world was the answer, bringing the Lord's return, Isaac's rest, and Abimelech's recognition of God with him. Though it seems like it would surely be quite the other way, we cannot join the world and hope to truly influence them for Christ.

26:34-35 – Grievous Choice

This would not be the last time godly parents were

grieved by a carnal son's choice of a wife from the world.

"He dreamed,
and behold a ladder
set up on the earth,
and the top of it
reached to heaven"

(Gen. 28:12)

Class 11 – Genesis 27-28

Gen 27:1 And it came to pass, that when Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see, he called Esau his eldest son, and said unto him, My son: and he said unto him, Behold, here am I.
Gen 27:2 And he said, Behold now, I am old, I know not the day of my death:
Gen 27:3 Now therefore take, I pray thee, thy weapons, thy quiver and thy bow, and go out to the field, and take me some venison;
Gen 27:4 And make me savoury meat, such as I love, and bring it to me, that I may eat; that my soul may bless thee before I die.

With chapter 27 we begin the final major section of Genesis, dealing largely with the life of Jacob. In chapter 26 we saw the record of Esau despising his birthright, exchanging it *"for one morsel of meat".* Chapter 27 now gives the outcome of that deal.

Chapter 27 – Lie for Blessing

27:1-4 – Isaac's Proposal

Vs. 4 – This blessing involved the pre-eminence of one brother over the other. On two counts Isaac was wrong in his purpose to give this to Esau over Jacob;

- God had promised pre-eminence to the younger at their birth (25:23).
- In a fair exchange Esau had sold his birthright to Jacob (25:33).

Isaac was expressing his personal preference here. He would honour neither the word of man nor of God in this undertaking, he being fully aware of the history leading up to this. Much of the blame for the resulting disaster therefore falls upon Isaac. As Noah with Ham, there were others drawn into wrong here, but it was Isaac's initial wrong that did the drawing. Our own evil choices lead others to evil as well.

Vs. 2 – We have no indication that Isaac was really pressed by the threat of death. In fact he lived for several decades after this event. He seems strangely pushed by some urgency other than what his words express, proceeding with a measure of haste and secrecy, without family consultation or any indication of prayer for the Lord's guidance. Isaac had obviously resolved to do what *he* wanted to do, against his own better judgment and that of others.

Esau joined his father in what he knew was against God's purpose and against his agreement with his brother. Perhaps he had come to realize something of the worth of what he had so foolishly sold, and saw this as an opportunity to get it back.

We learn much about the character and interrelations of these family members in this

chapter. Things here appear quite different from that image of family serenity pictured in Proverbs 15:17, *"Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith".* Issues in this home seem to revolve around the physical gratification of good food more than love, honesty, and mutual respect. Instead we are confronted with stubborn disobedience, lying deception, and bitter hatred to the point of threatened murder. God has given the home (and church) as a place of safety, where we might find refuge from the harsh, hateful world. We are wise to ever cultivate this. Woe to the one who brings trouble to that God-given refuge.

Not only do we observe trouble in the horizontal relationships of this home, but in the vertical as well. How very little we see here of humble trust and obedience toward the Lord. Isaac would attempt to deviate from God's prophecy and Esau joined him in this. Rebekah would not proceed with integrity or trust God to keep His promise and Jacob joined her in this.

There is a valuable lesson apparent in this account concerning God's sovereignty. Though men may counsel and agree together against the Lord, there simply is no defeating His purposes. What He said would happen is just what did happen. As every

Gen 27:5 And Rebekah heard when Isaac spake to Esau his son. And Esau went to the field to hunt for venison, and to bring it.
Gen 27:6 And Rebekah spake unto Jacob her son, saying, Behold, I heard thy father speak unto Esau thy brother, saying,
Gen 27:7 Bring me venison, and make me savoury meat, that I may eat, and bless thee before the LORD before my death.
Gen 27:8 Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to that which I command thee.
Gen 27:9 Go now to the flock, and fetch me from thence two good kids of the goats; and I will make them savoury meat for thy father, such as he loveth:
Gen 27:10 And thou shalt bring it to thy father, that he may eat, and that he may bless thee before his death.

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soul will ultimately come to recognize, *"Our God is in the heavens: He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased"* (Ps. 115:3, cf. Jonah 1:14). Indeed, *"there are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand"* (Prov. 19:21).

27:6-17 – Rebekah's Scheme

Rebekah was moved by a measure of right in her purpose. She desired to preserve for Jacob the blessing God had promised him, to prevent a wrong against God and her son. Thus at the root of it she was moving according to faith in God's promise. But in her fear that God's purpose was threatened she felt she must lend a helping human hand to the Holy One, as folks are so commonly given to do. Compare Abraham's lie to preserve his life, and Sarah's offer of Hagar to Abraham, and Naomi's offer of Ruth to Boaz at the threshing floor. These were all arm of flesh methods to help God out of the

difficult circumstances He so often seems to get Himself into. Thus Rebekah and Jacob possessed an underlying faith in God's words, yet with no confidence that He is quite able to carry out His will without human help. Thinking the Lord could be thwarted by human craft, she felt a measure of the same was needed to thwart the thwarters. Yet though we can see Rebekah moved by a right end, there can be no justifying her wrong means to that end. God blessed her actions with success for her right motive, but He dealt with her for her wrong means, forever removing from her that favoured son she so loved, yet so abused. The hatred resulting from their joint action forced the further need of Jacob's departure, a separation they assumed would be only for a brief time (vs. 45), till trouble blew over and angers cooled. Yet Rebekah never saw that son of her love again, and never knew the joy of holding her many grandchildren through him. And this eventuality resulted largely from the craftiness of her own brother, Laban, cut out of her same mould. Rebekah died in her old age starved even of the comfort of any word of her son Jacob, a heartache she brought upon herself through her manoeuvrings. Things were just never the same for this family after this tragic incident. And at this point both Rebekah and Isaac drop from the centre of God's focus.

Gen 27:11 And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, Behold, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man:
Gen 27:12 My father peradventure will feel me, and I shall seem to him as a deceiver; and I shall bring a curse upon me, and not a blessing.
Gen 27:13 And his mother said unto him, Upon me be thy curse, my son: only obey my voice, and go fetch me them.

Both *end* and *means* must ever be according to faithful, patient confidence in God's words. It is a principle too often neglected, even by the Lord's people. It is not the Lord's will for us;

- To try to win others to righteousness through any dose of *un*righteousness.
- To use any measure of untruth to convert or preserve a soul or to make ends meet.
- To ever set purity aside in seeking either our own way or the Lord's will.

As well, the Lord holds before us the example of a bitter lesson learned. He neither needs nor wants man's guile to accomplish His purposes. He would teach us the lessons of His sovereignty;

- That He will accomplish His purposes in spite of us.
- That He will punish our efforts at inappropriate help.
- That it is ours to accept His will and ways,

Gen 27:18 And he came unto his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I; who art thou, my son?
Gen 27:19 And Jacob said unto his father, I am Esau thy firstborn; I have done according as thou badest me: arise, I pray thee, sit and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me.

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leaning strong upon His words.

- That His successes are *"not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord"* (Zech. 4).

Vs. 12 – Note how Jacob's concern related more to getting caught and the consequences than to rights and wrongs. Are you concerned with the moral wrong of sin before God or just with exposure and penalties? When love for God is perfected such fears are cast out, for we then respond less out of fear of His punishments and more out of desire to please the One we love.

27:18-27 – Jacob's Deception

Jacob was a bit too willing and much too skilled at playing along with this fraud. And having been drawn in, he was forced to follow lie with lie (I count three, vs. 19-20, 24), trampling all over his own conscience.

Look well at the downward slant over the decades;

Gen 27:20 And Isaac said unto his son, How is it that thou hast found it so quickly, my son? And he said, Because the LORD thy God brought it to me.
Gen 27:21 And Isaac said unto Jacob, Come near, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my son, whether thou be my very son Esau or not.
Gen 27:22 And Jacob went near unto Isaac his father; and he felt him, and said, The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau. Gen 27:23 And he discerned him not, because his hands were hairy, as his brother Esau's hands: so he blessed him.
Gen 27:24 And he said, Art thou my very son Esau? And he said, I am.
Gen 27:25 And he said, Bring it near to me, and I will eat of my son's venison, that my soul may bless thee. And he brought it near to him, and he did eat: and he brought him wine, and he drank.
Gen 27:26 And his father Isaac said unto him, Come near now, and kiss me, my son.
Gen 27:27 And he came near, and kissed him: and he smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him, and said, See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the LORD hath blessed:

- Abraham's lie could at least boast a half-truth (12:11-12; 20:2).
- Isaac's lie was a whole lie (26:7).
- Jacob lied repeatedly to his own father (27:19-20, 24).

Sin is no idle entity, but actively grows worse when not dealt with properly. And behold how Isaac reaped what he sowed, having made himself a deceiver, he is now deceived. Jacob too will reap for his sowing, when he runs into Rebekah's brother Laban.

Though Jacob was partly a victim of his mother's deceptive scheming, he cannot be excused for his part in this sin. No man can ever fairly blame

Gen 27:28 Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine:
Gen 27:29 Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee.
Gen 27:30 And it came to pass, as soon as Isaac had made an end of blessing Jacob, and Jacob was yet scarce gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting.
Gen 27:31 And he also had made savoury meat, and brought it unto his father, and said unto his father, Let my father arise, and eat of his son's venison, that thy soul may bless me.
Gen 27:32 And Isaac his father said unto him, Who art thou? And he said, I am thy son, thy firstborn Esau.

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another for leading him into evil, for at any and every point we are all perfectly capable and responsible to stand true to the Lord, no matter what the pressures involved. It would have been very difficult indeed for Jacob to stand up to his mother here, especially when there was a measure of right in her cause. But refusal surely would have been the right way for him. Such a right response would have gained his mother's grudging respect and would have set Jacob in a leadership role, perhaps even leading to her spiritual growth and thanks in later years.

"He that rebuketh a man <u>afterwards</u> shall find more favour than he that flattereth with the tongue" (Prov. 28:23; cf. 9:8).

<u>27:28-29</u> – Isaac's Blessing

<u>27:30-40</u> – Esau's Rage

Gen 27:33 And Isaac trembled very exceedingly, and said, Who? where is he that hath taken venison, and brought it me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him? yea, and he shall be blessed.
Gen 27:34 And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father.
Gen 27:35 And he said, Thy brother came with subtilty, and hath taken away thy blessing.
Gen 27:36 And he said, Is not he rightly named Jacob? for he hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright; and, behold, now he hath taken away my blessing. And he said, Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?

Vs. 33 – *"And he shall be blessed"* – To Isaac's credit, when discovering the deception he was quick to accept God's purpose fulfilled over top of his own defiant effort. Yet no repentance is in evidence. Compare the same with Eli when hearing the Lord's rebuke through young Samuel (I Sam. 3).

Vs. 34 – Esau's bitter tears were due only to his loss of the physical aspects of the blessing. He had no interest in spiritual concerns involved, such as proceeding according to God's words, finding God's favour, standing in the line of Messiah, or the passing of spiritual blessing to the world through that promised One.

Vs. 36 – Esau's angry words were unfair. Though Jacob had certainly tripped his brother and replaced (supplanted) him in the way of blessing, it was Esau himself who *"despised his birthright"*, as the Lord is faithful to make clear (25:34). God lets

no man blame-shift.

This family is such a sad picture among God's people. How the tainted traits sown by Abraham have come to harvest here;

- Isaac would disobey the Lord's words in blessing Esau, and would dishonour the agreements of men. He would not allow his favourite to sell himself short.

- Rebekah would deceive her husband and instruct her son in the same by involving him in her lying scheme. She could not trust God to accomplish His words concerning her sons, thinking God in need of her cunning help. She seems to consider the Lord to be as inept as her husband.

- Jacob would allow others to influence him to do wrong (even mothers can be enticing sinners, Proverbs 1:10), and would allow himself to be drawn to deeper evil, to the point of brazenly lying to his own father (displaying his hate, Proverbs 26:28).

- Esau would join his father in despising God's stated purpose, and would hate his brother to the point of murder.

Gen 27:41 And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob.
Gen 27:42 And these words of Esau her elder son were told to Rebekah: and she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said unto him, Behold, thy brother Esau, as touching thee, doth comfort himself, purposing to kill thee.
Gen 27:43 Now therefore, my son, obey my voice; and arise, flee thou to Laban my brother to Haran;
Gen 27:44 And tarry with him a few days, until thy brother's fury turn away;
Gen 27:45 Until thy brother's anger turn away from thee, and he forget that which thou hast done to him: then I will send, and fetch thee from thence: why should I be deprived also of you both in one day?
Gen 27:46 And Rebekah said to Isaac, I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth: if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these which are of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me?

Each of these four sought to get their own way through shameful methods, and the result was an absolute mess! The moral of the story is *DO RIGHT*;

- No matter what the circumstances.
- No matter what the pressures pushing toward questionable things.
- No matter how good the end sought.
- No matter how much God seems to need your help.
- ***NO MATTER WHAT!***

<u>27:41-46</u> – Rebekah's Solution

Vs. 41 – Esau in his rage came to a settled resolve to kill his brother as soon as his father was gone. While he might have been concerned for his father's

distress over such a Cain-like act, Esau apparently held little concern for his mother's feelings. By his continued, murderous anger Esau displays no heart of true repentance for his low view of God's things. His wept purely for his personal loss, not for his offence before God.

Vs. 42 – At some point what Esau *"said in his heart"* was said with his lips, for his mother got wind of it. Rebekah again rose to the occasion with her characteristic clever resourcefulness and energy. Yet again, she would have been wiser to trust the Lord to deal with any threat upon this heir of Abraham's promise. God had spoken and He words would not fail.

Vs. 46 – Again we see the typically evasive way of this family. Rebekah did not openly discuss her true concerns with Isaac, perhaps fearing his rebuke for what she, in her deception, had brought upon the family. Instead she devised a pretence, earnestly suggesting the danger of Jacob following Esau's bad example in choosing pagan wives. Her concern was well founded, but still she lacked an integrity born of simple honesty.

Consider how Isaac comes across as a rather sluggish sort. Why did he not get involved in finding

Gen 28:1 And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan.
Gen 28:2 Arise, go to Padanaram, to the house of Bethuel thy mother's father; and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban thy mother's brother.
Gen 28:3 And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people;
Gen 28:4 And give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham.
Gen 28:5 And Isaac sent away Jacob: and he went to Padanaram unto Laban, son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, Jacob's and Esau's mother.

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good wives for his sons as Abraham did for him? Rebekah was more the driver in these concerns and events. Both Rebekah and Jacob (and her brother Laban) were go-getters (a bit overboard in fact), while Isaac was more the idler.

Chapter 28 – Heaven's Gate

28:1-5 – Jacob Sent Away

28:6-9 – Esau's New Wife

Esau presents such a sad picture here of a man who truly sought to please his father, thinking perhaps that what seemed a right might cover old wrongs. It appears that Esau did not know prior to this that a pagan wife was such a concern to his parents. Had Isaac ever made his disapproval known to his son? (26:35) Again, why is Rebekah the one leading in such a concern (27:46). True discipleship offers

Gen 28:10 And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran.
Gen 28:11 And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep.
Gen 28:12 And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.
Gen 28:13 And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed;

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positive, energetic leadership in the issues of life. It spells out rights and wrongs clearly. It insists on the former and resists the latter. There seems to be a great lack of parental leadership in this semi-dysfunctional family. But God took up where man came short.

28:10-22 – Stairway to Heaven

Here is the point where Jacob arises as an individual. For the first time he personally hears from the Lord. And this beginning only came when Jacob stepped out of his own home and began to make a way for himself (with the blessing of his parents). Every young person must come to such a pivotal point, leaving the comfort of the home and entering upon a new life. How much harder to do so in a flight of *"distress"* (35:3), as Jacob. How much easier to face such a crisis walking with the Lord, as Jacob came to.

Gen 28:14 And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.
Gen 28:15 And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.

Vs. 11 – This *"certain place"* Jacob *"lighted upon"*, later known as Bethel, was right in the middle of the land of Palestine, about 75 kms north of his home in Beersheba.

Vs. 12-15 – His dream of a ladder *"set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven"* would have reminded him of the vast gulf between his sinful soul and the holy God of heaven, as heaven is high above earth. As Abraham leaving Egypt, so Jacob had come away with blessing through deceit, and such sin separated his soul from God. Unless the Lord establishes some means of connection or communication, there would be no hope for man of relation or restoration to God.

A single ladder marked a single way, a narrow way. A ladder touching both earth and heaven marked a way reaching all the way down to sinful man and all the way up to holy God. The angels moving up and down that ladder speaks of their involvement in God's great work of redemption, they *"sent forth to*

minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation" (Heb. 1:14), which would include both souls now within God's fold of salvation and those who have not yet come to faith. From above that ladder God spoke His first direct message to Jacob. Note how the Lord began dealing directly with Jacob long before Isaac's death, as He did with Samuel in the place of Eli. As if Isaac, like Eli, disqualified himself from the Lord's service through his wilful disobedience. Here is where Jacob first learned that the covenant with Abraham and Isaac was to be continued with him.

Vs. 15 – Consider what a blessing the Lord's words must have been to this man;

- *"I am with thee"* – He was not alone on earth.
- *"I…will keep thee in all places whither thou goest"* – He would never be without divine care, no matter where life might take him.
- *"I…will bring thee again into this land"* – He would be back.
- *"I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of"* – He had the Lord's sure promise and presence to cling to.

For the first time perhaps the Lord became Jacob's

Gen 28:16 And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not.
Gen 28:17 And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.
Gen 28:18 And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it.
Gen 28:19 And he called the name of that place Bethel: but the name of that city was called Luz at the first.

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own personal God, Saviour, and Protector. And with such promises from the Lord, Jacob need fear nothing in life. Do we not have the same promises in Christ?

Vs. 16-19 – In his spiritual immaturity, Jacob responded with great focus upon *"this place",* instead of the God whom he had met (35:7). Yet we see through the Lord's approach that He saw in Jacob a heart of faith in spite of his immaturity and the methods into which he had been led. With the Lord *faith* shines above all else. Though our evil will always be punished, our genuine faith in the Lord will always be rewarded (Heb. 11:6). And consider how we are again warned to caution in our view of others. We may think one such as Jacob unworthy of God's interest and attention through the outward evil of his ways. But the Lord sees differently than we. He saw the surpassing virtue of inward faith, moving even the outward vices. May the Lord bring the measure of our patience closer to His own in our dealing with others.

Gen 28:20 And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on,
Gen 28:21 So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God:
Gen 28:22 And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.

Vs. 20-22 – In Jacob's vow he acknowledged his dependence upon the Lord for his keeping and pledged his stand with the Lord even as the Lord stood with him. Again, this seems to be the first major turning point in Jacob's life in his personal relationship with the Lord. Here is the vital point to which every soul must come in his conversion. This is all of life, real life, for without so coming to a place of personal relation to the Lord God of heaven a soul remains in denial of the importance of the Lord, with the rest of Cain's line.

Ponder Points

Jesus later picked up on this figure of the ladder spanning from earth to heaven, applying it to Himself (Jn. 1:51). He alone is that *"one Mediator between God and men"* (I Tim. 2:5). He alone is *"the way"* [the ladder], and *"no man cometh unto the Father but by Me"* (Jn. 14:6). Jesus, as Jacob's ladder, is God's revelation to mankind of His surpassing grace, coming down to man's need and

making a way for man to God's presence and favour.

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There are good lessons here for the one having left the home nest, feeling all the loneliness of making a way for himself in life. God seeks to meet such a one, even in his imperfections, as He did Jacob. He would enter into personal relation with him and give His words of promise and comfort…*if allowed in.* He would show such a one His ladder, the one and only way He has provided to Himself. He would make such a one aware of His ministering angels, active in their care for all *"who shall be heirs of salvation"* (Heb. 1:13-14). Though perhaps far from home, the Lord shows Himself near at all times, right here in *"this place"*. His eternal promise to His child is still in the Book,

"I will never [not possibly] *leave thee nor forsake thee"* (Heb. 13:5).
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Class 12 – Genesis 29-30

Gen 29:1 Then Jacob went on his journey, and came into the land of the people of the east.
Gen 29:2 And he looked, and behold a well in the field, and, lo, there were three flocks of sheep lying by it; for out of that well they watered the flocks: and a great stone was upon the well's mouth.

Gen 29:7 And he said, Lo, it is yet high day, neither is it time that the cattle should be gathered together: water ye the sheep, and go and feed them.
Gen 29:8 And they said, We cannot, until all the flocks be gathered together, and till they roll the stone from the well's mouth; then we water the sheep.

Chapter 29 – Wedding Time

29:1-14 – Meeting the Family

Vs. 1 – The literal Hebrew phrase given in the marginal note here, "lift up his feet", suggests the happy vibrancy with which Jacob went on his way, having met the Lord personally at Bethel. He went with a heart full of assurance from his God of grace, even as the Ethiopian eunuch of Acts 8 *"went on his way rejoicing"*, having found Jesus Christ and new life in Him.

Vs. 7-8 – Jacob was no lie-about, as were these lazy shepherds, displaying those qualities which later set him above the rest as a shepherd Laban earnestly sought to retain (31:6, *"with all my power I have served"*). Behold how these idle shepherds made a larger-than-reality obstacle of waiting until

Gen 29:9 And while he yet spake with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep: for she kept them.
Gen 29:10 And it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, that Jacob went near, and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother.
Gen 29:11 And Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice, and wept.

"they roll the stone from the well's mouth", when Jacob with a dose of applied gumption moved the stone all by himself (vs. 10). These men sought to justify their lounging around the well, when the wiser course and healthier for the flocks would have been to give them water and use the remainder of the day to further feed them. Lazy folks often use obstacles (mentally bloated but easily overcome with a bit of energy) to excuse their low motivation. Wisdom represents this tendency in an exaggerated form in Proverbs 22:13 & 26:13-15. Compare the proverbial sluggard who will not plough by reason of the cold in Proverbs 20:4.

Vs. 10 – Note how Jacob refused to allow common custom to sway him from a sensible course. He just watered Laban's flocks right there anyway, setting the tone for the way he would conduct the business of shepherding.

Vs. 11 – Though with many faults, Jacob was a man of great emotion (vs. 20).

Gen 29:12 And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's brother, and that he was Rebekah's son: and she ran and told her father.
Gen 29:13 And it came to pass, when Laban heard the tidings of Jacob his sister's son, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him, and kissed him, and brought him to his house. And he told Laban all these things.
Gen 29:14 And Laban said to him, Surely thou art my bone and my flesh. And he abode with him the space of a month.

Gen 29:18 And Jacob loved Rachel; and said, I will serve thee seven years for Rachel thy younger daughter.

Vs. 13-14 – Laban comes across with surface warmth, yet inwardly he was a self-server. Even our first meeting with him (24:29-31) showed his easy kindness to Abraham's servant, but a bit overly focused on the gold newly draping his sister.

What you are inside soon becomes evident, sooner to the observant, making the surface sham more tarnish than garnish.

29:15-20 – Labour for Love

Vs. 18 – Jacob had nothing to give for a wife but his labours.

Compare the self-control of Jacob working and waiting seven years for his wife, with the prevailing self-indulgence of modern dating relationships. Contrary to popular belief, true love does not have to be expressed physically. Indeed a love that loves without physical expression is more likely a love to

Gen 29:21 And Jacob said unto Laban, Give me my wife, for my days are fulfilled, that I may go in unto her.
Gen 29:22 And Laban gathered together all the men of the place, and made a feast.
Gen 29:23 And it came to pass in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter, and brought her to him; and he went in unto her.
Gen 29:24 And Laban gave unto his daughter Leah Zilpah his maid for an handmaid.
Gen 29:25 And it came to pass, that in the morning, behold, it was Leah: and he said to Laban, What is this thou hast done unto me? did not I serve with thee for Rachel? wherefore then hast thou beguiled me?

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last.

29:21-30 – Two For the Love of One

Vs. 22 – Eastern wedding feasts often last for a week, the newlyweds sleeping together from the first night.

Vs. 23 – It seems the custom was for the father to deliver his fully veiled daughter to the bridegroom's tent or bedchamber on the wedding night under cover of darkness. Therefore Jacob's unawareness of his unhappy deception until morning light revealed Leah in his arms instead of the woman he loved. Leah was willing to go along with this cheat, either out of secret love for Jacob or out of simple obedience to her father's wishes, or both. Rachel's silence as well, in spite of what must have been a most desperate disappointment, was likely attributable to parental submission. Though this father's actions constituted a heartless fraud we see

Gen 29:26 And Laban said, It must not be so done in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn.
Gen 29:27 Fulfil her week, and we will give thee this also for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years.

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no indication of protest from either daughter. We live in a very different day!

Vs. 26 – Laban's true character begins to come unveiled here, with all graciously thoughtful pretence laid aside. Though such may have been the custom of their country (or *Laban's* custom), his way was clearly void of integrity. Jacob should have been made aware of such a custom from the start.

Vs. 27 – *"Fulfil her week"* – Referring to the week of Leah's wedding feast, after which Rachel was also given to Jacob for the promise of his service of another seven years.

Ponder Points

Perhaps in a measure Laban displays a backhanded tribute to Jacob's character, that he wished both daughters married to him. Perhaps more likely he used his daughters to secure the employment of this industrious, profitable shepherd a bit longer. As Potiphar with Joseph, Laban saw the Lord's

blessing on Jacob (30:27) and wanted to keep that for himself.

As Laban used his daughters, so he used Jacob, who later testified of Laban's repeated fiddle with his wages to Laban's own advantage (31:7). With time it became obvious that Laban intended only to use Jacob for his service and leave him with nothing in the end. After 14 years in Laban's service Jacob still had nothing of his own (30:30).

People using people is an old human story. As always when such an approach is used, bitter resentment is the result, as we shall later see in these daughters and son-in-law of Laban (chapter 31).

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Note the interesting comparison;

- Then – "I am not Jacob, I am Esau!"
- Now – "I am not Leah, I am Rachel!"

Jacob was repaid in kind. Quite to his surprise he found himself reaping what he himself had sown (he in fact had come to the very *spring* of his mother's deceptive ways, and thus his own). God deals in justice with His own children.

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We tend to feel sorrow for Leah, stuck in the middle of a relationship of two who loved each other. From the beginning she was an unwanted wife, yet the Lord blessed her;

- Giving half of Jacob's sons through her.
- Giving Judah, and thus Messiah's line through her.
- Putting her beside her husband in her burial, rather than Rachel.

Through the discipline of our disappointments the Lord blesses. Though Leah had little of what she wanted in life, she gained much more by the Lord's grace. Our lesson is to be content to look for the Lord's blessing in what *He* supplies, rather than in what *we* want out of life.

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Polygamy works only if an environment of marital jealousy and turmoil is your pleasure. Polygamy was never strictly forbidden by God, but was never His pattern or perfect will, and never seemed to work toward a harmonious home.

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29:31-35 – Leah's Beginning

Vs. 32-34 – Leah's one hope in the birth of her first

Gen 29:31 And when the LORD saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb: but Rachel was barren.
Gen 29:32 And Leah conceived, and bare a son, and she called his name Reuben: for she said, Surely the LORD hath looked upon my affliction; now therefore my husband will love me.
Gen 29:33 And she conceived again, and bare a son; and said, Because the LORD hath heard that I was hated, he hath therefore given me this son also: and she called his name Simeon.
Gen 29:34 And she conceived again, and bare a son; and said, Now this time will my husband be joined unto me, because I have born him three sons: therefore was his name called Levi.

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three sons was to win the love of her husband;

- Vs. 32 – Reuben, meaning "see a son" – The Lord looked upon her in her unwanted status.
- Vs. 33 – Simeon, meaning "hearing" – The Lord heard that she was hated.
- Vs. 34 – Levi, meaning "joined" – Surely at last her husband would be joined to her.

It is a heartache to see the sad situation into which her father's selfishness had pushed Leah, and her heart so consumed only with longing for her husband's love, desperately hoping to win him through her fruitfulness. Yet see how she also expresses less of a joy in her children and more of a following in her father's footsteps, using their births and lives toward gaining her husband's love rather than simply seeing them as objects of her love. Behold again children cut from the same mould as their parents. It is good cause for genuine reform

Gen 29:35 And she conceived again, and bare a son: and she said, Now will I praise the LORD: therefore she called his name Judah; and left bearing.

Gen 30:1 And when Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister; and said unto Jacob, Give me children, or else I die.
Gen 30:2 And Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel: and he said, Am I in God's stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb?

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before the Lord that *they will be like us!*

Vs. 35 – With the birth her 4th we see a change in Leah's heart. Judah's name comes from the Hebrew verb *yadah*, the meaning of which runs in a couple of different directions. It expresses the idea of confession, either in making proclamation or declaration of the Lord in praise or thanksgiving, or in confession of sin. Perhaps both shades of meaning were carried in Leah's heart as she named this son. Perhaps there was in her a confessing of the wrong of her much too earthly previous focus, and an expressing of praise to the Lord. She seems now to have arisen from more horizontal concerns to a heart put right and filled with praise to the Lord.

Chapter 30 – Goats and Booties

The story of a growing family and flock.

30:1-16 – Marital Strife

Vs. 1-2 – Where Isaac was moved to *pray* in a similar

Gen 30:3 And she said, Behold my maid Bilhah, go in unto her; and she shall bear upon my knees, that I may also have children by her.

Gen 30:14 And Reuben went in the days of wheat harvest, and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them unto his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, Give me, I pray thee, of thy son's mandrakes.
Gen 30:15 And she said unto her, Is it a small matter that thou hast taken my husband? and wouldest thou take away my son's mandrakes also? And Rachel said, Therefore he shall lie with thee to night for thy son's mandrakes.
Gen 30:16 And Jacob came out of the field in the evening, and Leah went out to meet him, and said, Thou must come in unto me; for surely I have hired thee with my son's mandrakes. And he lay with her that night.
Gen 30:17 And God hearkened unto Leah, and she conceived, and bare Jacob the fifth son.
Gen 30:18 And Leah said, God hath given me my hire, because I have given my maiden to my husband: and she called his name Issachar.

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circumstance (25:21), these two are moved only to bitter words. We seem to observe a continuing degeneration in character over these generations.

Vs. 3 – Following Sarah's lead – The example of Abraham and Sarah in their sin still bore evil fruit decades later, and this without any indication of appeal to the Lord at all.

Vs. 14-16 – *"Mandrakes"* apparently possess, or were believed to possess, some aphrodisiac qualities (Song of Sol 7:13). Or perhaps they were believed to be a stimulant to fertility. It came to the point where Leah needed to *"hire"* her husband to sleep with her. The sad event was even entrenched in the name of her 5th son, Issachar, meaning "a hire" or "he is wages". We can well imagine the influence such family disharmony had upon the children.

Gen 30:22 And God remembered Rachel, and God hearkened to her, and opened her womb.
Gen 30:23 And she conceived, and bare a son; and said, God hath taken away my reproach:
Gen 30:24 And she called his name Joseph; and said, The LORD shall add to me another son.

30:22-24 – Taking and Adding

For years Rachel had watched her sister bearing one son after another. It was an anguish to bear the reproach of barrenness in her day, but double distress to bear it in the context of Leah's super-fertility. Compare Hannah's similar anguish in I Samuel 1. As well, there could be no doubt that the difficulty was with her, since her husband was quite fertile with her sister. This was perhaps part of Sarah's query in her offer of Hagar to Abraham, and some of her upset when Ishmael resulted. The reproach was proven to rest on *her* rather than her husband. And then Joseph was finally born. There is an interesting Hebrew word play in vs. 23 & 24. With the birth of Joseph the Lord did two things for Rachel;

- Vs. 23 – He *took away* the reproach of her barrenness, as sterility was considered indication of divine reproach. The Hebrew word is *asaph*, "take away".

- Vs. 24 – And He *added* to her a son to her joy.

The Hebrew word is *yasaph*, "to add", from which Joseph's name is derived. Rachel seemed to take the adding of Joseph prophetically as promise that the Lord would yet add another son.

Consider how the two ideas of *asaph* and *yasaph,* both taking and adding, so characterized Joseph's life. For this firstborn of Jacob's beloved wife was later taken away (to Egypt), and then added back to Jacob in his old age. It pictures the hope of every saved soul who has lost a saved loved one in death (I Thess. 4, *"that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope"*). Consider the analogy to Jesus Christ. He who, like Joseph, was taken from the presence of His adoring Father and added to us, was then taken from us and added back to the Father. And, as Joseph, Jesus was added back in greatest appreciation for His faithfulness during His absence. And this under similar circumstances to Joseph's;

- Through the jealousy and hatred of His brothers.
- Jesus sold by Judas, as Joseph by his brothers.
- Lied about by the Jewish leaders, as Joseph by his brothers.

Gen 30:27 And Laban said unto him, I pray thee, if I have found favour in thine eyes, tarry: for I have learned by experience that the LORD hath blessed me for thy sake.
Gen 30:28 And he said, Appoint me thy wages, and I will give it.
Gen 30:31 And he said, What shall I give thee? And Jacob said, Thou shalt not give me any thing: if thou wilt do this thing for me, I will again feed and keep thy flock:
Gen 30:32 I will pass through all thy flock to day, removing from thence all the speckled and spotted cattle, and all the brown cattle among the sheep, and the spotted and speckled among the goats: and of such shall be my hire.
Gen 30:33 So shall my righteousness answer for me in time to come, when it shall come for my hire before thy face: every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats, and brown among the sheep, that shall be counted stolen with me.
Gen 30:34 And Laban said, Behold, I would it might be according to thy word.

Then, in that day when that Son who was taken from us in His ascension shall be added back to us in His return, our reproach before a hating world (Jn. 15:18-20) will be taken away at last (with Israel's), even as was Rachel's (Isa. 66:5). The Lord never takes away from His own but that He adds (as in Leah case), and this according to His own perfect timing and will.

30:25-43 – Jacob's Way to Wealth

Vs. 25-31 – Wages dispute – Laban knew the blessing of God had come to him through Jacob, and he did not want to lose such a valuable servant. So again Laban suggested that Jacob set his wages. And again Jacob had a plan (29:15,18). Laban had meddled with wages too many times for Jacob to desire another normal wage programme. Instead he

Gen 30:37 And Jacob took him rods of green poplar, and of the hazel and chesnut tree; and pilled white strakes in them, and made the white appear which was in the rods.
Gen 30:38 And he set the rods which he had pilled before the flocks in the gutters in the watering troughs when the flocks came to drink, that they should conceive when they came to drink.
Gen 30:39 And the flocks conceived before the rods, and brought forth cattle ringstraked, speckled, and spotted.
Gen 30:40 And Jacob did separate the lambs, and set the faces of the flocks toward the ringstraked, and all the brown in the flock of Laban; and he put his own flocks by themselves, and put them not unto Laban's cattle.
Gen 30:41 And it came to pass, whensoever the stronger cattle did conceive, that Jacob laid the rods before the eyes of the cattle in the gutters, that they might conceive among the rods.
Gen 30:42 But when the cattle were feeble, he put them not in: so the feebler were Laban's, and the stronger Jacob's.
Gen 30:43 And the man increased exceedingly, and had much cattle, and maidservants, and menservants, and camels, and asses.

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suggested that all of the mix-coloured sheep and goats be his, with all of solid colour to remain Laban's (vs. 32-33). To this Laban agreed, but then quickly removed all striped and spotted animals from the herd (vs. 35-36), putting them at a great distance under the care of his sons. Laban was concerned only for himself and would have Jacob begin with nothing. As well, he did not want those animals with dominant mixed-colour genes to breed in the herd from which Jacob would draw his wealth. Jacob's dear father-in-law was quite determined to leave Jacob and family with as little as possible.

Vs. 37-43 – Jacob's way to wealth – It is an uncertainty what these interesting rods in the water

troughs were about. Perhaps Jacob's thought was of some sort of chemical or visual stimulant to mating.

Vs. 40-42 – He put his own flocks by themselves, separating his from Laban's. Probably that Laban might not do as at the outset, rustling the speckled and spotted to his own distant herd.

Jacob separated the stronger from the weaker, perhaps both physically and genetically. It seems Jacob, through careful observation, was organizing the breeding of the animals such that those carrying a dominance of spots in their gene pool bred together, keeping those with spots less dominant out of the breeding game. With his characteristic energy Jacob had observed the way of sheep for a long time. While he thought he was causing the birth of spotted animals to his favour, and it may be he had some effect in the matter, it was actually the Lord who was handing Laban's herd over to Jacob. His approach was another arm-of-flesh method. Instead of trusting the Lord to provide in His own way and time, Jacob took measures into his own hands, feeling God needed his help in giving him what he wanted from God. Jacob was running ahead of the Lord again. And whenever a soul does this he runs into faithless methods. We are

commanded to run the race (Heb. 12:1), and to *"so run, that ye may obtain"* (I Cor. 9:24). But never are we to run ahead of the Lord's perfect way and timing. It is a sad thing to see these two deceptive men, having met their match in each other, each seeking to out-manoeuvre the other. Jacob, while holding personal promises from God, can in no way find justification for following Laban's deceiving example. It is sad to see the prevailing selfishness all the way around in this family. None were willing to leave the results in God's hands, simply trusting Him in practical affairs, while working His will with energy. It is sad to see such inappropriate means used among family members against each other. It is sad to see the obvious character degeneration over the decades. It is sad to see people using people to their own self-serving ends. It is sad to see parents with less than pure and simple love for their children, who are glad for the lives of those children mainly for the personal benefits they bring. It is sad to see people acting like…*people – for it is <u>us</u>!*

Yet do not miss the Lord working behind the scenes to bring about His purposes for these souls. It was the Lord, so patiently dealing with people, so graciously loving and labouring for their best, in spite of their dishonouring of themselves.

People Using people

Laban used his daughters to sustain Jacob's employment.

Laban used Jacob for his own profit through God's blessing upon Jacob.

Leah used her sons to gain her husband's love.

Jacob used Leah as a useful son producer.

People still do the same;

- Using their children to win, wound or wow others.
- Using another for selfish benefits rather than loving them for who they are, and dumping them when they no longer deliver on those benefits. Many a marriage is run on such principles.
- Maintaining a "friendship" or association for financial benefits or status or some other personal gain.
- Maintaining church involvement for the social advantages it brings.

How very few among men are those *"who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own,*

not the things which are Jesus Christ's" (Phil. 2:20-21).

Class 13 – Genesis 31-33

Gen 31:1 And he heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, Jacob hath taken away all that was our father's; and of that which was our father's hath he gotten all this glory.
Gen 31:2 And Jacob beheld the countenance of Laban, and, behold, it was not toward him as before.
Gen 31:3 And the LORD said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee.
Gen 31:4 And Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field unto his flock,

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Chapter 31 – Jacob Runs

31:1-16 – Reasons for Leaving

Vs. 1-2 – It is not surprising that Laban and sons would see Jacob's wealth as evidence of dishonesty. A man tends to read the actions of others through the lens of his own heart motivations, assuming others altogether like himself. And Jacob was apparently thinking he had some part in influencing the colour of the lambs born.

Vs. 3 – The Lord encouraged Jacob's departure, promising His presence. See how the Lord's words combined with circumstances to confirm Jacob's need to move on. And the circumstances were of a pressing nature, making it quite impossible to stay. We are perhaps wise to look for such combined guidance before moving from where the Lord has currently put us.

Gen 31:14 And Rachel and Leah answered and said unto him, Is there yet any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house?
Gen 31:15 Are we not counted of him strangers? for he hath sold us, and hath quite devoured also our money.
Gen 31:16 For all the riches which God hath taken from our father, that is ours, and our children's: now then, whatsoever God hath said unto thee, do.

Vs. 4-16 – Family consultation. Though zeal had ever characterized Jacob's way, deceit had ever been the way of Laban in response. Laban's continual efforts to head off the Lord's transfer of much of his herd to Jacob were continually thwarted. No matter what colour was called, the flocks amazingly began to bear accordingly.

Vs. 14-16 – It is a sad thing to hear a speech like Rachel and Leah's, testifying of their father's abuse. That his own daughters sided with Jacob helped confirm the truth of the testimony concerning Laban. Here is what Laban's using ways eventually came to. He had never been one to consider the feelings or needs of his daughters. His act of forcing Leah into Rachel's place was an example of this. He had handled them as *possessions* rather than as *people*, to be used as merchandise, essentially trading them for Jacob's ongoing labours. The results were quite predictable;

- They were left feeling like items or *"strangers"*, rather than loved members of the

family, more like cattle than kin.

- They were filled with resentment rather than respect.
- They desired to leave rather than love.

In that Laban had attempted to deny Jacob enough to develop his own flock, quite determined to keep all for himself, he had made no provision for his daughters' future as well. Thus they resentfully testified that their father *"hath quite devoured also our money".*

See how the Lord blocked the scheming efforts of an ugly-hearted man here. The Lord did not lose track of the wrong. He did not allow Laban to unfairly get away with it. Ultimately all caught up with him, as all such selfishness inevitably will.

Consider how many parents are actually more or less followers of Laban? They are the type of parents who really use their children, and can be seen in many subtle ways;

- In an over-anxious interest in nurturing the athletic or academic abilities of their children, often advertising the merits of their children to others. In fairness, perhaps it is often more a matter of the *parents' image* than the child's

best.

- In failing to underscore the need for their child's religious training, recognizing that religion does not sell in the "real world" out there. As a result they refuse to "push God or religion onto their child", though they will eagerly push what wins earthly accolades for the child (and themselves?).

As Leah and Rachel, such used children will eventually know their parents for what they are. With time they will come to understand that their parents did not deny them what they should have or push what they should have. *And they will perceive <u>why</u>!!* "My parents are not concerned about what is best for me, but what is best for them!! They do not really love *me*. They love *themselves*, and are using me to do it!!"

May we ever be honestly seeking the growth and nourishment of others in the things of the Lord, and in what is for their best. Let that ever be your sincere, entire, undiluted goal. Put down pride and have no concern for your own image before others. Whenever we cease from being the servant of others and instead begin to use others for our own purposes we are sowing the seeds of their eventual disrespect, hatred and desertion.

Gen 31:21 So he fled with all that he had; and he rose up, and passed over the river, and set his face toward the mount Gilead.
Gen 31:22 And it was told Laban on the third day that Jacob was fled.
Gen 31:23 And he took his brethren with him, and pursued after him seven days' journey; and they overtook him in the mount Gilead.
Gen 31:24 And God came to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night, and said unto him, Take heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad.
Gen 31:26 And Laban said to Jacob, What hast thou done, that thou hast stolen away unawares to me, and carried away my daughters, as captives taken with the sword?

Gen. 31:30 "And now…wherefore hast thou stolen my gods?"

<u>31:17-24</u> – Flight and Pursuit

It is clear that Laban set off in pursuit fully intending to do them harm or at least force their return, thus the Lord's warning to him in a dream (and Laban's threat in vs. 29).

<u>31:25-55</u> – Watchtower

Vs. 26-27 – The thief himself made a great issue of what Jacob had *"carried away"* from him. Laban is such a study in hypocrisy. All involved knew that his proposal of a happy parting (vs. 27) would never have happened, and his implied love for his children and grandchildren (vs. 26, 28) was non-existent. What he now expressed in easy *words* he had failed to express in *actions,* and over many decades. Had he loved them in truth when he had opportunity they might have believed his words of love now.

Vs. 30-35 – Search for the stolen *"gods"* – The

Gen. 31:31 And Jacob answered and said to Laban, Because I was afraid: for I said, Peradventure thou wouldest take by force thy daughters from me.
Gen. 31:32 With whomsoever thou findest thy gods, let him not live: before our brethren discern thou what is thine with me, and take it to thee. For Jacob knew not that Rachel had stolen them.
Gen. 31:33 And Laban went into Jacob's tent, and into Leah's tent, and into the two maidservants' tents; but he found them not. Then went he out of Leah's tent, and entered into Rachel's tent.
Gen. 31:34 Now Rachel had taken the images, and put them in the camel's furniture, and sat upon them. And Laban searched all the tent, but found them not.
Gen. 31:35 And she said to her father, Let it not displease my lord that I cannot rise up before thee; for the custom of women is upon me. And he searched, but found not the images.

Hebrew word behind "gods" in vs. 30 & 32 is teraphim. These were little idols some people would keep in their house, like good luck charms. These gods Rachel had taken from her father's house before their hasty departure, Jacob knowing nothing of her theft. Her act revealed some distressing concerns;

- We see in Rachel superstitious trusts, obviously learned from her family.
- Jacob had so far failed to lead her to trust in the true God alone.
- There was in Rachel a good deal of disrespect for her parents, certainly her father.
- With her easy, clever deception (vs. 35) Rachel showed herself very much the child of her father.

Gen 31:36 And Jacob was wroth, and chode with Laban: and Jacob answered and said to Laban, What is my trespass? what is my sin, that thou hast so hotly pursued after me?
Gen. 31:37 Whereas thou hast searched all my stuff, what hast thou found of all thy household stuff? Set it here before my brethren and thy brethren, that they may judge betwixt us both.
Gen 31:38 This twenty years have I been with thee; thy ewes and thy she goats have not cast their young, and the rams of thy flock have I not eaten.
Gen 31:39 That which was torn of beasts I brought not unto thee; I bare the loss of it; of my hand didst thou require it, whether stolen by day, or stolen by night.
Gen 31:40 Thus I was; in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes.
Gen 31:41 Thus have I been twenty years in thy house; I served thee fourteen years for thy two daughters, and six years for thy cattle: and thou hast changed my wages ten times.
Gen. 31:42 Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely thou hadst sent me away now empty. God hath seen mine affliction and the labour of my hands, and rebuked thee yesternight.
Gen. 31:43 And Laban answered and said unto Jacob, These daughters are my daughters, and these children are my children, and these cattle are my cattle, and all that thou seest is mine: and what can I do this day unto these my daughters, or unto their children which they have born?

Vs. 36-42 – Laban never raised a question over any aspect of Jacob's angry speech here, indicating the truth of it. None could fairly question Jacob's many years of diligent, largely faithful service. It is good to be able to say such at the last.

Vs. 43-55 – The heap of witness.

Vs. 43 – Laban had never really given them over, but in his heart he was still retaining them for his own personal use.

Laban's Syrian term for the heap (vs. 47) and Jacob's Hebrew term ("Galeed") mean the same, "the

Gen 31:44 Now therefore come thou, let us make a covenant, I and thou; and let it be for a witness between me and thee.
Gen. 31:45 And Jacob took a stone, and set it up for a pillar.
Gen. 31:46 And Jacob said unto his brethren, Gather stones; and they took stones, and made an heap: and they did eat there upon the heap.
Gen. 31:47 And Laban called it Jegarsahadutha: but Jacob called it Galeed.
Gen. 31:48 And Laban said, This heap is a witness between me and thee this day. Therefore was the name of it called Galeed;
Gen. 31:49 And Mizpah; for he said, The LORD watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another.
Gen. 31:50 If thou shalt afflict my daughters, or if thou shalt take other wives beside my daughters, no man is with us; see, God is witness betwixt me and thee.

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heap of witness".

Vs. 48 – The term "mizpah" means beacon or watchtower, a symbol of the Lord's guard over these two in their mutual agreement to disagree. The point was that neither man could trust the other, and therefore the Lord was called upon to keep their lives and possessions safe from each other. Sad terms indeed for a family parting!

Chapter 32 – I Will Bless You

32:1-2 – Angel Reception

Before Jacob faced the most daunting threat of his life the Lord sought to prepare his heart with this encouraging visitation. This a reminder of his experience at Bethel, with ministering angels ascending and descending the ladder. And it served

Gen 32:1 And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him.
Gen 32:2 And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's host: and he called the name of that place Mahanaim.
Gen 32:3 And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother unto the land of Seir, the country of Edom.

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to confirm the Lord's pleasure in Jacob's return to the land as well. Jacob's name for the place, *"Mahanaim"* or "two hosts", expressed his delight in the Lord's provision of his earthly host of family and flocks (31:9), and the heavenly protection of God's angel host. It should have been enough to carry Jacob back to *"the land of thy fathers"* with the assurance that *"I* [the Lord] *will be with you"* (31:3). It would have been enough for one full of faith as Elisha, to keep that heavenly host in his vision even when in view of greatest earthly threat (II Ki. 6:16). But alas, how quickly Jacob forgot about this heavenly shield when confronted with Esau's mere hundreds. How good of the Lord to provide a vision of security just at the time when Jacob needed it to face what was before him.

32:3-8 – Menacing Message

Having slipped away from Laban, Jacob ran right into Esau. And see in this a glimpse into the work of God's grace in Jacob, for he clung to the vast importance of God's promise of blessing in the land.

Gen 32:4 And he commanded them, saying, Thus shall ye speak unto my lord Esau; Thy servant Jacob saith thus, I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed there until now:
Gen 32:5 And I have oxen, and asses, flocks, and menservants, and womenservants: and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find grace in thy sight.
Gen 32:6 And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to thy brother Esau, and also he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him.

He would rather risk death to have it. It is why this man had the Lord's love.

Vs. 4 – Jacob's approach to Esau was too given to fawning flattery (*"my lord Esau; Thy servant Jacob"*). Still there was too much fear of man in him in spite of the assurance of God's promise and angelic presence. And there was still too much of Jacob seeing to his own safety in the face of threat. Jacob's faith was real, but only ever a part-way thing. It was adequate to lift him at times to the Lord's presence, but inadequate to bring the Lord down to his earthly realities. It was adequate for him to hear the Lord's assuring words, but inadequate for him to make the proper application, *"Hath He said, and shall He not <u>do</u> <u>it</u>?"* Are we not much like this man, flooded with courage through the strengthening words of the Lord at our Peniels, yet so quickly and unreasonably forgetful when facing fearful scorn or threat or some other crises on the ground.

Gen 32:7 Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed: and he divided the people that was with him, and the flocks, and herds, and the camels, into two bands;
Gen 32:8 And said, If Esau come to the one company, and smite it, then the other company which is left shall escape.
Gen 32:9 And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the LORD which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee:
Gen 32:10 I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands.

Vs. 6 – Based on Esau's bitter attitude when these brothers parted two decades prior Jacob presumed menacing motives in his brother's coming.

Vs. 7-8 – He began where most of us begin, with practical precautionary measures, taking the matter of his safety into his own hands, having lost track of God's assurances. As always, Jacob must handle his Esaus rather than handing them over to the Lord. Such was ever the way of this man.

32:9-12 – Praying at Last

Jacob's prayer is a good one.

Vs. 10 – He came on the basis of God's mercy, rather than his own worthiness.

Vs. 11 – *"I fear him"* – He was at least honest with the Lord.

Gen 32:11 Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children.
Gen 32:12 And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.

Vs. 12 – He wisely approached the Lord based on His promise. Yet this is the first record of Jacob directly praying to the Lord, only now when in the worst trouble of his life. Why must the Lord so push a man, even His own children, to finally, honestly, earnestly turn to Him in prayer? Why must He take Jonah down to the lowest of lows in the fish before he would finally look up? And why this response from Jacob only after his own precautionary measures? And why such faithless fear in the first place, when Jacob had already received the sure promises of God? (28:13-15)

32:13-23 – Parade of Presents

More precautions – Prayer is sandwiched between precautions rather than the other way around, showing again the greater emphasis of Jacob's way. He still carried the weight of his fears in spite of God's promises and visions and his own prayers. He missed all the confidence the Lord meant for him by faith. Indeed the way of wisdom would combine prayer with precaution, but with the ability to leave

Gen 32:24 And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.
Gen 32:25 And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him.
Gen 32:26 And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.
Gen 32:27 And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob.
Gen 32:28 And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.

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it there, without anxiety.

<u>32:24-32</u> – The Face of God

God brought Jacob to the end of himself, to the point where he *must* have God's blessing, bringing on this encounter with the Lord Himself. Jacob displayed here exemplary perseverance.

Vs. 28 – From *"Jacob"* ("supplanter") to *"Israel"* ("prince" or "wrestler with God") – Not only did the Lord speak of power with God for Jacob's tenacity with God here, but power with man as well. Fruit among men or power with men comes through prayer, through prevailing power with God. Enough of clever methods and the subtleties of fashionable programmes in seeking to gain influence with men. Look to God. Prevail with Him in prayer. And you will have all the power and resource you need for effective ministry among men. Perhaps we never really enjoy the blessing of God until we come to the

Gen 32:29 And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there.
Gen 32:30 And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.
Gen 32:31 And as he passed over Penuel the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh.

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place where there is nothing more important in life than having His blessing.

Vs. 31 – *"He halted upon his thigh"* – Ever after Jacob wore the mark of God's touch in his walk. The Lord took away Jacob's ability to fight and run in an effort to force him finally to full reliance. There is a price to pay if we would expect God's blessing. And for Jacob that price was paid *personally*. No one was there to help. It was Jacob's own personal wrestling match with the Lord. He got *alone* with his God. Even so it was with Hannah, Jesus, Moses, and Daniel. Name one man or woman God ever used or blessed who did not first get alone with God, who was not first a great man or woman *in the closet!* And that price must be paid *physically*. It was very evident ever after that Jacob was a wrestler with God, for he bore the marks in his body like a spouse wears a wedding ring. There will be a casting aside of every hindrance in one who wins with God (Heb. 12:1). There will be a hatred of all that God hates. As Job, there will be a shunning of evil in our fear of God. Compare how people strive

and sacrifice and pay the agonizing price for some athletic prize that will fade away, yet how little is our willingness to so strive for God's blessing. Jacob's persistence in prayer was all night. God's blessing does not come cheap, with a flippant request. Jacob was desperate for God's help, as was Hannah for fruit, and Daniel for answers. And such a marked one will become a mark set up for Satan's hatred and attack as well.

Why did the Lord resist Jacob? Why did He wrestle with the man all night, until He saw that Jacob would not let go, even putting his thigh out of joint and pleading for release? He was testing Jacob to see if he *would* let go. He would see how serious, how desperate the man for God's help. Compare;

- Elisha's perseverance with Elijah (II Ki. 2). Elijah left his previous servant (I Ki. 19:2-3), who was never heard of again. But not so Elisha. And Elisha got the prize!

- Ruth's tenacious cling to Naomi (*"turn again my daughters"*).

- The true disciples in John 6 (*"will you also go away?"*).

- Job (*"though He slay me yet will I trust in Him"*, Job 13:15).

Gen 33:1 And Jacob lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, Esau came, and with him four hundred men. And he divided the children unto Leah, and unto Rachel, and unto the two handmaids.
Gen 33:2 And he put the handmaids and their children foremost, and Leah and her children after, and Rachel and Joseph hindermost.

Those truly blessed among the righteous are those who will not be put off. And therefore look well then to the *pay-off* of prayer. The hand of God's blessing was on Jacob's life!

Chapter 33

It is interesting to see that Jacob's name change did not stick as did Abraham's. Sometimes he is presented as "Israel", most times as "Jacob" from here onward. Even the common rendering of the patriarchs is "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob", not Israel. This wavering name usage seems to reflect Jacob's wavering character, between supplanter of men and prince with God. Even coming off that great scene of power with God at Peniel we find Jacob immediately back-peddling in fear at his meeting with Esau.

33:1-15 – Meeting with Esau

Vs. 1-2 – Upon his brother's approach, Jacob was again dividing his company, laying out his family

Gen 33:3 And he passed over before them, and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.
Gen 33:4 And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept.

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seemingly in order of preference, putting the less preferred first in harms way. What is in us boils to the surface in the crunch, under the pressure of a fearful situation.

See how the Lord did not take away the frightening obstacle, but made His grace available to endure it in peace, if Jacob would just rest in the Lord's promise. The experience of close fellowship with the Lord and times of victory does not exempt us from danger, but grants us grace to continue steadfast right through it.

Vs. 3 – Again the unattractively toady approach, bowing excessively before his brother. Compare the over-indulging flatteries of vs. 10, *"I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God".*

Vs. 4 – How often our haunting fears prove quite unjustified, making a mockery of our anxious precautions.

Vs. 8-11 – Esau neither understood nor wanted Jacob's gift, for he already had quite enough. Even

Gen 33:14 Let my lord, I pray thee, pass over before his servant: and I will lead on softly, according as the cattle that goeth before me and the children be able to endure, until I come unto my lord unto Seir.

Gen 33:18 And Jacob came to Shalem, a city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padanaram; and pitched his tent before the city.
Gen 33:19 And he bought a parcel of a field, where he had spread his tent, at the hand of the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for an hundred pieces of money.

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this manoeuvre of Jacob's proved unnecessary.

Vs. 12-15 – Jacob dealt with Esau in his characteristic way. Instead of speaking his true heart in a forthright manner he talked his way out of travelling with Esau or his men, promised to follow close behind, and then ducked in the opposite direction, deceiving his brother yet again. *Back to "Jacob"!* He just would not rest in the Lord. Can you picture Esau arriving home and making hurried preparations for Jacob's soon arrival, only to discover he had been rudely handled again by his brother? We might wonder what Esau thought of Jacob's easy references to his God (vs. 5 & 11). If you are going to act the unethical part of the hypocrite, at least do not drag the Lord into your performance.

33:16-20 – Jacob's Journeys

How quickly Jacob seems to have fallen from his lessons at Peniel. Are you not left with the

impression of Esau again looking the better man? He was straight-forward and honest, even warm and friendly, and obviously he had chosen to forgive his brother, while Jacob comes across more like Laban, with surface warmth but inward fear and fraud. What a pity when the world's man demonstrates nobler character than God's man.

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## Ponder Points

The high points of Jacob's spiritual experiences;

- God's house (28:10-22).
- God's host (32:1-2).
- God's face (32:24-32).

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Compare other spiritual plummets after great experiences with God;

- David's sin after II Samuel 7.
- Solomon's fall after his spiritual high.
- Peter's denial of the Lord after his great confession concerning who Jesus is.

"Then Jacob said unto his household,
and to all that were with him,
Put away the strange gods
that are among you,
and be clean,
and change your garments:
and let us arise, and go up to Bethel"

(Gen. 35:2-3)

# Class 14 – Genesis 34-35

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*Gen 34:1 And Dinah the daughter of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land.*
*Gen 34:2 And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her, and lay with her, and defiled her.*
*Gen 34:3 And his soul clave unto Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the damsel, and spake kindly unto the damsel.*
*Gen 34:4 And Shechem spake unto his father Hamor, saying, Get me this damsel to wife.*
*Gen 34:5 And Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter: now his sons were with his cattle in the field: and Jacob held his peace until they were come.*

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## Chapter 34 – Trouble Galore

Jacob's move to *"Shalem, a city of Shechem"* (33:18) did not prove to be a wise one. That he *"pitched his tent before"* this city smells of Lot earlier pitching his tent toward Sodom, with well-known tragic results there, for he was both *in* the world and *of* it! Though we do not hear of a reputation like Sodom's here, still too close a proximity to pagan influence would become the spring of trouble in this place as well. Perhaps, as with Lot, it was a matter of favourable conditions for Jacob's flocks. As is ever the case, moves made with attention to favourable financial or work conditions, yet with little thought to suitable spiritual concerns, result in disaster.

**34:1-5** – The Defilement

Vs. 1 – Dinah's actions seem to run beyond just

*Gen 34:7 And the sons of Jacob came out of the field when they heard it: and the men were grieved, and they were very wroth, because he had wrought folly in Israel in lying with Jacob's daughter; which thing ought not to be done.*

*Gen 34:13 And the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father deceitfully, and said, because he had defiled Dinah their sister:*
*Gen 34:14 And they said unto them, We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one that is uncircumcised; for that were a reproach unto us:*
*Gen 34:15 But in this will we consent unto you: If ye will be as we be, that every male of you be circumcised;*

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detached curiosity to an undue interest in the way of the world. This likely involved more than just one visit. Yet could we not see Dinah's conduct as an expression of Jacob's own decision to settle there in the first place? It was another bad fatherly decision creating a setting that drew out a child's bad decision (9:20-22).

Vs. 2 – This was probably not rape, but illicit relations.

Vs. 5 – Why does Jacob wait for his sons to take the leadership in the situation?

**34:6-19** – The Deception

Vs. 8-12 – Shechem came with neither apology nor any admission of wrong. What he did with Dinah may not have been considered wrong in their society. Such vast differences in moral standards are much of the problem with too close an

*Gen 34:16 Then will we give our daughters unto you, and we will take your daughters to us, and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people.*
*Gen 34:17 But if ye will not hearken unto us, to be circumcised; then will we take our daughter, and we will be gone.*
*Gen 34:18 And their words pleased Hamor, and Shechem Hamor's son.*
*Gen 34:19 And the young man deferred not to do the thing, because he had delight in Jacob's daughter: and he was more honourable than all the house of his father.*

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association with the world.

Vs. 13-18 – The words of the brothers were all a ruse, for the hearts of at least some of them were set on revenge from the start. Again it is a case of sons taking after their father, dealing with guile rather than with integrity, thus making themselves as evil as those they would punish.

These sons of the covenant were using circumcision, that special sign of their relation to the true God, as a condition for relation to men expressing a misunderstanding of that sign. But far worse, they were using circumcision as a religious cloak hiding the dagger of their wrath. Their pious pretensions of concern for their religion were merely a mask for their true intention to massacre. What an ugly thing to see in those claiming the Lord as their own!

Vs. 19 – Apart from the immorality factor, Shechem comes across as a man of integrity, with a genuine

love for Dinah (vs. 3). It is a reminder of Jacob with Esau, showing faith toward God but fraud toward man. While the man of the world, without a thought toward God, is attractively honest and forthright with men. Yet Jacob was loved by God for his faith, and Esau rejected by God for his unbelief, in spite of his honesty. The world makes a great deal of noble character. The Lord makes a great deal of genuine faith in Him, though never diminishing the importance of integrity toward men.

Note again the honesty of God in His Word to so fairly present those outside the covenant family with more integrity than those called by His name. Though the "man of God" discards his integrity, the God of man guards His, relating the bare truth concerning men whether inside or outside of His fold.

Where was Jacob during all of these developments? We are left with the impression of the sons sidestepping their father, discounting Jacob's opinion altogether. If ever there was a need for godly, fatherly leadership it was at this moment! In fact, where were Jacob and Leah (or the brothers for that matter) when Dinah first purposed to mix with Canaanites? Every caring parent with half a measure of wisdom would wonder what in the world

*Gen 34:20 And Hamor and Shechem his son came unto the gate of their city, and communed with the men of their city, saying,*
*Gen 34:21 These men are peaceable with us; therefore let them dwell in the land, and trade therein; for the land, behold, it is large enough for them; let us take their daughters to us for wives, and let us give them our daughters.*

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she was doing out there on her own. And again, where was Jacob's leadership when deciding to settle there in the first place? Poor leadership in a bad situation is usually traceable back to a history of poor leadership *bringing* the bad situation.

## On the Side

It seems brothers often played a significant role in the guidance of their sisters back then. Laban joined his father in the decision to allow Rebekah to become Isaac's wife (24:50). It was the brothers of Solomon's Shulamite lover who made the decisions concerning how she would be handled, based upon her responses to men while growing up (Song of Sol. 8:8-9).

**34:20-31** – The Destruction

Vs. 21 – Ironically, the *"peaceable"* nature of Jacob's house was part of the argument for union. Note again the simple trusting nature of the Canaanites,

*Gen 34:22 Only herein will the men consent unto us for to dwell with us, to be one people, if every male among us be circumcised, as they are circumcised.*
*Gen 34:23 Shall not their cattle and their substance and every beast of theirs be ours? only let us consent unto them, and they will dwell with us.*
*Gen 34:24 And unto Hamor and unto Shechem his son hearkened all that went out of the gate of his city; and every male was circumcised, all that went out of the gate of his city.*
*Gen 34:25 And it came to pass on the third day, when they were sore, that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brethren, took each man his sword, and came upon the city boldly, and slew all the males.*
*Gen 34:30 And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites: and I being few in number, they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house.*
*Gen 34:31 And they said, Should he deal with our sister as with an harlot?*

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set in contrast to the devious cunning of Jacob and sons. Again, the pagans are shown in a better light than God's own.

Vs. 25-29 – How much greater was their treacherous sin than Shechem's! To be sure, Shechem took what was not his to take and he was wrong to do it. But how much greater what Jacob's sons wrongfully took in response!

Vs. 30 – Note the selfish nature of Jacob's response (8 times *"me", "my", "I"*). Jacob's concerns had everything to do with himself and nothing to do with rights and wrongs. His only offer of guidance in the situation was to whinge over the leadership of others in the absence of his own. Behold the weak way of many, who are unwilling to get involved on the front end of making and executing decisions, yet

are quite willing to gripe at the tail end about how much better they might have led.

Has Jacob now forgotten the Lord's promise of protection? His God had spoken (28:14-15; 31:3)! Yet there was ever a drift in Jacob away from the high points of a Bethel, Mahanaim, and Peniel, from divine fellowship and trust. His life consisted of a handful of spiritual blips to the heights of closeness to the Lord, followed immediately and always by a general drift to an earthy existence. In this sense his life pictures the nation to follow from him, ever on the drift away from the Lord throughout their history, with only the occasional upward blip to spiritual strength under a Gideon or David or Solomon or Asa. And what of you and I? With the Lord for the odd *blips* or for the whole *trip*?

## Chapter 35 – Idols Aside

**35:1-8** – Return to Bethel

Vs. 2-4 – A call to purity. Before Jacob could take his family back to that place of the altar, that place of meeting God, there was need for some spiritual house cleaning. Their little idols and jewellery items used as amulets were all piled together and buried at the base of an oak. Spiritual decay is on display here. Jacob, though obviously aware of such pagan

*Gen 35:1 And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother.*
*Gen 35:2 Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments:*
*Gen 35:3 And let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went.*
*Gen 35:4 And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem.*

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practices, had not sought to move his family otherwise through his weakness. Perhaps Rachel's leanings had played a significant part in this (31:19). As King Solomon (II Ki. 11), so Jacob allowed a harmful home influence through the love of a woman. In essence he loved Rachel more than the Lord in allowing her to carry on with such practices and so perhaps influence the family astray. It seems they were like so many who claim to be God's people in our own day, yet who "worship" God while clinging to the silly superstitions and worldly practices of the heathen around, glorying in pagan productions, adopting their concerns and culture.

Their return to Bethel represented a return to the Lord and to fellowship with Him, which required a purge of all wrong practices and false trusts. The two must go hand in hand. If one would walk in the light of God's fellowship, all such remnants or

stinking graveclothes of our old, pre-Christ life (which was really a *living death*) must first be buried, left in the grave where we died to ourselves and rose to new life in Jesus Christ. Such idols and amulets could not be given away or sold. They must be *buried!* Even so the booze must be poured out. Even so the godless music must be destroyed. Even so the occult paraphernalia and pornographic materials must be burned (Acts 19:19). That which is evil must be trashed not transformed or transferred to others. One who is backslidden from the Lord, as Jacob, does not need to get saved again. He needs to throw away every distracting, worldly thing that stands between him and intimate union with his God and respond to God's call back to His side with a willing, repentant heart.

Notice how Jacob finally stood up here, showing solid leadership at last, demanding of his family what was right. And notice that when he did he met no resistance, not even from his brutal sons, for they knew in their hearts that he was right. There is power behind a man who stands up for what is right. Had they been waiting for this leadership from him? Could it be that those under us perhaps hold a secret wish that we would take a strong stand for what is right, even though it might run against their own interests?

*Gen 35:5 And they journeyed: and the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob.*
*Gen 35:6 So Jacob came to Luz, which is in the land of Canaan, that is, Bethel, he and all the people that were with him.*
*Gen 35:7 And he built there an altar, and called the place Elbethel: because there God appeared unto him, when he fled from the face of his brother.*

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Vs. 5 – This was not the terror of man, but *"the terror of God"*. It was as we saw with Isaac in 26:17ff. When finally coming to appropriate separation from the world and right relation with God His people become more a channel for His influence upon the world than in their worldly union. First there is the need of *personal* separation from unclean *practices* in vs. 2-4 (II Cor. 7:1), then the need of *public* separation from too close association with unclean *people* in vs. 5 (II Cor. 6:14-17). Only then is the blessing of God and His power in evidence upon the life. Compare the blessing in II Corinthians 6:17-18, *"and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty"*.

Vs. 7 – Note the progress in Jacob's spiritual awareness. In chapter 28 his focus was upon the *place* where the Lord met him, calling it Bethel or "house of God". Now the focus is upon the *God* of the place, calling it El-bethel or "God of the house of God", *"because there <u>God</u> appeared unto him"*.

*Gen 35:8 But Deborah Rebekah's nurse died, and she was buried beneath Bethel under an oak: and the name of it was called Allonbachuth.*

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Vs. 8 – Deborah was apparently the *"nurse"* given to Rebekah when she left Haran to become Isaac's wife (24:59). How she came to be with Jacob and family rather than with Isaac and Rebekah is unknown. Perhaps she joined Jacob in Haran when Rebekah died. Deborah's mention here is striking. Her association with Rebekah, the mention of her death, and the sorrow with her passing (the name given to the place of her death, *Allonbachuth*, means "the oak of weeping") raise some interesting thoughts. Though only a servant, her loss was mourned as though she were a family member. As a faithful servant she had arisen to such a dearly loved status. In being so mourned the *maid* was in fact more honoured than the *madam*, for the Bible does not even mention Rebekah's death or any mourning of her loss.

Consider such a time of sorrow coming directly after Jacob put his heart right with the Lord. And his greatest loss with Rachel's death was to come so soon after. In fact there are three sad graves in this chapter, after Jacob got right. Returning to the Lord does not relieve us from life's sorrows. And we cannot make the mistake of reading such hard

*Gen 35:9 And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padanaram, and blessed him.*
*Gen 35:10 And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name: and he called his name Israel.*
*Gen 35:11 And God said unto him, I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins;*
*Gen 35:12 And the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land.*

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losses as punishments. Perhaps it was a test to examine the nature and depth of Jacob's resolve. Would he still love God when he lost the love of his life? Would he, as Abraham with Isaac at Moriah, remain strong in his commitment to the Lord when he lost what he cherished most? Would he trust in the Lord with ALL his heart? (Prov. 3:5)

**35:9-15** – Reinstated with the Lord

As Abraham knew the fullness of the Lord's presence when he finally came to full obedience in chapter 13, even so Jacob was reconciled to the Lord when he finally came away from all compromise and led his family in the same. The Lord was finally able to tell Jacob all that He had been longing to tell him.

Vs. 11 – *"God Almighty"* – This again is El Shaddai, the same name by which the Lord revealed Himself to Abraham (17:1). It is that name expressing the Lord's parental provision of all that His children

*Gen 35:16 And they journeyed from Bethel; and there was but a little way to come to Ephrath: and Rachel travailed, and she had hard labour.*
*Gen 35:17 And it came to pass, when she was in hard labour, that the midwife said unto her, Fear not; thou shalt have this son also.*
*Gen 35:18 And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Benoni: but his father called him Benjamin.*

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need for their nurture to fruitfulness. It is that name suggesting His willingness to discipline His own, to press them, as Jacob, to His perfect will. The Lord reaffirmed here all that He had said previously to Jacob.

**35:16-20** – Rachel's Death

Vs. 16 – Such tragedy mingled with joy! Perhaps there is a question of the wisdom of their travelling at such a time, when it does not appear as though they really *needed* to, and the Lord had told Jacob to *"dwell there"* in Bethel (vs. 1). Did the travelling cause the complications? Was it fear that moved them? Fear of retaliation from Shechem perhaps? Bethel was only about 33 kms south. Fear born out of Jacob's own folly to dwell in Shechem and his absent leadership there? And look now at the resulting tragedy. Jacob lost the one dearest to him. Uncompromising righteousness will save you a packet of trouble and heartache in the long run.

Vs. 17-18 – The midwife sought to encourage Rachel

with the news that it was a son and that he would live. But Rachel refused to be encouraged, for she knew that she was dying, that her son's life would cost her own. Life was not easy for Rachel, and death as bitter. Upon entering marriage her father took away so much from her; her wedding feast, a great measure of her marital joy with a marriage troubled by bitter jealousy, the undistracted love of her husband, and all hope of happy relation with her sister. As well, she was relatively unsuccessful in providing children for the husband who loved her. Then after all those years of longing for another boy, only to leave this life bringing him into it! All of the joy and bright possibilities such a prospect would bring were stripped from her in death.

## On the Side

Consider how the birth of Benjamin was an answer to Rachel's request that the Lord add another son to her (30:24). In time the Lord did give as she requested, though He did not answer in exactly the way she intended or wanted. We must ask of the Lord and leave the answering to His discretion and be willing to accept His way with thanksgiving.

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How especially painful Rachel's death for Jacob as well, for we know how much he loved her from the beginning. Sorrow and love were the reasons for the name exchange in vs. 18. Rachel named him *Benoni*, meaning "Son of my sorrow", for he was the son she would never see grow up. It was perhaps a bit of a selfish name to leave with a boy, reflecting a less-than-thankful heart for the way the Lord chose to answer her prayer. Jacob changed the boy's name to *Benjamin*, meaning "Son of my right hand". Thus by this name Jacob marked this son as especially precious or honoured. To be at the right of someone in Hebrew idiom is to be in a place of honour. Benjamin was born of the only woman Jacob ever loved. He was especially precious, not because of *who* he was, but because of *whose* he was, because of his connection with Rachel, because he was the son of that wife Jacob loved. That child Rachel would make a tribute to her grief, Jacob made a tribute to his love!

Vs. 19 – *"In the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem"* – These early and later names are similar in meaning; Ephrath(ah) meaning "fruitful land", and Bethlehem meaning "house of bread". The area was

*Gen 35:20 And Jacob set a pillar upon her grave: that is the pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day.*
*Gen 35:21 And Israel journeyed, and spread his tent beyond the tower of Edar.*
*Gen 35:22 And it came to pass, when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine: and Israel heard it. Now the sons of Jacob were twelve:*

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quite an agricultural breadbasket.

Vs. 20 – Jacob made a monument of Rachel's grave, building a pyramid of stones over it, a spot still known and marked to this day. In more recent centuries of Muslim occupation of Palestine Jacob's original pillar has been replaced by a tomb.

**35:21-29** – Jacob and Sons

Vs. 22 – Jacob heard of Reuben's act, but apparently said nothing…until later when it came to rewards time (49:4). Reuben lost his birthright because of this act. Even so all we do in our bodies and leave unconfessed or unrepented of, *"whether it be good or bad",* will catch up with us at the last, at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Justice will surely be done, though it be long in coming.

Again there is indication of the truth of the Bible record here, to include such a shameful event as this among the patriarchs.

## Ponder Points

This scene of such tragic joy in Rachel's death in childbirth on the road into Bethlehem can perhaps be understood as something of a type or pointer to that birth of the promised Seed of the woman there in Bethlehem. Many centuries later Mary and Joseph passed Rachel's tomb as they entered the city of Christ's birth. To Bethlehem they came, to the very "House of Bread", in order to bring the Bread of Life into the world. Mary was in the very same condition Rachel had been in as she passed that monument, on the verge of giving birth to the Son of God and Messiah. The mingled joy and sorrow of that scene from distant history was an indicator of the nature of Christ's coming. In sorrow Jesus would leave His Father's presence in glory to be born to the barren existence of earth as *"the man of sorrows"*. Yet it was a birth with angelic announcement *"of great joy, which shall be to all people"*. For Christ's coming meant loss for both God the Father and Son, yet greatest joy and gain for mankind. And ultimately it was to God's glory and joy as well, with so great a company of believers finding life through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

Jacob changed the label on that son of sorrow to his son of special preciousness. Even so God the Father, through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, has turned every son of His sorrow who believes in Jesus into a child of special preciousness to Him. *"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people* [people of His own]" (I Pet. 2:9).

This place of honour Jacob gave to Benjamin because of his connection to that wife he so loved. Even so we who are in Christ are so cherished by the Father, not because of our own personal worth, but because of His great love for the Son and our union with that Son of His love, through faith in Him.

Rachel lost her son to life, as death separated her from him. Even so the Father lost His Son to life, as an earthly birth separated Him from the joy of their eternal union and fellowship. And then He lost Jesus to death in the tragedy of Calvary. He who in sorrow was separated from His Father in birth and death, has returned in joy through His resurrection and ascension, bringing a great company of the redeemed with Him in His return to the Father's right hand and fellowship.

As the Father has made Jesus the Son of His right hand, so Jesus has become the Son of *our* right hand. For how exceedingly precious Jesus Christ has become to every soul receiving Him as Saviour.

Bethlehem became a place of great sorrow again when Herod sought to kill Jesus as a young boy, wanting Him dead so badly that he went to the unimaginable extreme of massacring every little boy in the whole region (Matt. 2:16-18). All of those many little graves became monuments as well to the true nature of sinful man, who refuses to receive the very Messiah, Son of God, and Creator of all with open arms from the beginning, desiring His death instead. And that very cursed nature in every human heart is what God seeks to destroy through Christ's coming, death, and resurrection. As Christ's birth meant His death, the death of someone greatly cherished by the Father, and as Christ's birth meant the death of so many cherished baby boys in Bethlehem, and as the birth of Benjamin brought the death of that one Jacob so cherished, even so my *new* birth requires the death of someone I tend to greatly cherish – *myself!* Even so the new birth of others through me requires the same, for the birth in me of what God wants me to become, a channel of blessing to others, requires the death of what *I* want to be. This is Christ's

meaning when He said in John 12:24, *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit".* Thus Rachel and Jacob in their great sorrow had the ultimate joy of becoming pointers to the coming Messiah. Am I willing to be such a pointer to my Saviour, even through tragedy? Even through my own death to self? *"My hope…that Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death"* (Phil. 1:20). May we be willing for the mingled joy and sorrow of dying to self as we live for Jesus Christ. There may be sorrow for the loss of all that *I* might want my life to be. Yet there is no greater joy than to live for Christ and others. If the Lord has suffered such sorrow and loss to make me His precious son, if He has turned my Benoni, the sorrow of my birth into bondage in sin, to Benjamin, a son of His own right hand in Christ, then no sacrifice is too great for me to give for Him.

# Class 15 – Genesis 36-38

## Chapter 36 – Esau's Kids

This chapter is a lengthy record of the genealogy of *"Esau the father of the Edomites"*, who settled in Mt. Seir, that rugged region to the south and east of the Dead Sea with Sela or Petra as their capital.

**36:1-14** – Esau's Direct Descendants

**36:15-19** – Record of Their Dukes

**36:20-30** – Descendants and Dukes of Seir

The descendants of Seir were the "Horites" who dwelt in the land prior to Esau's arrival, and among whom the descendants of Esau or Edomites intermarried.

**36:31-40** – Kings Who Reigned Over Edom

Vs. 31 – *"Before there reigned any king over the children of Israel"* – This was one of the surrounding nations the Israelites wished to copy (*"that we also may be like all the nations"*) when demanding a king of their own (I Sam. 8).

**36:40-43** – A Few More Edomite Dukes

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The nations resulting from these brothers were ever in conflict. Edom refused Israel access through their land under Moses, opposing their blessing, as the Arab attitude toward Israel to this day. These descendants of Esau stood against many of Israel's kings throughout their history. Obadiah wrote his little book of prophecy to pronounce doom upon Edom for their arrogant, heartless delight in any misfortune coming upon the nation of Israel, and for their willingness to strike at Israel when they were weak. King Herod the Great was an Edomite. One wonders if he did not take particular delight as well in his brutality upon the house of Jacob.

## Esau Summary

- Esau in many ways was more outwardly attractive than Jacob. He was physically intimidating, a clever hunter, simple, guileless, sometimes affectionate, he loved his father (rather than deceiving him), and forgave Jacob.
- In despising his birthright Esau displayed his earth-bound disregard for the worth of God's promises and his sensual priority upon immediate, physical appetite or gratification over spiritual things.
- Esau showed his unconcern for God's

standard of right through intermarriage with Canaanites.

- He was quite willing to conspire with his father to regain the blessing of the despised and sold birthright.
- He was given to rage, and the willingness to express this in the Cain-like murder of his brother.
- He was confident in his earthly abilities, even against the Lord (Mal. 1:3-4).

The societies of men often produce attractive personalities, yet with an underlying disregard (hatred, Jn. 3:19-20) for the Lord and things important to Him. We are wise to not be taken by such charms, and to ever see things as God sees them with a heart of wisdom. We are wise to not be drawn into thinking less of the Lord and His things in view of the "real life" of those who are refined and clever and fascinating and attractive among earth-dwellers. Let your heroes be those truly heroic in the Lord's sight.

## Chapter 37 – Sold by Eleven

With this chapter we enter the last main section of Genesis (chapter 37-50), still dealing with the life of Jacob, but with a particular lean toward Joseph.

*Gen 37:1 And Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan.*
*Gen 37:2 These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren; and the lad was with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives: and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report.*

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**37:1-11** – Rising Hatred

Vs. 2 – What exactly were the contents of Joseph's evil reports we are not told, but with what we have seen and have yet to see in these brothers, we can well imagine. Again there is no indication of Jacob doing anything about the evil of His sons. Joseph was much like Samuel growing up in the house of permissive Eli with his carnal "brothers" Hophni and Phinehas, yet unaffected by their perversions (I Sam. 1-3). In a sense Jacob perhaps reflects God's way of dealing with us, showing little immediate response when His children sin even though evil be done directly against him (35:22). Yet as Jacob will demonstrate in chapter 49, so the Lord perceives and records all toward that final reckoning of rewards and punishments for the things done in our bodies.

Was Joseph at fault here for serving as a spy or tattler? We have no indication that he was in the wrong. He brought a report to the one responsible, and this seemingly in obedience to his father's wishes (vs. 14). As one writer stated, "It is an utterly mistaken sense of honour that keeps people from

*Gen 37:3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours.*
*Gen 37:4 And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him.*
*Gen 37:5 And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more.*
*Gen 37:6 And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed:*

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giving information when wrong-doing is involved". There is a time to speak and there is a right person to speak to, one responsible for those involved in wrongdoing. To not do so is perhaps to make yourself a partner in their crimes.

Vs. 3-4 – The beginning of the brothers' hatred was their father's particular favour of Joseph. Some would fault Jacob for his uneven love. Perhaps his open expression of it was not the better part of wisdom. Yet Joseph was a different kind of boy from his brothers. Being loyal and without guile he would certainly have been easier to love. Does the Lord not express a deeper love for the faithful among His children as well (Jn. 14:21, 23)? Even the obvious contrast of Joseph's life to the carnal lives of his brothers must have had a reproving effect, contributing to their hatred.

Vs. 5-11 – Joseph's dreams. These two dreams were prophetic, and it seems Joseph understood them to be so. The repetition perhaps relates the certainty of their fulfilment, as Joseph would later suggest to

*Gen 37:7 For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf.*
*Gen 37:8 And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words.*
*Gen 37:9 And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me.*

*Gen 37:13 And Israel said unto Joseph, Do not thy brethren feed the flock in Shechem? come, and I will send thee unto them. And he said to him, Here am I.*

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Pharaoh (41:32). The second round expands to involve his parents as well. His dreams relate what eventually happened, with his entire family coming under his protection and even headship in Egypt. Some would fault Joseph for even sharing his dreams, especially the second one when the first stirred such bitterness in his brothers. But we read of no arrogance in Joseph. He may have felt it his responsibility to relate the dreams, seeing them as from the Lord.

**37:12-22** – The Conspiracy

Vs. 13 – Joseph's eager response to his father (*"here am I"*) expresses the spirit of young Samuel (I Sam. 3). He was a bit too "sweet" for his brothers I suspect. Can you picture them mocking Joseph's "here am I". But look well at who became the honoured leader in the end. Look well to who was most blessed by God. As always, those used of the

*Gen 37:18 And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him.*
*Gen 37:19 And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh.*

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Lord as loyal leaders begin as faithful followers. From father to Pharaoh, this was Joseph's way all of his life with those over him. Even so Jesus ever displayed His willing obedience to His Father, even becoming the lowly Servant of man before His name was exalted above every other. In God's economy the way up is down. The way to honour is through humility. The world tends to hate a servant while loving the arrogant instead. The object of the Father's love will always tend to be the object of the world's hatred (Jn. 15).

Vs. 18 – Even before Joseph *"came near unto them"* his brothers were conspiring against him, even to the extent of murder. We see in them the same progression as in the Jewish leaders toward Jesus; hatred, envy (vs. 11; Acts 7:9; Matt. 27:18), conspiracy to murder, leading on to violence. Had they enjoyed God's goodness to them they would never be annoyed with God's gifts to others. But alas, their envy became *"rottenness of the bones"* in them (Prov. 14:30). Let the Lord be your delight and rejoicing and you will soon be rejoicing with others in His goodness to them as well. *"A sound heart is*

*Gen 37:20 Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams.*
*Gen 37:21 And Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands; and said, Let us not kill him.*
*Gen 37:22 And Reuben said unto them, Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him; that he might rid him out of their hands, to deliver him to his father again.*

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*the life of the flesh".* It must not matter to us what others have. Ever cultivate joy in what *you* have from the Lord. Be ever thankful and ever mindful of how little you deserve what you do have from Him.

Vs. 20 – *"We shall see what will become of his dreams"* – Oh how true their words became! They either refused to see Joseph's dreams as prophecy or thought they could change God's program through evil. God in fact used their evil to fulfil those despised dreams.

Vs. 21-22 – Reuben objected to killing Joseph. As the oldest he bore the greater responsibility. But instead of taking a bold, strong stand against his brothers, he chose a weaker approach, proposing a lesser measure, thinking he might later be able to release Joseph. Perhaps Reuben was afraid to appear the odd one out before his brothers. Have you been there? Feeling the pressure to not fight the crowd or the common current. Yet think how

heroic Reuben would appear to us now had he stood strong against the wrong. Understand that the same will one day be true of all who stand with Jesus now against our contemporary world in their denial of His pre-eminence. This was no place for seeking a compromise. Reuben's halfway job of it became no real rescue at all. At the point when Joseph was later sold to the Midianite caravan, Reuben apparently was not present (vs. 29-30). Through his weak refusal to grasp the opportunity when he had it and to stand for what was right, he forfeited his chance to do good for his brother. Though he meant well, good intentions are not enough. There was just no real resolve for right in this one, and therefore he missed his chance for reward before the Lord. If it is right then stand for it, no matter what the cost, no matter what your fears, no matter what the threats! Reuben must still have later joined in their shared lie concerning Joseph's disappearance. How fair his father's later assessment, to label this man *"unstable as water"* (49:4).

Consider as well how Reuben's illicit relation with Bilhah (35:22) did not put him on solid ground to stand against sin contemplated by others. Unconfessed personal sin robs us of all ability for spiritual leadership and forces us to compromise.

*Gen 37:23 And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stript Joseph out of his coat, his coat of many colours that was on him;*
*Gen 37:24 And they took him, and cast him into a pit: and the pit was empty, there was no water in it.*

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Compare how Deborah in her song (Judges 5) spoke in a similar way of the tribe to follow Reuben. In the call to help against Jaban and Sisera of the Canaanites, *"the divisions of Reuben"* had only *"great thoughts of heart"* (5:15-16). Again, great intentions, but to *no effective help!* The Lord still keeps the score, as we find in Judges 5. From Reuben's tribe came no prophet, no judge, no hero, no king. And in Moses' final blessing in Deuteronomy 33 he prayed only for the *survival* of Reuben's tribe (vs. 6).

Reuben's story is that of many a believer. The Lord shall recount in His day of judgment those among His children with *great intentions* to get up and do something in the battle for the sin-imprisoned souls of men. But in their refusal to actually do anything in taking a stand for Jesus Christ their "help" was small help in the end. Their *"great thoughts of heart"* never overcoming their fears, they ever only remained close to *"the sheepfolds"* of their own selfish concerns.

**37:23-36** – Sold Out of Their Lives?

*Gen 37:25 And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a company of Ishmeelites came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt.*
*Gen 37:26 And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood?*
*Gen 37:27 Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmeelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother and our flesh. And his brethren were content.*
*Gen 37:28 Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt.*

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Vs. 23 – They began by stripping Joseph of that irritating symbol of their father's favouritism.

Vs. 25 – How callous their hearts to sit and eat a meal with their own brother's pleading in their ears. Their cruelty did not curb their appetites. Oh it will come back to haunt them (42:21). The prophet Amos later depicted the same hard-heartedness of the sons of Israel, drinking *"wine in bowls"* but *"not grieved for the affliction of Joseph"* (Amos 6:6). They were unconcerned for the plight of helpless brothers around them, and concerned only with their own selfish ends. Contrast Christ's loss of appetite at Jacob's well (in the same area near Shechem) in His earnest desire for the eternal well-being of people (Jn. 4), while His disciples dully thought only of their own appetites.

Vs. 25-28 – Suddenly the "perfect" answer revealed itself. Circumstance and finance conspired to offer clear guidance to their indecision. Circumstance

*Gen 37:29 And Reuben returned unto the pit; and, behold, Joseph was not in the pit; and he rent his clothes.*
*Gen 37:30 And he returned unto his brethren, and said, The child is not; and I, whither shall I go?*
*Gen 37:31 And they took Joseph's coat, and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood;*
*Gen 37:32 And they sent the coat of many colours, and they brought it to their father; and said, This have we found: know now whether it be thy son's coat or no.*

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cannot be our guide, when sound principles they override. It is another reminder of the danger of reading circumstances (like tea leaves) in support of our own will, rather than through the lens of God's words.

Vs. 32 – Again, like father like sons. The boomerang comes back, with father deceiver now deceived by sons. Compare how the Jewish leaders were later forced to come up with lying stories to motivate violence against Jesus as well, and even to cover the unexplainable truth of His resurrection.

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## Ponder Points

This chapter is proof of God's providence over the affairs of men. How easily He overrules evil, turning it to good. Though He is never the Author of man's evil choices, yet He is so deftly able to turn every choice to good advantage.

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Joseph's life is such a stark contrast with all we have seen in Jacob and sons. His character is one of the finest in all the Bible.

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In Joseph's nature and life experiences we see abundant typology of Jesus Christ;

- As Joseph was hated by his own blood brothers who should have loved him most, so Jesus *"came unto His own, and His own received Him not"* (Jn. 1:11).

- As Joseph's brothers saw his virtue only as vice, so the Jews read Christ's sin*less*ness as sin*ful*ness.

- As Joseph was handed over to Egypt, so Jesus was betrayed to Rome's abuse.

- The Lord more than delivered Joseph, exalting him to a place of highest earthly honour, 2nd in command over all of Egypt. Even so Jesus was much more than merely delivered from death, being exalted to highest heavenly honour at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

- God judged the sons of Israel for their harsh treatment of Joseph, removing them from

their land. Even so Israel, because of their vicious handling of Jesus Christ, were sent to the longest dispersion from their land they have ever suffered.

- As the Lord moved circumstances to bring the house of Jacob to a place of dependence and submission under that rejected brother, so He will yet drive that nation to submission under that rejected Son of God.
- As Joseph, for all the evil treatment of his brothers, returned them grace, so Jesus returns grace where wrath is deserved.

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## Chapter 38 – Carnal Reprobate

This is not a pretty chapter. In fact the downhill trend of this family seems to bottom-out in these verses, highlighting the sharp contrast in Joseph presented in the next chapter. Perhaps this is part of the Lord's purpose here, to show the contrast. Other purposes of this chapter;

- To show the depths to which human depravity descends.
- To show the depths from which the Lord

ultimately lifted Judah to leadership.

- To show the devastatingly carnal influence of the Canaanites, and thus the Lord's reason for temporarily removing His people from that land.

- To show the need to remove the testimony of the Lord from among the Canaanites, that they might freely plunge to the depths of depravity, coming ripe for removal, that His people might later inherit. Even so the removal of the church and indwelling Spirit from the world during the coming Tribulation period will bring on the worldwide fall to the same pit of wholesale human depravity, that the meek might inherit the earth with the Lord in His kingdom.

**38:1-11** – Multiple Widowhood

Vs. 1-2 – The trouble began with Judah's sinful union with Canaanites. As always, such association went from bad to worse. Had Judah forgotten Abraham's trouble in Egypt (chapter 12),

*Gen 38:6 And Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, whose name was Tamar.*
*Gen 38:7 And Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD slew him.*
*Gen 38:8 And Judah said unto Onan, Go in unto thy brother's wife, and marry her, and raise up seed to thy brother.*
*Gen 38:9 And Onan knew that the seed should not be his; and it came to pass, when he went in unto his brother's wife, that he spilled it on the ground, lest that he should give seed to his brother.*
*Gen 38:10 And the thing which he did displeased the LORD: wherefore he slew him also.*

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Isaac's trouble in Gerar (chapter 26), and Jacob's trouble at Shechem (chapter 34)?

Vs. 7 – Here was a son so wicked *"the Lord slew him"*. Except for the entrance and influence of God's grace, so descends the character of man from one generation to the next.

Vs. 8 – This is the principle known as the Levirate Law, later entrenched in the Law of Moses (Deut. 25:5-10). The idea was to keep the name of an older brother alive when he died without children. The children of the younger brother's union would inherit the older brother's land.

Vs. 9-10 – This one was as bad or worse than his brother. Onan's sin was lovelessness toward his brother rather than the "sin" of birth control, as the Catholic church uses what happened here (the Bible does not speak against birth control). Onan perhaps wanted for himself the inheritance of his

*Gen 38:14 And she put her widow's garments off from her, and covered her with a vail, and wrapped herself, and sat in an open place, which is by the way to Timnath; for she saw that Shelah was grown, and she was not given unto him to wife.*
*Gen 38:15 When Judah saw her, he thought her to be an harlot; because she had covered her face.*
*Gen 38:16 And he turned unto her by the way, and said, Go to, I pray thee, let me come in unto thee; (for he knew not that she was his daughter in law.) And she said, What wilt thou give me, that thou mayest come in unto me?*
*Gen 38:17 And he said, I will send thee a kid from the flock. And she said, Wilt thou give me a pledge, till thou send it?*
*Gen 38:18 And he said, What pledge shall I give thee? And she said, Thy signet, and thy bracelets, and thy staff that is in thine hand. And he gave it her, and came in unto her, and she conceived by him.*

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brother (double portion of the firstborn), rather than for a child through Tamar.

Vs. 11 – Tamar was to wait until Judah's youngest son, Shelah, was old enough to be her husband.

**38:12-23** – Mutual Wickedness

Judah was perhaps reluctant to give his youngest to Tamar, since she seemed a bit of a grim reaper. He may have in some way blamed her for the death of the other two. When at last Shelah was old enough and it became obvious that he would not be given to her, Tamar would not to be denied, and had a plan.

Vs. 14-19 – The only way Tamar could think this might work was by knowing Judah's reputation for the use of prostitutes. And if she was aware of this

*Gen 38:24 And it came to pass about three months after, that it was told Judah, saying, Tamar thy daughter in law hath played the harlot; and also, behold, she is with child by whoredom. And Judah said, Bring her forth, and let her be burnt.*

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then surely others were as well. How many saw his hypocrisy when he later demanded her death for immorality (vs. 24)? Her deed appears to have been a subtle punishment of Judah for not giving her his last son.

Vs. 15 – Note how there was at that time a characteristic dress marking a woman as a prostitute. Is the same not true today, expressed in clothing that is tight, short, and form-revealing?

Vs. 18 – The "signet" was a seal or signature stamp worn on a cord around the neck. She purposely sought confirmation of who it was she lay with.

Vs. 23 – *"Lest **we** be shamed"?!*

**38:24-26** – Chickens Come Home to Roast

Vs. 24 – *"Let her be burnt!"* – Judah's hypocritical response implies immorality was O.K. for him but not for her. Perhaps his motivations ranged deeper, seeing this as deliverance from this woman and for his remaining son. What does this tell us of this

*Gen 38:25 When she was brought forth, she sent to her father in law, saying, By the man, whose these are, am I with child: and she said, Discern, I pray thee, whose are these, the signet, and bracelets, and staff.*
*Gen 38:26 And Judah acknowledged them, and said, She hath been more righteous than I; because that I gave her not to Shelah my son. And he knew her again no more.*
*Gen 38:27 And it came to pass in the time of her travail, that, behold, twins were in her womb.*
*Gen 38:28 And it came to pass, when she travailed, that the one put out his hand: and the midwife took and bound upon his hand a scarlet thread, saying, This came out first.*
*Gen 38:29 And it came to pass, as he drew back his hand, that, behold, his brother came out: and she said, How hast thou broken forth? this breach be upon thee: therefore his name was called Pharez.*
*Gen 38:30 And afterward came out his brother, that had the scarlet thread upon his hand: and his name was called Zarah.*

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man's love for his expendable daughter-in-law?

Perhaps in this public humiliation of Judah we see the beginning of the Lord's work of change in him. He had wronged Tamar, both in denying her his son and in his immorality with her. He was shamefully exposed and forced to something of a confession. When later facing Joseph in Benjamin's behalf, we shall see a very different Judah. From suggesting Joseph be sold that a bit of profit might be gained (37:26-27), we shall see Judah's willing offer of himself as a price for Benjamin's release in chapter 44.

**38:27-30** – Twins are Born

Pharez through Tamar is in the genealogy of Jesus Christ (Matt. 1:3).

## Ponder Points

The frankness of the Bible is perhaps nowhere more stunning than here, expressing again the supreme honesty of the God of the Bible. He so fairly paints in all the dark edges, though involving human ancestors of Messiah Himself. The Lord is no respecter of persons. He is not given to hiding the sin of His own. He lays it all bare, sending the warning to our own hearts of how He will deal with us all.

We might prefer to see Joseph as the ancestor of Jesus, but Judah is the man – even through Pharez in fact, Judah's illegitimate son through his illicit union with his own daughter-in-law! How strange! As if the Lord plays right into the hands of those looking for cause to reject the veracity of the Bible or the deity of Jesus Christ. Yet consider again how such a record as this could never be the work of men! Only the God of grace would so work through the lowest of fallen human life, lifting souls even to the honour of Messiah's line. Only a loving Messiah, willing even to sacrifice His own life, would forever carry the mark of fallen man upon His own lineage, even as He carries the scars of Calvary on His body. Only God would and could use such

defiled and broken vessels as channels of His gracious purposes. Only a God of glorious grace would so associate Himself with men. His purpose in us, and in the giving of His eternal Words, is that *"ye sin not".* Yet *"if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous"* (I Jn. 2:1). The message coming down to us from those days of old, and confirmed beyond question in Jesus Christ, is that *by the grace of God there is an answer for the filth of human sin.* We may never be what we might have been after sin's ravaging effects, but at every point there is hope that we can still be all that God would have us to be now and forever after.

*"Unto Him that loved us, and washed from our sins in His own blood"* (Rev. 1:5).

"And his master saw
that the LORD was with him,
and that the LORD
made all that he did
to prosper in his hand"

(Genesis 39:3)

# Class 16 – Genesis 39-41:37

*Gen 39:1 And Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hands of the Ishmeelites, which had brought him down thither.*
*Gen 39:2 And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.*

## Chapter 39 – Joseph Shines

**39:1-6** – Potiphar's House

Vs. 1 – The account now picks up with Joseph, having been sold into slavery in Egypt. Strangely absent are any signs of complaint or sullenness in this teenager for the wrong done to him. Here, as in the scene of his brothers' sell-out, Joseph is surprisingly passive and silent. As Isaac on Moriah, this man is another glimpse of Jesus, brought as a lamb to the slaughter, *"yet he openeth not his mouth"* (Isa. 53). It is one of the most difficult responses for a Christian to hold his tongue when facing gross unfairness (I Pet. 2:19-23).

Vs. 2 – *"The Lord was with Joseph"* – This is a truth we hear repeatedly of this man (also vs. 3, 21, 23). It is in fact the secret of his success, as vs. 3 & 23 confirm, though we must not be led to think Joseph passive or inactive in this. Similar words were said of godly King Hezekiah in II Kings 18:6-7, yet in II

*Gen 39:3 And his master saw that the LORD was with him, and that the LORD made all that he did to prosper in his hand.*
*Gen 39:4 And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand.*

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Chronicles 31:20-21 we discover the earnest human effort involved as well. Even so Joseph put his trust in the Lord while he put his all into the work presented to him, making the best of a bad situation. If he must be a slave, then he would be the best! God's blessing does not fall to the independent any more than it does to the idle. Dependent diligence is His way for us. In the same way we need the Spirit's gifts and filling to be blessed of God in our work. Yet we must then, in dependence upon Him, work as though all depends on our own labours.

Vs. 4 – *"He served him"* – Here is the outworking of a right attitude in Joseph. His was ever a servant heart (40:4). Though he had been so wronged, and might have easily and understandably slipped into bitterness or despair in his plight, yet he ever kept his head up and heart right. The following once appeared in an Iowa newspaper; "If we can accept each adversity of life as a kick in the pants instead of in the face, adversity can become a step up the ladder of success". Blighting can be blessing in fact, a setback something to sit up and thank God for.

*Gen 39:5 And it came to pass from the time that he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the LORD was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field.*
*Gen 39:6 And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he knew not ought he had, save the bread which he did eat. And Joseph was a goodly person, and well favoured.*

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Or as another put it, "He got a lemon – and made lemonade". This was clearly a spiritual response in Joseph, an expression of his dependence upon God, good indication that he had learned to *"trust in the Lord with ALL"* his heart. For we shall see throughout the record of his life how real the Lord ever was to him. And do not miss how Joseph's trust in the Lord never faltered in spite of what the Lord allowed. The attitude of Job is in this young man, *"though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him".*

Vs. 3 – The good blessing of the Lord on Joseph's life was evident even to the unsaved around him. It is the kind of good testimony all God's true children should have in society.

Vs. 6 – Rachel was an attractive woman (29:17), and Joseph possessed a measure of his mother's beauty it seems. But as is often the case, physical attractiveness can be more handicap than help.

**39:7-20** – Potiphar's Wife

*Gen 39:7 And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me.*

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We find here a refreshing record of moral purity to counter the scandal of Judah and his house in the previous chapter. Young people do well to ponder long the details of this lesson of blessing. The driving force of temptation does not change much over the ages. It is the response of a man or woman to it that makes all the difference in their direction and end. As someone once wrote; "'Tis the set of the sail, and not the gale that determines the way ships go". It is still possible for a young person to walk in purity, integrity, and victory with God, as did Joseph.

Vs. 7 – Living right and walking with God does not exempt us from temptation. There is no sin in facing temptation. Sin begins only with our lingering in its presence. And consider the *power* of this temptation;

- It came to Joseph at an age when he approached the peak of sexual interest, with relevant hormones at full flush!
- It came when deprived of and missing the tender companionship of home and family. He was a lonely boy.

*Gen 39:8 But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand;*
*Gen 39:9 There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?*

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- It came when he could easily blame a tumble on the trauma of his misfortunes, or on his doubt of God's goodness.

- It came with the flattery of the madam's interest in a mere slave boy.

*Though many things there were excusing,*
*Still young Joseph stood refusing!!*

Compare Satan's temptation of Jesus with food in the wilderness, only after He was greatly hungry through His long fast. In temptation the evil one does not mess around. He brings it with fullest power and pathos at the points where we are weakest.

Vs. 8 – *"He refused"* – Mark the solid resolve in these words. No deliberations. No hanging about (Prov. 7:8). No signs of indecision. He just flatly refused! Joseph's reasons for denying her were two;

- *That he not sin against his trusting master.* Potiphar's trust in him drew out his grateful,

*Gen 39:10 And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her.*
*Gen 39:11 And it came to pass about this time, that Joseph went into the house to do his business; and there was none of the men of the house there within.*
*Gen 39:12 And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out.*
*Gen 39:13 And it came to pass, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and was fled forth,*
*Gen 39:14 That she called unto the men of her house, and spake unto them, saying, See, he hath brought in an Hebrew unto us to mock us; he came in unto me to lie with me, and I cried with a loud voice:*
*Gen 39:15 And it came to pass, when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled, and got him out.*

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willing loyalty.

- *That he not sin against his holy God.* God's attitude was important to Joseph, enough to effectively guide his behaviour, enough to put a leash on inordinate affections. Though he might deem the Lord unfair to allow his condition, he would not be unfaithful. Never is true Christianity merely a Baptist do's and do not's list. It is ever only the question of what might please or displease the holy God of our love.

Vs. 12 – Joseph's flight was right. It was the only thing he could do. Even so God's counsel to the young for every such temptation to immorality is to *"flee fornication"* (I Cor. 6:18).

Vs. 13-18 – When her lust so quickly turned to hate it became obvious that it was no true love moving

*Gen 39:19 And it came to pass, when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spake unto him, saying, After this manner did thy servant to me; that his wrath was kindled.*
*Gen 39:20 And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were bound: and he was there in the prison.*

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this woman. One good measure of love's reality, and a means of sifting love from lust, is whether commitment remains in the absence or denial of physical gratification.

Vs. 18 – It was the 2nd time Joseph's coat was used to form a lie about him.

Vs. 20 – Why do you suppose Potiphar only put Joseph in prison, rather than putting him to death for such a "crime"? Perhaps it was a matter of reputations;

- The madam's *shameless* reputation – As she approached Joseph so it is likely she had earlier approached others. Perhaps rumours concerning her ways had made the rounds prior to this.
- The servant's *blameless* reputation – Her story did not fit what Potiphar knew of Joseph. The day will come when you will be glad for your good reputation. A good name went a long way toward saving this young man's life.

*Gen 39:21 But the LORD was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison.*
*Gen 39:22 And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it.*
*Gen 39:23 The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing that was under his hand; because the LORD was with him, and that which he did, the LORD made it to prosper.*

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**39:21-23** – Prison House

Note again Joseph's suffering in silence, though he was in a circumstance that humanly must have seemed so completely hopeless. Who would ever remember a foreign kid stashed away in a lonely Egyptian prison? Yet we hear from Joseph no effort to explain or justify himself. There are no bitter counter-accusations as we might expect. Perhaps Joseph assumed such an effort would be wasted wind. Perhaps in loyalty to Potiphar he would say nothing to threaten his master's marriage. There is a stunning integrity arising in our understanding of this man. The inner strength to so respond (or not respond), as Joseph now *again* faced the new unfairness of this imprisonment, could only be found in the words sandwiching this prison scene, *"the LORD was with Joseph".* Only through a real walk with the real God could such be possible. Whether in rejection, bondage, temptation, or false accusation Joseph seems ever undisturbed in his patient walk with the Lord and humble service of men. It seems his awareness of God's presence and

*Gen 40:1 And it came to pass after these things, that the butler of the king of Egypt and his baker had offended their lord the king of Egypt.*
*Gen 40:2 And Pharaoh was wroth against two of his officers, against the chief of the butlers, and against the chief of the bakers.*
*Gen 40:3 And he put them in ward in the house of the captain of the guard, into the prison, the place where Joseph was bound.*
*Gen 40:4 And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them: and they continued a season in ward.*
*Gen 40:5 And they dreamed a dream both of them, each man his dream in one night, each man according to the interpretation of his dream, the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, which were bound in the prison.*

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purposes ever kept his heart. What better place to see the reality of relation to the Lord than when facing life's difficulties, and particularly when facing difficulties uncommonly difficult (as Job's).

Vs. 23 – The evident trustworthiness of Joseph is one of his key virtues. From Potiphar (vs. 4 & 8) to Pharaoh (41:40) the trusting response of his Egyptian superiors was ever the same.

## Chapter 40 – Still in Custody

**40:1-4** – Joseph's Charge

Enter now Pharaoh's butler and baker, joining Joseph in the prison house. Comparing vs. 4 with 39:1, it seems it was Potiphar (*"the captain of the guard"*) who charged Joseph with their care.

**40:5-19** – Interpreter of Dreams

*Gen 40:6 And Joseph came in unto them in the morning, and looked upon them, and, behold, they were sad.*
*Gen 40:7 And he asked Pharaoh's officers that were with him in the ward of his lord's house, saying, Wherefore look ye so sadly to day?*
*Gen 40:8 And they said unto him, We have dreamed a dream, and there is no interpreter of it. And Joseph said unto them, Do not interpretations belong to God? tell me them, I pray you.*

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Vs. 5 – Obviously these were not normal dreams, even as Joseph's own dreams in chapter 37. These men woke with an awareness of some special significance in their dreams, therefore their anxious desire to understand them.

Vs. 7 – Joseph was genuinely concerned and sensitive to notice their melancholy manner. A lover of God is ever a lover of men! Do not miss Joseph's ever present effervescent personality. He was an attractively good-natured young man who just never seems clouded with sullen resentment at any of the times we might expect it. His ready sympathy and cheerful attention to the concerns of others here reveals his lack of preoccupation with his own sorry state. He was thoughtless of himself while being thoughtful of others!

Vs. 8 – Consider Joseph's firm confidence that *"interpretations belong to God"* and his keen interest in helping with their dreams. Do you see here his own continuing confidence in God's message to *him*

*Gen 40:20 And it came to pass the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast unto all his servants: and he lifted up the head of the chief butler and of the chief baker among his servants.*
*Gen 40:21 And he restored the chief butler unto his butlership again; and he gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand:*
*Gen 40:22 But he hanged the chief baker: as Joseph had interpreted to them.*
*Gen 40:23 Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgat him.*

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through dreams? Though so long ago, and his condition so far from seemingly *ever* seeing those distant dreams fulfilled, yet still Joseph maintained his confidence that the Lord would somehow do as He had said, and that the clarity with which the Lord spoke to him deserved his fullest trust.

Vs. 19 – Friendly but frank – Joseph's faithfulness extended to speaking even what he knew would hurt. Compare young Samuel as the candid carrier of the Lord's hard message to Eli (I Sam. 3). Compare Daniel's pained faithfulness to deliver the meaning of Nebuchadnezzar's dream (4:19ff), a man for whom he had come to care.

**40:20-23** – Fulfilled and Forgotten

Vs. 23 – *"But forgat him"* – Joseph could only have come to know this as the days stretched to months and then to years. This waiting must have been the hardest to endure. From a human perspective, how could he ever hope for another opportunity as he had with the butler? Yet still we see no indication

*Gen 41:1 And it came to pass at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh dreamed: and, behold, he stood by the river.*
*Gen 41:2 And, behold, there came up out of the river seven well favoured kine and fatfleshed; and they fed in a meadow.*
*Gen 41:3 And, behold, seven other kine came up after them out of the river, ill favoured and leanfleshed; and stood by the other kine upon the brink of the river.*
*Gen 41:4 And the ill favoured and leanfleshed kine did eat up the seven well favoured and fat kine. So Pharaoh awoke.*
*Gen 41:5 And he slept and dreamed the second time: and, behold, seven ears of corn came up upon one stalk, rank and good.*
*Gen 41:6 And, behold, seven thin ears and blasted with the east wind sprung up after them.*
*Gen 41:7 And the seven thin ears devoured the seven rank and full ears. And Pharaoh awoke, and, behold, it was a dream.*
*Gen 41:8 And it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled; and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all the wise men thereof: and Pharaoh told them his dream; but there was none that could interpret them unto Pharaoh.*

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of fraying in his attitude toward God or his world. With Joseph, all was quiet endurance in God. And see how the darkest hour was just before the dawning.

## Chapter 41 – Joseph Won

Now we discover the reason for the Lord's delay. His timing was perfect, lifting Joseph to the opportunity that would rocket him from slavery to celebrity.

**41:1-8** – Pharaoh's Dreams

Vs. 8 – The mouths of Pharaoh's wise men were shut like Daniel's lions, preventing even credible

suggestions. By this means the Lord effectively prepared the way for Joseph's hour.

**41:9-13** – Remembrance and Reference

The familiarity of the situation was the butler's prompt. Pharaoh's concern with no known means of finding an interpretation was a reminder of the frustration the butler had shared with the baker in prison, and of the relief brought through Joseph.

**41:14-24** – Called and Involved

Vs. 14-15 – *"Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph"* – Pharaoh wasted no time in stating the case.

Vs. 16 – Joseph wasted no time in stating the source. He does not appear to view this as an opportunity to promote himself or attempt to wrangle his own release. He stood before Pharaoh on the very same basis with which he dealt with all men. He was thoughtless of his own concerns as the simple, selfless servant of God and man. He held back nothing that was for Pharaoh's best. He did no bargaining. He was a stranger to all such subtle manoeuvrings. By the grace of God he had

*Gen 41:25 And Joseph said unto Pharaoh, The dream of Pharaoh is one: God hath shewed Pharaoh what he is about to do.*
*Gen 41:26 The seven good kine are seven years; and the seven good ears are seven years: the dream is one.*
*Gen 41:27 And the seven thin and ill favoured kine that came up after them are seven years; and the seven empty ears blasted with the east wind shall be seven years of famine.*
*Gen 41:28 This is the thing which I have spoken unto Pharaoh: What God is about to do he sheweth unto Pharaoh.*
*Gen 41:29 Behold, there come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt:*
*Gen 41:30 And there shall arise after them seven years of famine; and all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine shall consume the land;*

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what Pharaoh needed, and he delivered what he had without the least hesitation or fanfare.

**41:25-36** – Interpretation and Advice

Vs. 25 – *"The dream of Pharaoh is one"* – Both dreams covered the same ground.

Vs. 26-32 – The Lord was warning Pharaoh of 7 years of plenty, followed by 7 of famine.

There is an interesting parallel here with the coming Tribulation Period. As the Lord used 7 famine years to drive Jacob and sons under the rule of Joseph, so He will use those coming 7 years of greatest hardship to drive Israel to their knees before Jesus in His return, that One they formerly rejected.

Vs. 33-36 – This further advice was astute and accepted as from the only one with wisdom to

*Gen 41:33 Now therefore let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt.*
*Gen 41:34 Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years.*
*Gen 41:35 And let them gather all the food of those good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities.*
*Gen 41:36 And that food shall be for store to the land against the seven years of famine, which shall be in the land of Egypt; that the land perish not through the famine.*

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interpret the dreams. Joseph's entire response was simple and concise, given with modesty and dignity. He in no way suggests himself for the job. It seems he never even suspected Pharaoh might actually appoint him, a lowly foreign slave. He just does not seem concerned for himself at all. He knew his life was in God's able hands. Pharaoh was obviously impressed with Joseph, his stately wisdom, and the evident mark of God upon him.

## Joseph Summary

Joseph consistently rose to the top among men as the favourite of his father, Potiphar, prison-keeper, and Pharaoh, even though he was an outsider with greater obstacles to overcome than the locals. Why did Joseph so consistently emerge to prominence in every context? (Compare these responses with Jesus);

- He refused to harbour bitterness for the most

unfair treatment.

- He never reviled or accused. Though he was forsaken by his own brothers, falsely accused by Potiphar's wife, unfairly imprisoned by Potiphar, and forgotten by the butler, yet we see in him only *happy diligence* in each new downward turn.
- There was in him no burning hatred, contempt, or grudge.
- He sought no revenge. Sir Francis Bacon once said, "By taking revenge, a man is but even with his enemy; but in passing over it, he is superior".
- He never complained.
- He never showed resistance of wrong.
- We never hear from him pathetic pleading.
- We never see in him miserable moroseness.
- He refused depression or despair. Though *"sold for a servant: whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron"* (Ps. 105:17-18). Though he spent 13 years in slavery or prison, some of the prime years of his life. Though he was held in a condition where he was without hope of human deliverance.

- Always he carried a positive outlook.
- Always he showed a servant attitude.
- Always there was in him the *"perfect peace"* of a *"mind stayed on Thee".*
- He was always given to quiet, patient endurance.
- He never turned to blame-shifting.
- He never made excuses.
- He never dwelt on the obstacles or his misfortunes.
- And he never yielded to moral impurity.

No matter how sorely pressed by setbacks there was seemingly no limit to Joseph's loyalty, no breaking point for his tolerance; though he was cast down into the pit, down to Egypt, and down into the dungeon; though hammered, like Job, with one blow after another. Yet in spite of all against him, Joseph rose victorious. Because *"the LORD was with Joseph"* he prospered.

A true mark of godly character is to be ever unprovoked by life, and ever unremoved from life's Author. As Paul's words, *"none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself"* (Acts

20:24). It was as if Joseph was simply untouched by trials. With the result that he became a man immeasurably blessed;

- Blessed by God, the King of heaven.
- Blessed by Pharaoh, king of Egypt.
- Blessed by Jacob, patriarch of the Jewish nation (49:22-26). Joseph received the double portion of the land through his two sons. The most eloquent of his father's words were reserved for him. Many of the nation's great leaders arose from Joseph's tribes; Joshua, Deborah, and Samuel of Ephraim, Gideon and Jephthah of Manasseh.

The way we handle adversity is all about our faith, and has everything to do with the direction and outcome of our lives.

# Class 17 – Genesis 41:37-43:34

In vs. 33-36 Joseph followed up his interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams with sound advice, suggesting the appointment of officers to overseer the collection and storage of 20% of national produce during the coming seven good years, and then to administer the distribution of those carefully hoarded resources in the seven lean years to follow. By the Lord's help Joseph could offer not only the meaning of Pharaoh's dreams, but a sensible plan as well, showing sound foresight. Pharaoh was impressed, noting the evident mark of God's wisdom upon this young man.

**41:37-45** – Lowly Loyalty to Lofty Royalty

The moral of this story is all about God's faithfulness to a faithful man. The Lord's promise to Eli still stands true, *"them that honour Me I will honour".* After so many years of a quiet walk of faith and uprightness, patiently awaiting God's time in the most trying of circumstances, the Lord now began to reward His good servant with good, just as He will soon bring the evil servants to evil in this troubled family. Will you trust Him for this? Will you be patient?

*Gen 41:38 And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?*
*Gen 41:39 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art:*

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It is important to note as well that Joseph's truly humble heart never changed, though coming now to great earthly honours. Only a heart that will still love God at the bottom of the heap can be trusted to love Him yet at the top. How often the way to the high road of exaltation runs first through the lowlands of humiliation. The valley must first be crossed in order to ascend the distant peaks beyond (Phil. 2). Perhaps this is some of the reason for hardships in the Christian life, to discern who among God's children can be trusted with honours.

There must have been a great measure of mystery in those years of downward slide for Joseph. Though loving and walking with the Lord, still his earthly lot fell from rejection, to sell-out, to slavery, to slanderous lies, to prison. Even so Ruth must have agonized over many heart-aching questions of why the bright prospect of marriage fell to barrenness, to widowhood, to emigration, to deep poverty, seemingly moving farther from earthly hope and comfort the closer she drew to the true God. Yet it all made sense in time, as she, with Joseph, eventually came to the joy of the Lord's reward for

*Gen 41:40 Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou.*

*Gen 41:46 And Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt.*
*Gen 41:47 And in the seven plenteous years the earth brought forth by handfuls.*

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their quietly patient faithfulness in painfulness.

Vs. 38-39 – *"A man in whom the Spirit of God is"* (Dan. 5:11). The presence of God with a man is the key to his wisdom and influence with men.

Vs. 40-41 – First Joseph was so placed over Potiphar's house (39:4, 6, 8), then over Potiphar's prison (39:22-23), and now over Pharaoh's kingdom. Joseph now virtually held sway as 2nd in command, like a prime minister over one of earth's great powers at that time. How very similar Daniel's experience under Darius of the Medes (Dan. 6).

**41:46-57** – Joseph's Conduct

Vs. 46 – Joseph was the same age as Jesus when entering His earthly ministry. Thus he was about 13 years (37:2) in Potiphar's house or prison house. For him it was opposite to what Egypt faced in the ensuing years, with *mis*fortune before *good* fortune.

Vs. 47 – *"The earth brought forth by handfuls"* – Both

*Gen 41:48 And he gathered up all the food of the seven years, which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities: the food of the field, which was round about every city, laid he up in the same.*
*Gen 41:50 And unto Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came, which Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On bare unto him.*
*Gen 41:51 And Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: For God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house.*
*Gen 41:52 And the name of the second called he Ephraim: For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.*

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the years of feast and the years of famine extended beyond the borders of Egypt (vs. 54, 56-57).

Vs. 48-49 – The record shows Joseph successfully executing his post with discretion and thoroughness, both in the plenteous years and in the famine to follow (vs. 53-57), affirming the wisdom of Pharaoh in his appointment.

Vs. 51-52 – Both names of Joseph's sons marked his joy and thanks in his God;

- *"Manasseh"* – Meaning "forgetting", spoke of the God who so graciously allowed Joseph to forget his hard years of anguish, and who lessened the heartache of his lost family. Forgotten as well was all bitterness toward his brothers or Mr. & Mrs. Potiphar or the forgetful butler. Again, we see not the least resentment harboured in Joseph. *"Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before"* (Phil.

*Gen 41:56 And the famine was over all the face of the earth: And Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold unto the Egyptians; and the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt.*
*Gen 41:57 And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy corn; because that the famine was so sore in all lands.*

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3). Yet in the forgetfulness of Joseph's newfound blessings, *he never forgot the Lord* who had so blessed Him. Contrast the nation of Israel in Psalm 106, who *"forgat God their Saviour"* in their plenty, or King Uzziah who *"was marvellously helped, till he was strong. But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction"* (II Chron. 26:15-16). Note the warning and prophecy in Deuteronomy 8:11-19; 32:13-18.

- *"Ephraim"* – Meaning "fruitful", spoke of the God who replaced Joseph's troubled years of affliction with fruitfulness. In his wisdom to cling to the Lord in the hardest of times Joseph had learned the great lesson of the Lord's blessing through affliction. *"He purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit"* (Jn. 15:2).

It was ever the same Joseph with his God, whether in poverty or plenty, whether in shame or fame. As we rejoice in our God who is always the same, so may He rejoice in we who are always the same in

*Gen 42:1 Now when Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt, Jacob said unto his sons, Why do ye look one upon another?*
*Gen 42:2 And he said, Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt: get you down thither, and buy for us from thence; that we may live, and not die.*

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our consistent contentment and closeness to Him.

Vs. 57 – Not only was Joseph lifted to sway over the land of Egypt, but he held in his hand the life of the entire surrounding world throughout those years of famine.

## Chapter 42 – We Need Bread Too!

The sins of Joseph's brothers began to find them out as the need arose to buy grain in Egypt. It is now more than seven years since Joseph's appointment, after the years of plenty and into the years of famine, and over twenty years since Joseph was sold into Egypt.

**42:1-24** – Facing Joseph

Vs. 1 – Note the bitter bite in Jacob's manner with his sons (Prov. 12:18). It was a family so void of wholesome speech or happy peace. Because Jacob never curbed his own wilful ways nor those of his sons there appears to be little rest in his home. Undisciplined families are ever fraught with

*Gen 42:3 And Joseph's ten brethren went down to buy corn in Egypt.*
*Gen 42:4 But Benjamin, Joseph's brother, Jacob sent not with his brethren; for he said, Lest peradventure mischief befall him.*

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animosities and tension, and bitter men breed bitterness around them. Proverbs repeatedly warns of the disquiet and disgrace children will bring to their parents when not trained up according to God's perfect way. Note the contrast in the happy, blessed house of Joseph.

Vs. 3 – Their journey down to Egypt must have led them to ponder what had become of Joseph. Their thoughts likely could not help but run to that brother they had forced to this very same journey two decades before. How long they had lived in the anguish of their secret regrets.

Vs. 4 – Benjamin was the only remaining son through the wife Jacob had loved, thus he was determined to hold him close, not risking his loss. Benjamin would have been a young man of twenty-something by this time. Strange how we do not really know this last son of Jacob. Never is there record of a word spoken by Benjamin in the sacred text. Yet he was one especially loved by Jacob and by Joseph and even by the other brothers. From his birth Benjamin held a very special place of

*Gen 42:5 And the sons of Israel came to buy corn among those that came: for the famine was in the land of Canaan.*
*Gen 42:6 And Joseph was the governor over the land, and he it was that sold to all the people of the land: and Joseph's brethren came, and bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth.*

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prominence with Jacob. And this was not due to anything we see in his personality, since we do not know him. It seems his preferred place was due to his position or association, because of whose son he was. Again, we perhaps see in Benjamin a picture of every believing soul having found refuge in Jesus. The saved are loved of the Father not through personality or personal merits. They are loved unconditionally due to their position, solely because they are united with the beloved Son of the Father through their faith in that only Saviour.

Vs. 6 – Ah do you hear now the distant echo of their cold words, *"we shall see what will become of his dreams"* (37:20)? They did not recognize Joseph because;

- Changes in his physical appearance from seventeen to nearly forty years of age must have been quite significant.

- He spoke to them through an interpreter (vs. 23), implying he did not even know their language.

*Gen 42:7 And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but made himself strange unto them, and spake roughly unto them; and he said unto them, Whence come ye? And they said, From the land of Canaan to buy food.*
*Gen 42:8 And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him.*
*Gen 42:9 And Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them, and said unto them, Ye are spies; to see the nakedness of the land ye are come.*
*Gen 42:10 And they said unto him, Nay, my lord, but to buy food are thy servants come.*
*Gen 42:11 We are all one man's sons; we are true men, thy servants are no spies.*

*Gen 42:15 Hereby ye shall be proved: By the life of Pharaoh ye shall not go forth hence, except your youngest brother come hither.*
*Gen 42:16 Send one of you, and let him fetch your brother, and ye shall be kept in prison, that your words may be proved, whether there be any truth in you: or else by the life of Pharaoh surely ye are spies.*

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- They had sold him as a slave and thus could not possibly associate their lost brother with one in such a position.

Vs. 7-20 – It is likely that Joseph had anticipated such a visit from his brothers. And as when he first stood before Pharaoh he had a plan, so now too he had a plan as to how he would handle them. He seemed to be motivated by a desire to know if they were changed men from those who sold their brother to slavery and their father to sorrow so long ago. Thus he planned to force them to the option of selling out another brother to see if they would do it again, wounding their father anew. Joseph was probably greatly moved as well by a desire to see his full brother Benjamin again. Toward these ends he accused his brothers of being spies, demanding their words be proved true by bringing to him the

*Gen 42:21 And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us.*
*Gen 42:22 And Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore, behold, also his blood is required.*

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missing brother of whom they spoke. He at first demanded that nine brothers be kept while one fetched Benjamin. Later he allowed for one to be kept until the rest returned with their remaining brother.

Vs. 21-22 – Their deliberations revealed the guilt of their souls long carried upon their consciences. The moment they ran into this adversity they immediately made the association with their secret sin of two decades prior. Time had not buried their wrong or guilt! They still knew before the Lord and before each other what they had done. They were reliving the torment as they must have done a thousand times since, but now joining in their brother's anguish instead of indifferent to it as before. They just could not shake the memory of his earnest pleadings. And they were in fact unconsciously confessing their evil to the very one they had wronged, not knowing that Joseph could understand their every word.

*Gen 42:23 And they knew not that Joseph understood them; for he spake unto them by an interpreter.*
*Gen 42:24 And he turned himself about from them, and wept; and returned to them again, and communed with them, and took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes.*

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Vs. 24 – The Lord had evidently been working in them over the years. With Joseph's tears there must have been a measure of hopeful encouragement in the change he sensed in them. But he pressed on with his purpose, in order to confirm that their penitent hearts would actually prevent them from ever doing it again.

'Tis one thing my friend
To be sorry for sin,
Of this need the Bible is plain.

But to find true absolving
Involves the resolving
Never to do it again.

Behold a truly great man in Joseph, who loved his persecutors enough to seek only their best through the proper admission of their wrong. Joseph was no brooder, pondering long on the "sweetness" of revenge. There is rather genuine affection here for these who had handled him with such unfair cruelty. Joseph's loving and forgiving spirit again

*Gen 42:25 Then Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn, and to restore every man's money into his sack, and to give them provision for the way: and thus did he unto them.*
*Gen 42:26 And they laded their asses with the corn, and departed thence.*
*Gen 42:27 And as one of them opened his sack to give his ass provender in the inn, he espied his money; for, behold, it was in his sack's mouth.*
*Gen 42:28 And he said unto his brethren, My money is restored; and, lo, it is even in my sack: and their heart failed them, and they were afraid, saying one to another, What is this that God hath done unto us?*

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bear the mark of God's Spirit. He is an earthly image of the Lord, responding with affection for those responding with rejection. We see the same example in Paul's intense love for the Jewish people who were so given to his destruction.

Simeon may have been the leader in Joseph's mishandling, and perhaps for this reason he was kept for a surety. Jacob certainly had nothing good to say of Simeon at the last when handing out final blessings and cursings.

**42:25-38** – Facing Jacob

Vs. 25 – Again Joseph was showing kindness to those who had used him so spitefully.

Vs. 28 – Again their consciences were pricked, reading God as against them even in this kindness. Perhaps Joseph's purpose was to show them kindness for their cruelty, heaping *"coals of fire"* on

*Gen 42:36 And Jacob their father said unto them, Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me.*
*Gen 42:37 And Reuben spake unto his father, saying, Slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee: deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him to thee again.*
*Gen 42:38 And he said, My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone: if mischief befall him by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.*

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their heads, overcoming *"evil with good"* (Rom. 1:20-21; Prov. 25:21-22).

Vs. 29-34 – In recounting what happened in Egypt they were refreshingly honest with their father. Their character seems to have arisen, even set in contrast with their father's grousing in vs. 36 & 38.

Vs. 36 – With his sour "woe is me" spirit Jacob saw all against him, instead of seeing by faith his gracious God for him, working *"all things…together for good to those who love"* Him. Jacob sounds like Naomi here when she returned in bitterness from Moab (Ruth 1:20-21), so intent upon the frustrating waves of circumstances, unable to hear the Lord bidding him to walk with Him on the water above life's tempests. Could it be that Jacob suspected his sons of having a part in taking Joseph from him, therefore his distrust?

Vs. 38 – Jacob of course had no reason to trust his eldest son, Reuben (35:22). What kind of silly

*Gen 43:1 And the famine was sore in the land.*
*Gen 43:2 And it came to pass, when they had eaten up the corn which they had brought out of Egypt, their father said unto them, Go again, buy us a little food.*
*Gen 43:3 And Judah spake unto him, saying, The man did solemnly protest unto us, saying, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you.*

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surety was he offering anyway, that Jacob might feel free to kill his grandchildren through Reuben if Benjamin should not come back?

## Chapter 43 – My Brother to See

This chapter continues the build-up to Judah's plea and Joseph's tearful self-exposure in chapters 44 & 45. Consider the tremendous amount of coverage on this whole process of Joseph testing his brothers. There is great importance here, both as God's fulfilment of Joseph's dreams and in revealing God's transforming work of grace in his brothers.

**43:1-14** – Benjamin Debate

With the growing need to return to Egypt for more food (and Simeon), Jacob and sons were nose to nose over whether or not Benjamin would go along.

Vs. 3 – Judah now steps forward as spokesman. He appears to be shading Joseph's words a touch more solemn than reality would permit. We have no record of it spoken quite like this.

*Gen 43:4 If thou wilt send our brother with us, we will go down and buy thee food:*
*Gen 43:5 But if thou wilt not send him, we will not go down: for the man said unto us, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you.*
*Gen 43:6 And Israel said, Wherefore dealt ye so ill with me, as to tell the man whether ye had yet a brother?*
*Gen. 43:7 And they said, The man asked us straitly of our state, and of our kindred, saying, Is your father yet alive: have ye another brother: and we told him according to the tenor of these words: could we certainly know that he would say, Bring your brother down?*

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Vs. 5 – They simply refused to go without Benjamin.

Vs. 6 – It was whining complaint, with a touch of Jacob's old craft. "Why did you even have to tell him the truth about another brother anyway! You could have told the man anything and how could he have ever known the difference". It was the same dishonest approach they had used on Jacob himself, when explaining Joseph's disappearance years before. Poor Jacob had died a thousand deaths by the sword he himself lived by, reaping what he had sown. And do not miss how this was one situation where such dishonesty would certainly have backfired, for they were dealing with a man down there who knew far more than they could ever have expected! It is always the very best policy to be strictly honest. We never know who knows what! And we always know the Lord knows all! Jacob's sons were right to not be the sons of their father in this way.

*Gen 43:11 And their father Israel said unto them, If it must be so now, do this; take of the best fruits in the land in your vessels, and carry down the man a present, a little balm, and a little honey, spices, and myrrh, nuts, and almonds:*
*Gen 43:12 And take double money in your hand; and the money that was brought again in the mouth of your sacks, carry it again in your hand; peradventure it was an oversight:*
*Gen 43:13 Take also your brother, and arise, go again unto the man:*
*Gen 43:14 And God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin. If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved.*

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Vs. 7 – Again Judah appears to be shading the truth to his advantage. We have no record of Joseph drawing this information out of them with such pointed questions. They for some reason volunteered this information when accused of being spies (42:9-13).

Vs. 11-14 – With the tug-o'-war over Benjamin won by the sons, Jacob turned his thoughts to things practical. They would need to carry a special gift to the Egyptian governor as well as double money for what had been returned to their sacks.

Vs. 14 – There is a strange note of strength in Jacob's closing words here, *"If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved."* He reflects a bit of brave Esther's, *"if I perish, I perish"* (Esther 4:16). As if he would say, "If that is God's will for me, then I will be satisfied with it!" As if when finally wholly deprived of any ability to manipulate the results, he at last turned his keeping completely over to the Lord. It

*Gen 43:29 And he lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, Is this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me? And he said, God be gracious unto thee, my son.*
*Gen 43:30 And Joseph made haste; for his bowels did yearn upon his brother: and he sought where to weep; and he entered into his chamber, and wept there.*

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is that place to which our God ever seeks to bring us; until we see Him as the vine and we the branches (Jn. 15); until we understand that we are quite unable to produce in and of ourselves, that our one calling is to remain attached in abiding dependence and relation to the vine, there will be no fruit, let alone *"much fruit"*. Jacob was dragged again in these moments from self-sufficiency to that blessed, restful place of *God*-sufficiency.

**43:15-25** – Return to Egypt

Vs. 19-23 – They were very anxious to reveal the "error" of their money returned to them the last time, only to discover that it was no error at all, with no further explanations offered. This should have been a clue to them of whom they were dealing with.

**43:26-34** – Joseph's Feast

Vs. 26 – Upon Joseph's arrival they again bowed in fulfilment of His dreams (vs. 28).

Vs. 29-30 – With the sight of Benjamin, *"his*

*Gen 43:31 And he washed his face, and went out, and refrained himself, and said, Set on bread.*
*Gen 43:32 And they set on for him by himself, and for them by themselves, and for the Egyptians, which did eat with him, by themselves: because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that is an abomination unto the Egyptians.*
*Gen 43:33 And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth: and the men marvelled one at another.*
*Gen 43:34 And he took and sent messes unto them from before him: but Benjamin's mess was five times so much as any of theirs. And they drank, and were merry with him.*

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*mother's son",* Joseph again had to quickly get alone to let his tears flow.

Vs. 32 – Egyptians would not eat with Hebrews, in the same way that the Jews later would not eat with Gentiles. It seems this was because the Hebrews were shepherds, which profession for some reason was an abomination to Egyptians (46:34). Joseph was careful not to violate this custom.

Vs. 33 – The brothers marvelled when they were seated precisely according to their birth order. That this Egyptian ruler would know their order of birth was another clue they should have picked up on.

Vs. 34 – This blatant favouritism of Benjamin was a return to the conditions so embittering these brothers against Joseph years before. Joseph both wanted to honour his full brother in whom he especially delighted, and he sought to assess the

feelings of the brothers toward Benjamin. Were they still given to jealousy, or would they delight in the honour of another? Yet all *"were merry with him"*, further indicating change in these men. God was at work in them as He is in us, *"both to will and to do of His good pleasure"* (Phil. 2:13). Again, Joseph's strange favouritism was a clue that they were in fact feasting with Benjamin's full brother.

The Lord through Joseph will push these troubled brothers on to the ultimate test in the next chapter, a test in which Judah will display the heart of a king, freely offering himself that he might preserve Benjamin, and his father.

"So now it was not you
that sent me hither,
but God"

(Gen. 45:8)

# Class 18 – Genesis 44-45

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*Gen 44:1 And he commanded the steward of his house, saying, Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put every man's money in his sack's mouth.*
*Gen 44:2 And put my cup, the silver cup, in the sack's mouth of the youngest, and his corn money. And he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken.*
*Gen 44:3 As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away, they and their asses.*

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These chapters now arrive at the summit toward which the previous seven chapters have been slowly climbing.

## Chapter 44 – Judah Implores

**44:1-17** – Benjamin Framed and Found

Vs. 1-2 – Joseph's steward must have been quite intrigued with all of this. He was instructed privately to give the brothers all the grain they could carry, and to again return their money to their sacks. Then he was to plant Joseph's special silver cup in Benjamin's sack.

Vs. 3 – Imagine how bright and happy their mood as they set out from Egypt. All the brothers were intact with Simeon returned to them and Benjamin safe. They carried an abundance of food. And they had been strangely honoured by the Egyptian ruler.

*Gen 44:4 And when they were gone out of the city, and not yet far off, Joseph said unto his steward, Up, follow after the men; and when thou dost overtake them, say unto them, Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good?*
*Gen 44:5 Is not this it in which my lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth? ye have done evil in so doing.*

*Gen 44:8 Behold, the money, which we found in our sacks' mouths, we brought again unto thee out of the land of Canaan: how then should we steal out of thy lord's house silver or gold?*
*Gen 44:9 With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, both let him die, and we also will be my lord's bondmen.*
*Gen 44:10 And he said, Now also let it be according unto your words: he with whom it is found shall be my servant; and ye shall be blameless.*
*Gen 44:11 Then they speedily took down every man his sack to the ground, and opened every man his sack.*
*Gen 44:12 And he searched, and began at the eldest, and left at the youngest: and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack.*

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Vs. 4-5 – Soon after their departure the steward was sent to accuse them of repaying the masters kindness with theft in taking his special cup. The purpose or usage of this divining cup is unclear. With Joseph's evident devotion to the true God, it seems unlikely he used it for divination.

Vs. 8 – They pled in support of their integrity in that they did not quietly keep the money they thought mistakenly returned to them (43:19-22).

Vs. 9 – Quite confident of their combined innocence, they rashly suggested death for anyone found guilty and slavery for the rest.

Vs. 13 – Oh their horrified shock and anguish with the discovery of the cup in Benjamin's sack! Their

*Gen 44:13 Then they rent their clothes, and laded every man his ass, and returned to the city.*
*Gen 44:14 And Judah and his brethren came to Joseph's house; for he was yet there: and they fell before him on the ground.*
*Gen 44:15 And Joseph said unto them, What deed is this that ye have done? wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine?*
*Gen 44:16 And Judah said, What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants: behold, we are my lord's servants, both we, and he also with whom the cup is found.*

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happy mood was so suddenly dashed to the most desperate despair! And now they were faced with a choice, the test Joseph would put to them. Would they return to face the music with their brother or would they continue on home without him. Their return to Egypt with Benjamin speaks volumes, for they apparently were free to go, being considered *"blameless"* (vs. 10). Assuming Benjamin to be as guilty as he appeared, they had good excuse before their father for returning without their little brother. But they are different men now, a family quite determined to stand together with their brother in his suffering. *"A brother is born for adversity"* (Prov. 17:17).

Vs. 14 – *"Judah and his brethren"* – Judah now arose as the leader (like *"Paul and company"* in Acts). Leadership boils to the surface in such anxious moments of emergency.

Vs. 16 – Judah is the very picture of humility and

*Gen 44:17 And he said, God forbid that I should do so: but the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant; and as for you, get you up in peace unto your father.*
*Gen 44:18 Then Judah came near unto him, and said, Oh my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant: for thou art even as Pharaoh.*

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openness here. His statement, *"God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants"*, seems to refer again to that old unconfessed sin so long carried on the troubled consciences of these men, now rising again to haunt them in their anxious trial (42:21). They recognized God's hand in their happiness turned to heartache.

Vs. 17 – Joseph insisted that only Benjamin need remain in slavery, with the rest quite free to go. Again it was another chance, put to them even more pointedly now, to leave their brother in his adversity and preserve their own ease. Would they do it again? This was the question Joseph presents to them, when this time it seemed they even had valid cause to do it. *But they would not!* And thus the stage was set for Judah's earnest appeal, indeed one of the most heart-wrenching homilies in all of Scripture.

**44:18-34** – Judah's Impassioned Plea

Vs. 18 – Judah drew near as a most intensely

*Gen 44:19 My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father, or a brother?*
*Gen 44:20 And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him.*
*Gen 44:21 And thou saidst unto thy servants, Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him.*
*Gen 44:22 And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father: for if he should leave his father, his father would die.*
*Gen 44:23 And thou saidst unto thy servants, Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more.*
*Gen 44:24 And it came to pass when we came up unto thy servant my father, we told him the words of my lord.*
*Gen 44:25 And our father said, Go again, and buy us a little food.*
*Gen 44:26 And we said, We cannot go down: if our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down: for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest brother be with us.*
*Gen 44:27 And thy servant my father said unto us, Ye know that my wife bare me two sons:*

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cautious and humble advocate (a picture of the advocacy of Jesus Christ before the Father in our behalf, I John 2:1). Benjamin's release they must have at all costs! What could they do if his petition failed? Indeed, how could he *"go up to my father, and the lad be not with me?"* (vs. 34).

Vs. 19-29 – Judah so simply and seriously explained the situation between their father and this beloved *"child of his old age".*

Vs. 30-31 – He relates the likely tragic outcome of returning without Benjamin. He was pleading for the very life of his father here as much as for the freedom of his little brother. Judah could not bear to put his father through it again. His touching

*Gen 44:30 Now therefore when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad be not with us; seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life;*
*Gen 44:31 It shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die: and thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to the grave.*
*Gen 44:32 For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever.*
*Gen 44:33 Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren.*
*Gen 44:34 For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father.*

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intensity of feeling is truly majestic, filling to the full his promise to Jacob of standing surety for Benjamin. How very, very different is this man. It is impossible to miss the mark of the Spirit's work upon Judah. What once they treacherously did with such indifference, eating lunch with the sound of Joseph's pleading in their ears, they now simply cannot bring themselves to allow, though *forced* upon them, though seemingly quite justified.

Vs. 33 – Judah was fully prepared to take Benjamin's place, to hand himself over to slavery for one he presumed guilty, one who by all appearances had brought shame upon the whole family and deserved his punishment. And so senselessly so, in a situation where they simply could not afford to lose the good favour of this ruler! Where else could they get food if they mess things up here? Yet Judah was not moved by a question of innocence or guilt, only by sacrificial love for his father and

brother. He who once initiated the proposal that Joseph be sold, now offered himself in his brother's place. He who once joined in selling his innocent brother to be rid of a nuisance, would now sell himself for what seemed a truly errant brother. We see here in Judah the heart of God embodied in Jesus Christ our Saviour, that glorious descendant of this noble advocate. He too says, "Please allow what they deserve to fall on Me". He too pleads His substitution in our place before the Father, not through our innocence, but only through His love expressed in the finished work of His sacrificial death in our behalf. "Take Me, the innocent, in the place of the guilty." Compare Paul's willingness to be accursed in the place of his Jewish brothers (Rom. 9:1-4). Compare Moses willing for the same in behalf of his people in Exodus 32:32. It is the heart of the leader, the true missionary spirit that cries, "Oh spend my life for their good!". Here is the essence of true love, which insists on meeting the need of the other over my own. Here is a love that willingly suffers loss that the other might know gain. And oh see how such loving appeal won the day!

## Chapter 45 – No More to Hide

**45:1-4** – Joseph's Self-revelation

*Gen 45:1 Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren.*
*Gen 45:2 And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard.*
*Gen 45:3 And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence.*

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Joseph simply could no longer contain himself. He at last had heard the very expression of love and change he had so longed to hear from his brothers.

Vs. 1 – He quickly cleared the room of all but his brothers, though I suspect the servants had their ears pressed to the crack of the door (vs. 2). This whole procedure must have been intensely interesting to them.

Vs. 3 – *"I am Joseph!"* – And with his statement of identity the brothers were stunned to fearful silence, being most greatly *"troubled at his presence".* It does not take a rocket scientist to figure out what was happening there in the hearts of these men. Perhaps there was a fleeting joy at seeing Joseph well after over 20 years, then all joy immediately swept away by guilt, sorrow, remorse, and *terror!!* The Hebrew word translated *"troubled"* carries the idea of fear. They were troubled with *terror* before one with such a justifiable score against them. Partly they were happy he was alive and well. Partly they were not really wanting him

still alive at all, to know and tell of their dark deed. And not only was Joseph alive, but he himself *was* the great ruler, now in a position of absolute power over them, fully able to execute vengeance. *Their very lives were in his hands!* A man with every reason to hate them (as every soul before the Lord). How suddenly they were naked and exposed with no way to hide. Joseph would be fair to do to them all that their evil deserved. Horrified they were as well to realize in that moment that now they were sure to be fully exposed in all of their lying treachery. Even if they should live through this, *their honour dies!* Everybody was going to know their dark, shameful secret now!! Their wives, their children…*their father!* For it was against Jacob as much as against Joseph that they had worked such shameless treachery. Here he was alive after all, and every bit in a position to crush their lives and tell their lies!

We are wise to look well upon it and receive instruction! It never did them any good after all to conceal this terrible secret and to carry the awful burden of unconfessed guilt all those many years. They have been found out at the last *anyway!* All they accomplished by their hiding was to do themselves the great soul-destroying damage of holding the cancer of guilt in their bosom all of those

many years! It is the same that the unsaved do to themselves, carrying within themselves all of their lives the poison of unconfessed and uncleansed sin. And these brothers never got over the uneasiness of their fearful insecurity. Even after this confrontation they carried a measure of it the rest of their days (50:15). Oh the heartache of it! In their pride they refused confession, fearing what people would think of them should they ever be found out. And now all were going to find out anyway!! And their evil would appear all the more sinister and senseless for the long decades they carried it. How many hours of sleep foolishly lost over this? How many countless times the anxious pang of their guilt stabbed them like a knife when they remembered? How many times they wished they had it to do again that they might do him good and not evil? All of it comes to reckoning now, as they look with terror into the eyes of this man.

But wait! There is a further dawning as they look through the murky cloud of their guilt to really see what they are seeing in their brother. As they look into Joseph's eyes amazingly they do not see venom! They *expect* venom! They *deserve* venom! But no, as they look they see not the expected pent-up rage, but *tears!* Evident tears of happiness and love, yet tears of sorrow for the great losses. And he is

*Gen 45:4 And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt.*
*Gen 45:5 Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life.*
*Gen 45:6 For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest.*
*Gen 45:7 And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.*
*Gen 45:8 So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.*

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saying, *"Come near to me".* Not, "Haul them away!" In some ways perhaps it would be easier for them to endure if Joseph would come down on them in vengeance. For his loving kindness in response to their maliciousness is like the twist of the dagger, like coals of fire upon their heads.

**45:4-8** – Words of Comfort

Joseph read their discomfort, drawing from his loving heart, so ready to forgive, words only of comfort. *Not one word of reproach does he speak!* In the context of his unrestricted kindness where his wrath was so deserved, the sin-wearied hearts of his brothers would find self-reproach enough.

Even so in the light of God's abounding grace where His wrath is deserved we are moved to repentance for our wrong toward Him. And we are moved to reproach ourselves the more as we learn of God's love. Our awareness of God's goodness toward us

*Gen 45:9 Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto me, tarry not:*
*Gen 45:10 And thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast:*
*Gen 45:11 And there will I nourish thee; for yet there are five years of famine; lest thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast, come to poverty.*
*Gen 45:12 And, behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you.*
*Gen 45:13 And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen; and ye shall haste and bring down my father hither.*
*Gen 45:14 And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck.*
*Gen 45:15 Moreover he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him.*

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in His long-enduring love *"leadeth thee to repentance"* (Rom. 2:4).

Joseph graciously bid them;

- To not be upset with themselves for what they did (vs. 5).
- To understand how God worked through their wrong to prepare the way for their preservation (vs. 5-7).
- To recognize *God* as the One sending him to this place of honour in Egypt (vs. 8).

How typical of Joseph to see God's hand in every eventuality. This was the heart and soul of his success under severest trial.

**45:9-15** – Promise of Care

Joseph longed only to nurture his brothers and the father he so loved. See again the mark of his humility, that he would willingly, unashamedly care for his own. Though now exalted among men, yet still he would tenderly love and care for his lowly, despised shepherd family (46:34). Woe to one attaining such earthly prominence that he should look with disdain upon his parents and family. Such a one holds only earthly honours, and that only for a time. Note the image of Jesus in Joseph here, ever humbly caring for the lowly, though Himself exalted high.

Vs. 15 – *"He kissed <u>all</u> his brethren"* – Thus he displayed the reality of his genuine affection for *all* of them. Even Simeon, who perhaps instigated their initial harm against him. Even Rueben, who had been so ineffectually weak as a protector. Even Judah, who suggested his sale to the merchants. And the others, who did nothing to stand in his behalf.

*"After that his brethren talked with him"* – This most certainly involved their expression of sorrow and regret and apology, coming at last to full reconciliation and peace with their brother. Can you imagine the great burden of guilt lifted from their shoulders after all those years? And Joseph

*Gen 45:17 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Say unto thy brethren, This do ye; lade your beasts, and go, get you unto the land of Canaan;*
*Gen 45:18 And take your father and your households, and come unto me: and I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and ye shall eat the fat of the land.*
*Gen 45:19 Now thou art commanded, this do ye; take you wagons out of the land of Egypt for your little ones, and for your wives, and bring your father, and come.*
*Gen 45:20 Also regard not your stuff; for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours.*
*Gen 45:21 And the children of Israel did so: and Joseph gave them wagons, according to the commandment of Pharaoh, and gave them provision for the way.*

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would have traced out for them the way in which he came to such honour in Egypt.

**45:16-20** – Pharaoh's Agreement

From our first meeting with this Pharaoh he shows a sterling character, now eagerly joining in Joseph's enthusiasm for the care of his family.

Vs. 20 – *"Regard not your stuff"* – They were not to worry about property left behind in their move, for the best of Egypt was offered to them.

**45:21-28** – Sent with Gifts to Jacob

Vs. 21-23 – All of this parade of presents would help persuade Jacob of the truth of their report that Joseph was alive and supremely prospering.

Vs. 24 – *"See that ye fall not out by the way"* – Perhaps there was a measure of distrust here? They have carried a shared lie home to their father before.

*Gen 45:24 So he sent his brethren away, and they departed: and he said unto them, See that ye fall not out by the way.*
*Gen 45:25 And they went up out of Egypt, and came into the land of Canaan unto Jacob their father,*
*Gen 45:26 And told him, saying, Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt. And Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not.*
*Gen 45:27 And they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said unto them: and when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived:*
*Gen 45:28 And Israel said, It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die.*

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And to tell of Joseph in Egypt was to be forced finally to admit to their father that he landed there through their treachery and lie. But they were done with deception.

Vs. 27 – Jacob only believed their words *"when he saw the wagons".* Without the tangible proof of the wagons their words alone were not enough as far as Jacob was concerned. Perhaps because he read others through his own dishonesty. Perhaps we can only believe God's words without some tangible proof when finally we come to our own honesty of words.

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## Ponder Points

Consider some parallels between Joseph and Jesus;

- Joseph revealed himself to brothers who had once rejected him, as the coming revelation of

Jesus Christ will be to His own rejecting nation, when *"they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him..."* (Zech. 12:10).

- Joseph's love for his own people had never failed, through all the intervening years, an enduring love that finally won them at the last. Even so is the enduring, pursuing love of God in Jesus Christ.

- Joseph continued to love when vengeance was reasonable and expected. Even so God's persistent love is displayed in genuine affection where His wrath is deserved and expected.

- Not only was Joseph discovered alive, but in a position of absolute power over his brothers, and their dark secret was naked and exposed before him. Even so Israel, with all men, will discover the One they mocked and murdered *alive*, and in a position of power over them (ALL POWER!), with their every dark secret naked and exposed before Him.

- When confronted with Joseph revealed, his brothers were seized with guilt, sorrow, and terror before that one with such a justifiable score against them. Even so Christ's return

and revelation to the nation of Israel will result in the same (Zech. 12:10ff).

- As Joseph with his brothers, when the redeemed at last look into the Saviour's eyes we will not see the deserved venom and rage, but tears of happiness, of love, and of sorrow for the great losses. And we, the redeemed, will hear Him say, as Joseph, *"Come near to me".*

- The one who rose to reign became the servant-ruler to his lowly brethren. Even so Jesus Christ, though exalted to the highest, will gird Himself and serve the lowly redeemed (Lk. 12:37; Jn. 13:4-5).

- Joseph would happily take his family to his place and house, to live with Him there under his constant care and provision. Even so Jesus shall take to Himself all who have become a part of His own family, *"and so shall we ever be with the Lord"* (I Thess. 4:17), living evermore under His wings.

- The revelation of Joseph brought his brothers to reconciliation and peace, protection and provision. Even so the revelation of Jesus Christ, bringing fullest reconciliation to God, will finally restore the believing remnant of

His brothers to the same in Christ's earthly kingdom. Indeed every soul believing God's revelation of Jesus Christ in His words will come to the same peace, protection, and provision in Him.

- Joseph gave to his brothers the same commission with which Jesus Christ has charged His followers, to take to the unbelieving world the message that;
    - Jesus (as Joseph) is alive after all.
    - Jesus (as Joseph) is exalted to highest honour, seated at the Father's own right hand.
    - Jesus (as Joseph) expresses His willingness to receive all who come to God by Him, and beckons all to come to His eternal protection and provision.

# Class 19 – Genesis 46-47

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*Gen 46:1 And Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac.*
*Gen 46:2 And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here am I.*
*Gen 46:3 And he said, I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation:*
*Gen 46:4 I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again: and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes.*

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As the brothers with Joseph, so it will be with the nation of Israel with Jesus at the last. After all the years of carrying their guilt they still had to make confession to their father, when the son at last revealed himself.

## Chapter 46 – Jacob's Trip

**46:1-4** – Communion at Beersheba

Outwardly Jacob's response to Joseph's invite seems to be without hesitation. We can well imagine how much he wished to see his long-lost son (45:28). And there was the practical concern of the drought forcing a move as well. It could not have been an easy thing to leave their Promised Land and the place of Rachel's grave. Inwardly Jacob must have been struggling with some uncertainty about going down. Perhaps for this

reason the Lord came to him with His gracious assurances that he was right to go. Here was one case where it was *right* for God's people to leave the Land of Promise, because God Himself advised it.

Vs. 3-4 – Four things the Lord promised;

- He would make of Jacob's family *"a great nation"* there (Ex. 1:7).
- He would *"go down with"* him.
- He would surely return Israel to the land of promise.

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## On the Side

Though the Lord seems to indicate that their return would be soon after the drought, He actually meant that Jacob's *body* would be returned upon his death, with his nation following four centuries later. Though God's promises are sure, His time frame often extends far beyond what we presume. He speaks of events as if all together, as if all is lined up in a row on a time line, yet He fails to mention great, unexpected, surprising time gaps in between. As within the 70 weeks of Daniel 9. As the millennia-long time gap within Isaiah 61:2. As the church age tucked between Joel 2:29 & 30. To miss

this principle casts our eschatology to confusion. There is guidance here in our own reading of God's promises. They are fulfilled actually, according to a normal reading, but only eventually. God always does just what he says He will do. The answer in the centuries of waiting is not to explain His words away or to read them other than normally, but to be patient in our faith.

Herein is much of the rub in modern theological debates. Amillennialists say Jesus never meant to promise a literal kingdom, but that He spoke only of His kingdom *now*, from the time of Christ's death and resurrection. It did not happen literally then, so it was not meant to happen literally at all. Premillennialists say Jesus meant a literal kingdom, but He did not mean it right now. It did not happen literally then, so it was not meant to happen then. Yet what do we have here in God's promise of Israel's return to the land? It was a promise that would be actually, literally fulfilled, though not immediately. When God says He will bring Israel back to the land, He is going to bring Israel back to the land, not in allegory but in actuality.

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- *"Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes"* –

*Gen 46:5 And Jacob rose up from Beersheba: and the sons of Israel carried Jacob their father, and their little ones, and their wives, in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to carry him.*
*Gen 46:6 And they took their cattle, and their goods, which they had gotten in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt, Jacob, and all his seed with him:*
*Gen 46:7 His sons, and his sons' sons with him, his daughters, and his sons' daughters, and all his seed brought he with him into Egypt.*

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It would be Jacob's comfort to be under the care of the one he most loved and trusted in the tender moment of his death.

**46:5-7** – On the Way

**46:8-27** – Roll Call

Vs. 27 – The 70 apparently included the 66 of vs. 26, plus Jacob, Joseph, and Joseph's two sons. The Septuagint (LXX) records 75 instead of 70 here, which Stephen quotes in his Acts 7 challenge to the Jewish Sanhedrin. It seems the higher number includes Joseph's grandsons. The LXX extends vs. 20 to include a son and grandson of Manasseh and two sons and a grandson of Ephraim. The LXX gives the number of sons born to Joseph as nine rather than two here in vs. 27, with the 66 of vs. 26 equalling 75. Jesus never made comment about such textual concerns. They are fuel for those committed to rejecting the Bible, to stoke the fuming fires of their denial. But for the one who cries, *"Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of*

*Gen 46:28 And he sent Judah before him unto Joseph, to direct his face unto Goshen; and they came into the land of Goshen.*
*Gen 46:29 And Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Israel his father, to Goshen, and presented himself unto him; and he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while.*
*Gen 46:30 And Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive.*
*Gen 46:31 And Joseph said unto his brethren, and unto his father's house, I will go up, and shew Pharaoh, and say unto him, My brethren, and my father's house, which were in the land of Canaan, are come unto me;*
*Gen 46:32 And the men are shepherds, for their trade hath been to feed cattle; and they have brought their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have.*
*Gen 46:33 And it shall come to pass, when Pharaoh shall call you, and shall say, What is your occupation?*
*Gen 46:34 That ye shall say, Thy servants' trade hath been about cattle from our youth even until now, both we, and also our fathers: that ye may dwell in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians.*

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*eternal life",* he knows this Book as the very words of life.

**<u>46:28-34</u>** – Arrival

Can you imagine the great anticipation and pent-up emotion in both Jacob and Joseph as the time of their meeting drew near?

Vs. 28 – Judah was honoured by Jacob's trust in him as leader.

Vs. 29 – We can only stand back and look upon this most moving reunion with wonder and tears, as if Jacob had received his beloved son back from the dead after more than two decades.

Vs. 31-34 – The matter of their presence and care in the land must still be passed by Pharaoh.

Vs. 34 – Note how the Lord had gone before them, even in this Egyptian distaste for shepherds. It was God's programme of separation, ensuring that the Lord's people were *preserved* in Egypt, yet at the same time kept separate from the *pollutions* of Egyptian society. They were preserved, and preserved pure. God often makes His people repulsive in the world's sight. For one thing a believer's righteousness is utterly irritating to them. Nobody really likes being an irritation or despised. But even such disappointments are of the Lord's mercy, given as a protection against too close an association with the world. And remember that such separation presents no outreach problem, for both Isaac and Jacob found their influence upon the world greatly enhanced when finally they walked away from the world's association (26:23-29; 35:1-5). Never are we to be aloof in our attitude. We are to live peaceably with all men as far as this lies within our power.

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## Ponder Points

The patriarchs had received the sure promise from God that their descendants would indeed inherit

the land of Canaan. Yet it was the Lord who called them out of Canaan and into Egypt. With the passing of time and with the death of the fathers and on into the passing centuries it must have become a rather hard thing for the faithful to keep that hope alive in their hearts. They had God's promise of a land and of a return to it. They understood that promise to be taken literally, which time ultimately affirmed they were quite right to do. Yet the longer they were in Egypt the more seemingly impossible it must have become to hold their faith in that promise. And of course, as in every age, with time there would have arisen the voice of the faithless and deceived. These would have begun to interpret God's ancient promises in some way other than a normal reading, as natural deductions of the natural mind when facing extended time without fulfilment. Proud "interpreters";

- Who lifted their system of reading above common sense.
- Who lifted their "learning" above common intelligence.
- Who made their "wisdom" essential to all who would truly know.
- Who insisted upon their lens as the only valid

means to read the Book.

It is shades of the old arm-of-flesh methods of Rebekah and Jacob. Thinking God needs man's clever interpretive help to maintain His honour in the face of promises which it would seem could neither be understood normally nor fulfilled literally. But such errant interpreters, as impatient as they are faithless, were as wrong then as they are today. For the Lord *did* ultimately bring *exactly* what He had promised, according to a very simple, normal reading of His promises, though only after many centuries. The answer to the surprising abundance of time is not to reinterpret, but only to wait a bit (Heb. 11:13). Do not ever let time become the enemy of your soul, leading you to see either lie or lark in the sure words of God.

*"For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry"* (Hab. 2:3).

*"Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continued as they were from the beginning of the creation"* (II Peter 3:3-4).

*Gen 47:2 And he took some of his brethren, even five men, and presented them unto Pharaoh.*
*Gen 47:3 And Pharaoh said unto his brethren, What is your occupation? And they said unto Pharaoh, Thy servants are shepherds, both we, and also our fathers.*
*Gen 47:4 They said moreover unto Pharaoh, For to sojourn in the land are we come; for thy servants have no pasture for their flocks; for the famine is sore in the land of Canaan: now therefore, we pray thee, let thy servants dwell in the land of Goshen.*

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## Chapter 47 – Pharaoh's Acquisition

Joseph essentially buys all of Egypt and its resources for Pharaoh in this chapter.

**47:1-10** – Family Before Pharaoh

Vs. 3 – As Joseph had predicted (46:33), Pharaoh enquired after their occupation. And as Joseph had advised, they were honest with him.

Vs. 4 – Their word is *"sojourn"* (temporary) not "stay".

See how Joseph did not in any way attempt to distance himself from his past or his people, though his family were very ordinary people, even with occupations repulsive to the locals, and though many of Joseph's associates likely tended to look down on him due to his family connection. Yet still he gladly stood with his family before his adopted nation, his love for them in no way stressed by

*Gen 47:5 And Pharaoh spake unto Joseph, saying, Thy father and thy brethren are come unto thee:*
*Gen 47:6 The land of Egypt is before thee; in the best of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell; in the land of Goshen let them dwell: and if thou knowest any men of activity among them, then make them rulers over my cattle.*
*Gen 47:7 And Joseph brought in Jacob his father, and set him before Pharaoh: and Jacob blessed Pharaoh.*
*Gen 47:8 And Pharaoh said unto Jacob, How old art thou?*
*Gen 47:9 And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage.*

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public opinion. Even so Jesus stands with we who are the redeemed, *"for…He is not ashamed to call them brethren"* (Heb. 2:11).

Vs. 6 – See again the graciousness of this Pharaoh, and of Joseph as well, who was ever wise to never presume upon Pharaoh. Therefore Joseph and his family were always handled with the same graciousness with which he handled others.

*"Any men of activity"* – Men of strength, virtue, uprightness, speaking of those with energy and integrity combined with understanding of sheep. A measure of skill combined with energy and integrity will never lack the offer of work.

Vs. 9 – *"Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been"* – *"Few"* in comparison to his grandfather Abraham who had lived to 175, and his father Isaac who had lived to 180. *"Evil",* largely as

*Gen 47:13 And there was no bread in all the land; for the famine was very sore, so that the land of Egypt and all the land of Canaan fainted by reason of the famine.*
*Gen 47:14 And Joseph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, for the corn which they bought: and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house.*

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a result of his own deceptive ways mirrored in his sons, leading from one disturbing family fuss to another. This is such a sad commentary on the bitter life of one named a prince with God. The warning is to us, to not become bitter old men and women through our refusal to be utterly honest and up front with people, by not choosing the happy way of simply walking in God's will.

Vs. 11 – Rameses is a later name for the same area of Goshen, on the eastern edge of the Nile delta.

**47:11-12** – Family Settled

It was by Pharaoh's command that Joseph gave to his family *"the best of the land"*, rather than using his own office to grant special favours.

**47:13-26** – Policy in the Drought

I have read that archaeology has found record as well in ancient Egyptian history of the Nile failing to rise for 7 consecutive years, dated in the era of Joseph's day and resulting in the worst of famines.

*Gen 47:15 And when money failed in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came unto Joseph, and said, Give us bread: for why should we die in thy presence? for the money faileth.*
*Gen 47:16 And Joseph said, Give your cattle; and I will give you for your cattle, if money fail.*
*Gen 47:17 And they brought their cattle unto Joseph: and Joseph gave them bread in exchange for horses, and for the flocks, and for the cattle of the herds, and for the asses: and he fed them with bread for all their cattle for that year.*
*Gen 47:18 When that year was ended, they came unto him the second year, and said unto him, We will not hide it from my lord, how that our money is spent; my lord also hath our herds of cattle; there is not ought left in the sight of my lord, but our bodies, and our lands:*
*Gen 47:19 Wherefore shall we die before thine eyes, both we and our land? buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants unto Pharaoh: and give us seed, that we may live, and not die, that the land be not desolate.*
*Gen 47:20 And Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; for the Egyptians sold every man his field, because the famine prevailed over them: so the land became Pharaoh's.*
*Gen 47:21 And as for the people, he removed them to cities from one end of the borders of Egypt even to the other end thereof.*

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As the famine continued the Egyptian people spent;

- Their money (vs. 14). *"Money failed"* when all currency was in Pharaoh's hand.
- Their livestock (vs. 16-17).
- Their land and lives (Vs. 19-20).

Thus the whole of Egypt, land, livestock, and people (apart from the priests), came into Pharaoh's possession during those years of drought. And yet this occurred in such a way that there was no trace of bitterness in the people, marking Joseph's shrewdness in handling people.

- He kept their grain in the cities in which it

was produced (41:48), avoiding the feeling of being cheated.

- He was fair with them.
- He graciously allowed them 80% of their produce when working what had become Pharaoh's land (vs. 24). Note that God's wise man did not propose the nonsense of socialism.
- He kept their confidence in him.

In a situation that could so easily have boiled over into national riot, Joseph handled the people with grace and wisdom. They understood that he was more *saviour* than *slave-owner* (vs. 25), for they would surely have perished without him. Thus willingly they became the servant of his master.

Even so it is with *our* Saviour, Jesus Christ. It is not with bitterness that we give ourselves to become the servants of God. We would surely have died without the work of our Saviour. Thus with joy we become the servants of His Father and ours. Without Jesus we were as dead men, without hope. When at last we stop fighting the truth of the sin-brought disaster we face, and accept the fact that our only hope for life is in Jesus Christ, and place our lives under His care, we at last come under His

*Gen 47:22 Only the land of the priests bought he not; for the priests had a portion assigned them of Pharaoh, and did eat their portion which Pharaoh gave them: wherefore they sold not their lands.*
*Gen 47:23 Then Joseph said unto the people, Behold, I have bought you this day and your land for Pharaoh: lo, here is seed for you, and ye shall sow the land.*
*Gen 47:24 And it shall come to pass in the increase, that ye shall give the fifth part unto Pharaoh, and four parts shall be your own, for seed of the field, and for your food, and for them of your households, and for food for your little ones.*
*Gen 47:25 And they said, Thou hast saved our lives: let us find grace in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants.*
*Gen 47:26 And Joseph made it a law over the land of Egypt unto this day, that Pharaoh should have the fifth part; except the land of the priests only, which became not Pharaoh's.*

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ample provision and protection and we find in Him a most gracious Master indeed.

We see in Joseph an exceedingly competent man in every way. As Pharaoh had recognized in him from the beginning, he was *"a man in whom the Spirit of God is"* (41:38). Behold how the Spirit's presence did not just touch on the spiritual or religious life of the man, though this remained strong to the end. It made him an exceedingly useful man on earth as well. The influence of the Spirit makes a man wise with the wisdom of God, wise in dealing with men. God does not work in His own to make them babbling, Bible-thumping fools. Their willingness to stand for the truth may indeed make them appear foolish to the world. But it is toward all of the very best of human nature that the Spirit will lead every willing soul. A genuine walk with God gives a shine of the divine to every aspect of a life, for *"the*

*Gen 47:27 And Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions therein, and grew, and multiplied exceedingly.*
*Gen 47:28 And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years: so the whole age of Jacob was an hundred forty and seven years.*

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*wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy"* (James 3:17).

Note also in Joseph one who was supremely successful in secular business, yet never once do we hear of him compromising God's right principles. Are we not taught here that it is in fact possible to succeed in the business world and even in the political arena *with* God? Oh we must not make the mistake of thinking that a walk in purity and truth will always lead to worldly success comparable to Joseph's experience. But as well, we must not mistakenly think that success in business assumes or requires dirty dealing or crooking the books. This man successfully ruled in the secular world in humble purity before God. Christianity does not have to leave business success behind any more than success must leave true Christian principles behind.

**47:27-31** – Carry Me Home

*Gen 47:29 And the time drew nigh that Israel must die: and he called his son Joseph, and said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me; bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt:*
*Gen 47:30 But I will lie with my fathers, and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their buryingplace. And he said, I will do as thou hast said.*
*Gen 47:31 And he said, Swear unto me. And he sware unto him. And Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head.*

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Vs. 28 – Why did they stay after the years of famine were ended? There must have been some clear communication from God that they were to stay (15:13-14; 46:3-4).

Vs. 29 – *"Put…thy hand under my thigh".* Again, the meaning of the method has been lost with time, but the solemnity of it is apparent here, as in 24:2.

Vs. 30 – Jacob's request to be buried in Canaan displayed his faith in God's promise that the nation would indeed ultimately return from Egypt and would possess Canaan as their own land. Though Jacob dabbled with deception all of his days and foolishly felt the need to help God upon occasion, yet he ever moved according to faith in God's words. *Still believing!* And here now on his deathbed he is an old man bowing his heart in worship of his God.

# Class 20 – Genesis 48-50

*Gen 48:5 And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt before I came unto thee into Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine.*
*Gen 48:6 And thy issue, which thou begettest after them, shall be thine, and shall be called after the name of their brethren in their inheritance.*

## Chapter 48 – Two Sons I Take

As Jacob's death drew near it was a time for final plans, pronouncements, and predictions concerning the future. In this chapter Jacob began with special focus, blessing, and privilege upon Joseph, extending this work in the next chapter to all of his sons.

Vs. 3-4 – Jacob's heart was centred on God's promises. Death's approach is a time to remember and hold close the promises of God.

Vs. 5-6 – Jacob claimed Joseph's first two sons for his own, giving them a position among his sons and resulting tribes. This was to the honour of Joseph and would be to the exclusion of Simeon. By this means those sons who had made themselves unworthy lost the opportunity for leadership, and worthy Joseph was given a double portion. Reuben's right of the first-born passed to Joseph

*Gen. 48:7 And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan in the way, when yet there was but a little way to come unto Ephrath: and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath; the same is Bethlehem.*
*Gen 48:8 And Israel beheld Joseph's sons, and said, Who are these?*
*Gen 48:9 And Joseph said unto his father, They are my sons, whom God hath given me in this place. And he said, Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them.*
*Gen 48:10 Now the eyes of Israel were dim for age, so that he could not see. And he brought them near unto him; and he kissed them, and embraced them.*
*Gen 48:11 And Israel said unto Joseph, I had not thought to see thy face: and, lo, God hath shewed me also thy seed.*
*Gen 48:12 And Joseph brought them out from between his knees, and he bowed himself with his face to the earth.*
*Gen 48:13 And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near unto him.*
*Gen 48:14 And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the firstborn.*

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(I Chron. 5:1-2), the actual first born receiving only one portion on the trans-Jordan side in the end.

Vs. 7 – Joseph was a reminder of that wife Jacob had loved and lost.

Vs. 11 – Though Jacob had lost all hope of ever seeing Joseph's face he had seen not only Joseph again but his grandchildren. He acknowledged God as the One so blessing him. God is a God of surprising blessing to those who cling to their faith through all, though imperfectly.

Vs. 13-14 – With Jacob's blindness (vs. 10) Joseph was careful to guide his firstborn, Manasseh, toward Jacob's right hand and Ephraim toward his

*Gen 48:15 And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day,*
*Gen 48:16 The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.*
*Gen 48:17 And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him: and he held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's head.*
*Gen 48:18 And Joseph said unto his father, Not so, my father: for this is the firstborn; put thy right hand upon his head.*

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left, the right hand being that place of primary blessing. But Jacob purposely, knowingly crossed his hands, placing his right on the head of Ephraim and his left upon Manasseh.

Vs. 15-16 – Note how positive and full of faith were Jacob's heart and words at the last, compared to his *"few and evil"* report of his years before Pharaoh (47:9). His awareness of God's care for him throughout his life (*"all my life long unto this day"*) is striking. His evident hope was in his God and his heart was genuinely thankful to the Lord at this point. He had at last come to rest in the God who had carried him and made promise to Him (vs. 3-4), resting in what the Lord had done and said. A heart of faith will always be full of the promises of God, resting upon them.

Vs. 17-18 – Joseph protested his father's crossed hands, thinking it a mistake resulting from his blindness.

*Gen 48:19 And his father refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know it: he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great: but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations.*
*Gen 48:20 And he blessed them that day, saying, In thee shall Israel bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh: and he set Ephraim before Manasseh.*
*Gen 48:21 And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die: but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers.*
*Gen 48:22 Moreover I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow.*

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Vs. 19 – Jacob assured him that it was no mistake, that he knew what he was doing. The younger son was again to be blessed above the first-born; as Seth over Cain, Isaac over Ishmael, Jacob over Esau, and later David over his many older brothers. God moves according to His omniscient awareness of hearts and outcomes, not according to the customs of men.

Vs. 22 – This *"one portion above thy brethren"* perhaps referred to land given to Manasseh on the trans-Jordan side, or more likely to that portion of land near Shechem purchased by Jacob (33:19; Jn. 4:5) where Joseph's body was eventually buried (Josh. 24:32).

It was to this scene of Jacob's blessing upon Joseph's sons that the writer of Hebrews pointed as proof of Jacob's faith (Heb. 11:21).

*Gen 49:1 And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days.*
*Gen 49:2 Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob; and hearken unto Israel your father.*

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## Chapter 49 – Judgment Time

We come now to the last words and wishes of Jacob. His sons here received the things done in their bodies, according to that they had done, whether good or bad. So very solemn was the moment, as the *"solemn assembly"* of the Day of Atonement. It was a time of receiving for their past performance in the family, a time of prophesying of the resulting future prospects in the kingdom, the former relating directly to the latter. This was the judgment seat of Jacob!

**49:1-27** – Concerning Jacob's Sons

Vs. 1-2 – Sons summoned. After Jacob's special blessing of Joseph and sons the word went out to all the brothers that the time of their father's death was near and they must come. As they gathered Jacob began to speak to his sons individually, and before all, one after the other. The form of his speech is as poetic as it was penetrating and perceptive. He speaks in the Spirit, and so his words prophetically point to *"that which shall befall*

*Gen 49:3 Reuben, thou art my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power:*
*Gen 49:4 Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou it: he went up to my couch.*

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*you in the last days".* His words found fulfilment in the days of Israel's earthly kingdom, both that later brought in by Joshua and that yet to be brought by Jesus in His return.

Vs. 3-4 – Reuben – *The man <u>crushed</u>.*

We can well imagine the troubled conscience Reuben brought to this scene. I think I can see the sweat on his brow as he heard his father begin to speak. Though Reuben was *"the beginning of my strength"* as Jacob's first-born son, he would *"not excel"* because he *"went up to my couch"* (35:22). Behold how the man's shameful sin was now so openly exposed! How very suddenly and shockingly Reuben discovered that Jacob had kept careful account of his deeds after all! In the same way the Lord will show His supreme awareness at His judgment seat.

This was no *mercy* seat. This was a *judgment* seat! Had Reuben's sin been brought to the mercy seat and confessed there when he had opportunity, it would no doubt not have been so handled now at

the judgment seat. Throughout those 4 decades, from Reuben's sin until this moment of reckoning, Jacob quietly waited. It was Reuben's chance to put things right, an opportunity now quite passed! And though Reuben's sin was so far in the distant past, and though his evil may not have seemed such a big deal when he did it, with only the briefest mention in the Bible text, and never even a comment from his father, and though this son might have pointed to many a reason seeming to justify his actions at the time, yet now he found his sin exposed without the least ability for avoidance or argument. He found his unconfessed sin the basis of the most unimaginable shame and loss, before his brothers! Before all! Never confessed – never spoken of – *never forgotten by his father!* Dealt with now at the judgment seat of Jacob. His wrong caught up with him in the end, and most certainly and completely found him out. He would not excel due to his instability. No double portion of the first-born, for that went to Joseph. No spiritual or priestly responsibilities of the first-born, for that went to Levi. No princely privileges of leadership, for that went to Judah. No national leader ever arose out of Reuben's tribe. We see in both Reuben and Simeon the sons who never put their wrong right. *Sons* to be sure. They never lost their position as sons in the family. But alas, the reward that might have

*Gen 49:5 Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations.*
*Gen 49:6 O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their selfwill they digged down a wall.*
*Gen 49:7 Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.*

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been theirs went to another.

Vs. 5-7 – Simeon & Levi – *The men <u>condemned</u>.*

Their vice was unbridled anger and cruel violence as displayed at their Shechem massacre (chapter 34). When their father moaned at them there no sorrow or repentance was heard from them, only self-justifications (34:31). Jacob now publicly disassociates himself from their conspiracy (vs. 6). And again, though Jacob may not have sufficiently dealt with their wrong at the time, he never forgot their violent treachery upon innocent people. And now at the last it was fully visited and condemned at the judgment seat of Jacob.

This was no *mercy* seat, but a *judgment* seat. If a man's sin will not be brought to the mercy seat it must be dealt with at the judgment seat.

Divided and scattered within the inheritance of others their tribes would be, for their wrong was

*Gen 49:8 Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee.*
*Gen 49:9 Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?*
*Gen 49:10 The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.*
*Gen 49:11 Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes:*
*Gen 49:12 His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk.*

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never put right. Simeon's descendants received no tribal area, but were scattered throughout Judah's tribe and possession (Josh. 19:1). Levi was divided throughout the land in the various cities of the Levites, their priestly office being their inheritance. And even their priesthood was only a limited thing, for the pattern of it was not even that which Jesus Christ would follow into the ages of the ages, as the book of Hebrews explains.

Vs. 8-12 – Judah – *The man <u>crowned</u>.*

We well know how Judah had fallen to such moral depths in chapter 38; a pagan marriage, shocking failure as a father, running with the wrong crowd, his daughter-in-law used as a prostitute. Yet *none* of this was mentioned here at the judgment seat of Jacob! For there had come a significant turn in this man's heart. There must have been some reckoning with his wrong when exposed by Tamar (38:25-26), to the point that he so arose to leadership, offering

*Gen 49:13 Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea; and he shall be for an haven of ships; and his border shall be unto Zidon.*
*Gen 49:14 Issachar is a strong ass couching down between two burdens:*
*Gen 49:15 And he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute.*

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himself in sacrifice as a substitute for Benjamin before Joseph. Perhaps Judah's heart return is the meaning of vs. 11, that *"he washed his garments in wine"*. It seems he was fully restored to the Lord and thus found a place of blessing now comparable even to Joseph's. Judah's sins having been brought to the mercy seat, were therefore not even remembered at the judgment seat. In Judah we see the son who was bad, but then was wise to put himself right.

Vs. 10 – *"Until Shiloh come"* – The word "Shiloh" means "place of peace". This is likely a prophecy of Messiah as the One who would bring peace, leading on to the glimpse in vs. 11-12 of far-off blessing in His coming Millennial Kingdom.

Vs. 13 – Zebulun – Would live beside the Mediterranean Sea and be enriched by it.

Vs. 14-15 – Issachar – Perhaps vs. 15 refers to laziness (*"saw that rest was good"*) leading to forced labour.

*Gen 49:16 Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel.*
*Gen 49:17 Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward.*
*Gen 49:18 I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD.*
*Gen 49:19 Gad, a troop shall overcome him: but he shall overcome at the last.*
*Gen 49:20 Out of Asher his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties.*

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Vs. 16-18 – Dan is characterized by the treachery of a snake by the roadside. This tribe was first to fall to major idolatry (Judge 18:30-31).

Vs. 19 – Gad – Three of the six Hebrew words in this verse play on his name (raid, attack, overcome). Gad's tribe settled to the east of the Jordan, and was thus open to border raids.

Vs. 20 – Asher – *The man <u>consoled</u>.*

We find bright promise spoken over this little tribe. Asher's name means "blessed" or "happy" (30:12-13). Asher was later given the fertile coastal area on the north side of Mt. Carmel (Josh. 19:24-31). In a sense Asher was a lowly nobody, being the last son of the hand-maid of the unwanted wife, the very bottom of the heap. He is not mentioned as particularly distinguishing himself in any way either for evil or good. Yet now he is blessed with good as the son of Jacob, for there are no "nobodies" in God's family.

*Gen 49:21 Naphtali is a hind let loose: he giveth goodly words.*
*Gen 49:22 Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall:*
*Gen 49:23 The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him:*
*Gen 49:24 But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel:)*
*Gen 49:25 Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb:*
*Gen 49:26 The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren.*

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Vs. 21 – Naphtali – Characterized by a doe set free, and as having an eloquent ability with words.

Vs. 22-26 – Joseph – *The man <u>confident</u>.*

Here was a man who could face the judgment seat of Jacob with confidence and without shame (I Jn. 2:28), for he knew he was right with his father and always had been. Jacob heaped reward after reward upon this cherished one, waxing more eloquent over him with words of praise than any other. He was promised fruitfulness (vs. 22) and blessing (vs. 25-26), and such did indeed characterize Joseph's life and heritage. The meaning of his son Ephraim's name was "fruitful". And Ephraim became the leading tribe in the north of the nation of Israel. We see in Joseph the son who always walked right. And every child of God reflecting the *faithfulness* of Joseph in his life will

*Gen 49:27 Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil.*
*Gen 49 28 All these are the twelve tribes of Israel: and this is it that their father spake unto them, and blessed them; every one according to his blessing he blessed them.*
*Gen 49:29 And he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite,*
*Gen 49:30 In the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite for a possession of a buryingplace.*
*Gen 49:31 There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah.*
*Gen 49:32 The purchase of the field and of the cave that is therein was from the children of Heth.*
*Gen 49:33 And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people.*

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show forth the *fruitfulness* of Joseph as well. He will be like a *"fruitful bough by a well"*, clinging to *"the true vine"* and purged to good effect by the great Husbandman (Jn. 15).

Vs. 24 – We see reference to Jesus Christ in the names *"the shepherd, the stone of Israel"* (Jn. 10:11; I Pet. 5:4; Heb. 13:20; I Cor. 10:4).

Vs. 27 – Benjamin – Violent in spirit, as a ravenous, devouring wolf. Compare Judges 20.

**49:28-33** – Concerning Jacob's Burial

In spite of the chequered history of this man, it was the death of a righteous man in the end, a man who through a circuitous route came at last to a heart

filled with the sure words of God and finding rest therein.

Vs. 33 – That Jacob was *"gathered unto his people"* speaks again of life after death in Abraham's bosom. Though *"his people"* were dead they still existed, and he would have existence with them in death. And that Jacob expected *"to be gathered unto my people"* (vs. 29) speaks of God's pledge to him of the same. In every age God's own children have His gracious assurances of hope beyond the grave.

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## Ponder Points

Consider some parallels with the Judgment Seat of Christ (II Cor. 5:10);

- Jacob was perceptive, missing nothing, forgetting nothing, except those things confessed. So Jesus will be at His judgment seat.
- The sons were fairly rewarded according to their works. There were no arguments, for all understood the appropriateness of the judgment.
- Reward or loss was then carried into their Promised Land existence and lived out there.

*Gen 50:1 And Joseph fell upon his father's face, and wept upon him, and kissed him.*
*Gen 50:2 And Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father: and the physicians embalmed Israel.*
*Gen 50:3 And forty days were fulfilled for him; for so are fulfilled the days of those which are embalmed: and the Egyptians mourned for him threescore and ten days.*

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Even so for us during Christ's earthly kingdom, when we enter into the joy of our Lord. Those having shown themselves *"faithful over a few things"* in this life shall then be made *"ruler over many things"* (Matt. 25).

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## Chapter 50 – Hope He Gives Me

**50:1-14** – Jacob's Burial

Vs. 2-3 – God had providentially provided the Egyptian art of embalming, without which this burial trip to Canaan would have been a nasty mission, perhaps impossible. Embalming was a lengthy process (40 days) involving the removal of the internal organs, drying the body, and wrapping it tightly with material, resulting in the form we know of as a mummy.

Vs. 9 – Pharaoh was quite happy to bestow highest
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*Gen 50:7 And Joseph went up to bury his father: and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt,*

*Gen 50:10 And they came to the threshingfloor of Atad, which is beyond Jordan, and there they mourned with a great and very sore lamentation: and he made a mourning for his father seven days.*
*Gen 50:11 And when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning in the floor of Atad, they said, This is a grievous mourning to the Egyptians: wherefore the name of it was called Abelmizraim, which is beyond Jordan.*
*Gen 50:12 And his sons did unto him according as he commanded them:*
*Gen 50:13 For his sons carried him into the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, which Abraham bought with the field for a possession of a buryingplace of Ephron the Hittite, before Mamre.*
*Gen 50:14 And Joseph returned into Egypt, he, and his brethren, and all that went up with him to bury his father, after he had buried his father.*
*Gen 50:15 And when Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him.*

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honours upon Jacob in his death.

Vs. 10 – It is unclear why they circled around to the trans-Jordan side and then crossed over the Jordan for the burial. As if they were fore-shadowing the path the nation would follow when later coming into their land.

Vs. 14 – There seems to have been no question among them of remaining in Canaan. They had no go-ahead from the Lord as yet.

**50:15-18** – Lingering Fears

Vs. 15 – Behold the lasting effect of sin. Consider the implications of their fear;

*Gen 50:16 And they sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying,*
*Gen 50:17 So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin; for they did unto thee evil: and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father. And Joseph wept when they spake unto him.*
*Gen 50:18 And his brethren also went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we be thy servants.*

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- They were suspicious of Joseph;
    - That his tears and expression of forgiveness were not real.
    - That he was only performing for their father's sake.
    - That he was actually inwardly vengeful after all and would show this now that their father was gone.
    - That he was a sham and not truly as noble as he appeared on the surface.
    - That he in fact could not be trusted.
- Could it be that they were in fact reading Joseph through their own nature, suspecting him to be like themselves, and surprised when he was not, thus exposing their own nature in the process (Titus 1:15)?

Consider how we sometimes handle the Lord the same;

*Gen 50:19 And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God?*
*Gen 50:20 But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.*
*Gen 50:21 Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them.*

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- Suspecting that He cannot be taken at His word.
- Thinking Him fickle.
- Assuming Him as vengeful as ourselves deep down.
- Feeling that He does not forgive us as fully as He says He does.
- Doubting that the salvation and life He gives could be so complete and eternal.

**50:19-21** – Repeated Comforts

We can well imagine Joseph's deep disappointment and sorrow with their suspicions after all those years. Would they never understand him? Would they never simply accept his stated motives? They could never truly love him or enjoy his love until they could come to a settled trust in his words of assurance and acceptance. Yet again, as always, we find no bitterness in Joseph in spite of this new slash at his character. He was ever the patient lover of souls, despite even their unfair suspicions of him

*Gen 50:22 And Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he, and his father's house: and Joseph lived an hundred and ten years.*
*Gen 50:23 And Joseph saw Ephraim's children of the third generation: the children also of Machir the son of Manasseh were brought up upon Joseph's knees.*
*Gen 50:24 And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.*

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now. It was another opportunity for him to display the reality of his enduring love for them.

Even so the Lord quietly endures when we doubt the truth of His gracious love, presuming Him as fickle as ourselves. Yet with such a twisted view of Him we can never simply bask in His love. Settled peace cannot be ours until we come to full trust in His assurance that we are indeed *"accepted in the beloved".*

**50:22-26** – Joseph's Blessing and Burial

Vs. 23 – Joseph lived to enjoy his descendants to the 3rd and 4th generation (great and great-great grandchildren).

Vs. 24 – *"God will surely visit you"* (again vs. 25). Joseph still walked with God, according to simple faith in Him, right out the end his life on earth. He was ever the simple saint, fearing the Lord to the last in spite of all of the abuse he endured throughout his life, in spite of all the honours and

*Gen 50:25 And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence.*
*Gen 50:26 So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.*

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attractions of Egypt around him, in spite of all that sought to allure his heart away as the temptress at the first. Even as Noah *"found grace in the eyes of the Lord"* in the very worst of times and environments, so Joseph's faith was just never touched by earthly things. Therefore we conclude that a man is most certainly able to live for God unaffected by his environment, regardless of the afflictions or temptations he may face, yea in the very worst possible conditions. There is just no fair ability to blame our environment or circumstances for leading us astray from the Lord.

Vs. 25 – Joseph's request that his body be carried to the Promised Land upon their departure was the one thing about Joseph mentioned by the writer of Hebrews as marking his faith (Heb. 11:22). And why did he not follow his father's example in having his body taken and buried immediately in the land? Perhaps he wanted that unburied coffin to stand as a perpetual reminder that they did not belong there in Egypt.

Now look with me to the last words of this blessed

book, to the rather odd way in which this book of Genesis ends, with the body of Joseph waiting *"in a coffin in Egypt".* Yet understand that this is far from an image of hopelessness as it might appear at first blush. Consider how that coffin was a picture of hope. In a sense it even seems to be a bit of a summary of the message of the book of Genesis. God having begun with man's creation in perfection, man so soon fell to the ravages of sin and death. Yet the whole thrust of this book is the God of grace seeking to restore or redeem fallen man. The beginning of the answer can be seen in that unburied *"coffin in Egypt",* awaiting eventual departure to the Land of Promise. For that coming Exodus would be the greatest picture of redemption, of God lifting man out of his bondage to the cruel taskmaster of sin and the world and taking him into covenant relation to Himself and planting him at last in Emmanuel's land.

Consider how each following generation ends on the same note; *"I die: but God will surely visit you".* Though death eventually meets every one of us, there can be hope in death. All who die in Jesus Christ will be gathered unto their people in death. And though we depart this life, Jesus Christ will surely come as He said and visit His people.

*"Even so, come, Lord Jesus"* (Rev. 22:20).

*God will surely keep His words!*