

"In the Beginning, God...."
A Verse-by-Verse Study of the Book of Genesis
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Bible Studies

Genesis

"In The Beginning, God..."

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Bible Studies
by Kathleen Dalton
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Genesis

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This booklet has been put together for you to use either

- in your own personal Bible Study time,
or...
- to help you lead a Bible Study discussion group in your home, or at work.

It is divided into several lessons, usually covering a chapter of the book you are studying, or sometimes a portion of a chapter.

Each lesson has two (2) parts:

1. Questions for you to use as you read and think through the scripture.
2. Answers to those questions, with my comments and thoughts.

If you are leading a discussion group, it will be helpful to be sure each member of your group has a copy of each week's questions in advance, so that they can prepare ahead of time if they want to.



Genesis

Table of Contents

<u>Passage</u>	<u>Page</u>
Introduction	5
Genesis Chapter 1	7
The Bible and Evolution	16
Genesis Chapter 2	18
Genesis Chapter 3	25
Genesis Chapter 4	32
Genesis Chapter 5	40
"From Adam to Noah" Chart	41
Genesis Chapter 6	46
Genesis Chapters 7&8	59
A Little Quiz for 7&8	62
Genesis Chapter 9	72
Genesis Chapters 10&11	77
"From Noah to Abraham" Chart	84
Genesis Chapters 12&13	85
Genesis Chapter 14	93
Genesis Chapter 15	100
Genesis Chapters 16&17	109
Genesis Chapters 18&19	119
Genesis Chapters 20&21	131
Genesis Chapter 22	140
Genesis Chapters 23&24	145
Genesis Chapters 25&26	154
Genesis Chapters 27&28	163
Genesis Chapter 29	170



Genesis

Table of Contents (cont.)

<u>Passage</u>	<u>Page</u>
Genesis Chapter 30	178
Genesis Chapter 31	187
Genesis Chapter 32	193
Genesis Chapter 33	199
Genesis Chapters 34,35,&36	205
Quiz for Chapters 1-36	215
Genesis Chapter 37	217
Genesis Chapter 38	225
Genesis Chapters 39, 40, 41	235
Genesis Chapters 42&43	243
Genesis Chapters 44&45	253
Genesis Chapters 46&47	262
Genesis Chapter 48	268
Genesis Chapter 49	277
Genesis Chapter 50	295



Introduction to Genesis

When did you begin?

Was it your birthday? No.

Was it the moment in time when you were first conceived? Well, yes, that answer is correct...but....I have a thought here.....

You see, God had you in mind before you were born...in fact, before Genesis 1:1. Did you know that? Look at Matthew 25:31-36, Revelation 17:7&8, and Psalm 139:14-16. When you read those verses it becomes clear, doesn't it, that God knew you and planned for you long before you were conceived?

When He began creating our universe, He had already thought of you. He had you in mind when He planned the continents and the seas; He had you pictured when He began time; He created your DNA when He took all the raw materials of our world and organized them and filled them with life. You were part of the seed that was created inside Adam and inside Eve when they were miraculously brought into existence.

Technically you began when the miracle of conception took place in your mother's womb. But forget technicalities for now, and marvel at the realization that God knew you before He ever created the first piece of dust.

Genesis is first and foremost about God. But it is also about you.

So, just to make this truth real inside yourself, read Genesis 1:1 like this: **Before the beginning, God decided who I would be someday**, and then, next, *"in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."*

Chapter-by-Chapter Bible Studies

You could say the whole world was created with you in mind, except... that almost sounds like creation was made to revolve around you....and of course, it wasn't. It was made to revolve around God. Here's what God did: *God made a place where you and I would get our chance to live out our faith in Him.* Creation was all about God's creation living by faith in Him. All about Him. And pretty fantastic for us.

How should that make us feel?

- it should remind us that we are miraculously loved and cherished by God -
- and it should bring us to our knees before Him - why in the world would He be thinking of us?
- And it also should give us an overwhelming sense of the kinship we have with every other person, across our globe, who also was in the mind of God before the beginning:

Now, keeping that in mind, let's start studying and thinking and talking our way through the book of Genesis.

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Genesis Chapter 1 - Questions

1. Can you find at least 5 major truths from just verse 1?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Verse 1 says that "in the beginning God created." Here are some more verses to look up - to give you a better idea of the implications of this simple statement:

- Psalms 102:25-28
- Isaiah 40:25&26
- John 1:1-3
- Psalms 89:11
- Psalms 90:2
- Isaiah 44:24
- Hebrews 1:1&2
- Hebrews 11:3
- Revelation 4:11

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2. What did God do on Day 1? (:1-5)
3. What did God do on Day 2? (:6-8)
4. What did God do on Day 3? (:9-13)
5. What did God do on Day 4? (:14-19)
6. What was the purpose of the lights created on Day 4? (:14)
7. What did God do on Day 5? (:20-23)
8. What did God do on Day 6? (:24-31)
9. What did God tell Adam & Eve to do? (:28)
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
10. What did God plan for men and animals to eat?

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Your Questions: (List here the questions which came to your mind as you read through this chapter.)

Here are mine:

- The sun and moon were not created until Day 4 - what was the "light" of Day 1? _____
- On what day (or days) did God create Dinosaurs? _____
- What does it mean..."created in His image"?(:27) (see Genesis 5:3 for another place this phrase is used)

Conclusions: (What have you learned about God...about you...how has this chapter made you feel...is there anything you should change?)

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Genesis Chapter 1 - Answers

1. Can you find at least 5 major truths from just verse 1? (Here's what I've come up with:)

1. God existed before the beginning.
2. God was the creator of our world. It wasn't an accident.
3. God is bigger than the heavens and the earth.
4. God is more important than anything He created, including me.
5. God has the ability to create. To make something from nothing.
6. God is powerful.
7. God is creative.
8. I would not exist if it weren't for God. He deserves my thanks.
9. If anyone knows how to make life work, it is God.
10. Everything I see and touch belongs to God.

2. What did God do on Day 1? (:1-5)

On Day 1 God gathered together all the raw ingredients He would need to form our universe, then He spoke the Light into the middle of all those ingredients. With the presence of that light, He set the universe in motion - time began. There was morning and there was night - the first day.

Now, I have a question about that light...but we'll save that until we get to the end of the chapter.

3. What did God do on Day 2? (:6-8)

On Day 2 God separated His raw ingredients by placing atmosphere in between them. Some of the raw ingredients were above the atmosphere, and some were below. The atmosphere became the "skin" for the earth. It was the life-sustaining air which would set earth apart from the rest of the universe.

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4. What did God do on Day 3? (:9-13)

On Day 3 God organized the raw materials under the atmosphere into a round ball containing dry land and sea (earth). On the dry land He placed some of those raw materials which He had turned into plants - vegetation. All the plants were programmed to reproduce, and contained seeds to do just that.

5. What did God do on Day 4? (:14-19)

He made the sun and the moon and the stars on Day 4. Notice from this day's work that it is clear God was creating sun and moon for the earth. He was creating what was necessary to make life work on earth, but not on any other planet, or in any other solar system. All the other planets, solar systems, and galaxies were out there, but only one planet was created and planned to sustain life. Only earth.

6. What was the purpose of the lights created on Day 4? (:14)

- Signs

(God would use the stars and the skies to give "signs" to the whole world of His power. Can you think of times He did that?)

- Seasons
- Days
- Years

The sun and the moon also forever defined the rhythm of the earth...day and night...seasons.... Time as we know it, measured in a 24-hour day, a 7-day week, a 30-day month, and a 365-day year, would be the standard for the whole universe. Now...it's important to note that time existed from the moment God began creating (remember? Day and night began on Day 1) . But the universal understanding of time...the organization of time.... would come from the creation of sun, moon and Stars

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7. What did God do on Day 5? (:20-23)

On Day 5 God filled the waters with sea creatures, and the skies with winged creatures. Everything that lives in the sea, and everything that flies in the sky. Our global eco-system was almost complete.

8. What did God do on Day 6? (:24-31)

On Day 6 God created the animals, and man. When He made man, unlike any of His other creations, He made him in His own image. He made man to look like Himself. And He gave man rule over all the rest of the living things that made up His creation. Over the fish, the birds, the animals, and the vegetation. The vegetation was for food.

9. What did God tell Adam & Eve to do? (:28)

- Be fruitful and multiply. They were told to make babies. Have a family, and encourage their children to have families, and to fill the earth with people. God's plan was for the earth to be full of people who loved walking with Him in the cool of the day. Who looked forward to His presence all the time. Who obeyed and loved and longed for Him.
- **Subdue the earth.** They were told to organize the raw materials of earth and use them for the good of the people. The people would always come first. The things of earth were intended for their sustenance and pleasure.
- **Rule over the earth.** They were given the go-ahead to explore and discover and create the most wonderful, unimaginable things. They could build buildings and roads, houses and neighborhoods. They could assemble rockets which would take them out into that amazing universe and see the glory of their God displayed through the wonders He created. He meant for men to create and learn and discover and build and take His raw materials and do unbelievable things.

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Later on in *Genesis* chapter 11 we're going to see that when people built a large tower in Babel, He stopped them. Why? If He wanted them to rule the earth, why not let them do it in Babel? Because He meant for them to rule the world while they were in a close relationship with Him. He gave them rule, and knew that rule would benefit them as long as they were in obedience to Him. The sinful men who built the tower in Babel built it not to discover the wonders of God, but to shake their fists in the face of God. Adam and Eve's sin was going to change the course of the gifts He had just given them. Being fruitful, filling the earth, subduing the earth and ruling the earth would not be at all what God intended it to be. It would be hard, painful, and full of death and unhappiness.

10. What did God plan for men and animals to eat? (:29&30)

Vegetation. With the imagination He had also given man, there was probably no end to the ways those greens and fruits and nuts and seeds could be prepared. It was not going to have to be spinach salad every day. ☺

**Here are some of the questions others have come up with
in past *Genesis* studies:**

1. Q: Since God planned for us to be vegetarians (*Genesis* 1:29 & 30), why did He create animals?

A: Because animals were a part of the perfect creation of God - not intended for eating. Perhaps simply intended for our enjoyment.

2. Q: Since there was to be no death, why make male and female (assuming the purpose was to replace the ones who died with new ones).

A: God made animals and people, and then wanted to them to fill the

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A Verse-by-Verse Study of the Book of Genesis

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earth by multiplying (Genesis 1:28) . God did not fill the earth initially.

3. Q: Why did God pick that particular part of the earth?

A: Unknown. Guess: maybe that was the perfect place from which to begin to fill the earth.

4. Q: Where did God come from:

A: That is really the most basic question to ask. The first verse of Genesis (1:1) is clear. In the beginning of everything we call time and space, God was already there. No one created God. He did not come from anywhere. He always was. That is why He calls Himself "I am". (Exodus 3:13 & 14) and (John 8:58).

5. Q: What about carbon-dating? How can the earth be only 5,000 - 10,000 years old in the light of the scientific evidence of carbon dating?

A: Carbon dating requires certain assumptions. Assumptions not based on proven, observable fact. And...there is much evidence in proven, observable fact for a "young earth".

6. Q: Why are there such profound cultural differences amongst people...and different races...since we are descendants of the same 2 people?

A: We are all descendants of the same 2 people, Adam and Eve. And we are also all descendants of the same 8 people - Noah, his wife, their 3 sons (Shem, Ham & Japheth, and their wives). The inhabitants of the earth split up into distinct people groups based on differing languages after the flood, and after the Tower of Babel. (Genesis 11). The three major races of people descended from Shem, Ham & Japheth, as they parted to and began to fill differing areas of God's created earth.

7. Q: Could the "days" of Genesis 1 have been long periods of time which were simply called "days"? Could they have been other than 24-hour periods of time?

- The Hebrew word used in Genesis 1 for "day" is the word "yom" - which always means 24-hour period every time it is used, except in cases where

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it is clearly indicated by the context that the literal meaning of the 24-hour-day is not intended (ie: The Day of the Lord).

- Also - the 6-day creation is restated in Exodus 20:11. The creation "week" is stated - and given as a reason for organizing our times of work and times of rest into a week of 7 days. The whole concept of week of 7 days comes from the Genesis 1 account. Not seven "periods of time", but specifically, 7 days.

- Adam and Eve were created on "Day 6" lived through "Day 7" (God's day of rest), and then at least into Day 8. If these were even thousand-year periods of time, Adam would have been at least 2 thousand years old by the time creation was finished. Scripture says Adam lived to 930 years old. (Genesis 5:5).

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A few things to think through about the Bible and Evolution:

Evolution says:

- Life evolved naturally from non-living chemicals.
- Earth is anywhere from millions to 5 billion years old.
- The earth is always evolving, improving.
- Man is always evolving, improving.
- Man is not spiraling down, but is in charge of his own destiny.

The Bible says:

- God created earth and life in 6 days.
- Adam to Abraham = about 2,000 yrs.
- Abraham to Jesus = about 2,000 yrs.
- Jesus to now = about 2000 yrs.
- Earth is about 6,000 years old.
- The earth is not evolving, improving.
- Man is not evolving, improving.
- The earth and man are actually disintegrating because they are in need of a Savior.
- Only the Savior can change the downward spiral of man.

Here are some of the reasons I take a Bible view:

- The Bible is the unerring Word of God. It says so. There's no reason to think God could not have created everything in the world in 6 literal days.

II Timothy 3:16

II Peter 1:20

- Either we can trust all of it, or we can't. Can't pick and choose.
- If we don't know which parts of the Bible to trust - we have to become our own final authority.
- "Evening and Morning" describes a 24-hour day.

In The Beginning God...."

A Verse-by-Verse Study of the Book of Genesis

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- The Hebrew word used in Genesis 1 for "day" is the word "yom" - which almost always means 24-hour period - there are very few exceptions.
- Evolution, and a belief in a long, long period of time for creation would mean we accept as truth the fact that there was death of animals and men before
- Adam and Eve sinned. The Bible says there was no death before the fall of man (sin). (Genesis 2:15-17)

In other words, Death was the result of sin, and that's why Jesus had to die on the cross. Death of any living creature before the fall, required in the Evolution view, assumes as untrue the Genesis 3 account that death began with the sinful fall of Adam and Eve.

Therefore, it also questions the necessity of the death of Jesus to pay the price for sin. (I Corinthians 15:20-28)

- From the time of the fall of man, men have degenerated, not improved. Evolution teaches the constant upward improvement of creation. A belief which combines creation by God with evolution still assumes evolution is continuing today - thus creation is still constantly improving....or.....that God is still creating - which the Bible states He is not...the creating God did was completed on Day 6 - that's why He rested on Day 7.

Want More Info?

Here are Some Great Resources for you:

www.AnswersinGenesis.org

www.creationmuseum.org



Genesis Chapter 2 - Questions

Just read, observe, and answer these questions:

1. When were the heavens and the earth completed?
2. What did God do on the 7th day?
3. (:3) What did God "rest" from?

(verses 4-25 are a "supplement" to what we already have read happened on day 6.
We are getting more details about the creation of man and woman.)

4. On what day did God create vegetation?
5. On what day did God create man?
6. (:7) What materials were used to create man?
7. (:7) What gave man life?
8. (:8) Where did God put the man He had made?
9. (:9) What did God put in the garden?
10. (:9) What 2 trees are specifically named in the garden?
11. (:10-14) What 4 rivers flowed out of Eden?
12. (:15&16) What was man told to do in the garden?
13. (:16) What was man told not to do in the garden?

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14. (:17) What was man told would happen if he ate of the tree of the knowledge of good & evil?
15. (:18) Why did God make a helper for man?
16. (:19) What else was formed out of the ground besides man?
17. (:19-20) Who gave the animals their names?
18. (:21-25) Was woman made the same way man was?

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Genesis Chapter 2 - Answers

When I garden, I sometimes wonder what in the world I think I am doing.

I bend, stoop, shovel, dig, rake, get down on my hands and knees, and then get back up again, lift, grunt, groan, and always get so worn out I know without a doubt I should not have tackled the project.

But when I finish the task at hand, I savor the moment when I can just stand back and look at what I have accomplished. A mass of flowers. A straight row or two. A border. A path. A plant moved to a sunnier location. Or a piece of something cut off and planted somewhere else in the garden, so that one plant becomes two. Ahhhh. So peaceful and relaxing and satisfying to see the results of my labor.

That feeling is what I think of as I begin reading in Genesis Chapter 2. The Lord God has worked to create this brand new world and universe. It took Him 6 days! I don't think He was tired when it was finished, but I do think He savored the standing back and looking. It was good, peaceful, and satisfying to enjoy the fruits of His labor....just to look at it and love it.

1. When were the heavens and the earth completed?

The heavens and the earth were completed on Day 6.

2. What did God do on Day 7?

On Day 7 the Lord enjoyed His creation by kicking back and looking at it. I think He could have smiled, taken a deep breath, and looked and looked and looked.

3. (:3) What did God "rest" from?

I'll repeat what I said above - ! I don't think He was tired when it was finished, but I do think He savored the standing back and looking. It was good, peaceful, and satisfying to enjoy the fruits of His labor....just to look at it and love it. His "rest" was a whole day of satisfaction.

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(verses 4-25 are a "supplement" to what we already have read in Chapter 1. In Chapter 2 we are going to get more details especially about the creation of man and woman.)

4. (:5-7) On what day did God create vegetation?
5. (:5-7) On what day did God create man?

On Day 3 God created vegetation, but didn't create man until Day 6. Until He created man, there was no one to water or watch over the vegetation, so we get an extra little detail here about God's timing: the Lord God made sure the plants were cared for by creating a mist that rose up from the earth and watered everything until there were men and women to care for the vegetation.

6. (:7) What materials were used to create man?

Man was created from materials God had already made. Man was created from the dirt, the dust, of the earth. He wasn't created from the atmosphere, or from the planets or stars out in space. He wasn't created from vegetation, or from animals. When God made man, God took the dirt He had made and created him.

7. (:7) What gave man life?

But man, with bones and heart and lungs and skin created from the dust of the earth, was not complete until God Himself blew His own breath into this piece of clay, and gave him life. Man would someday be able to pass that life on to his children, and they to theirs....but it had to start by a miracle....a miracle that man could not accomplish at all. Man could not start his own breathing. He could not bring himself to life. God did it. Simply by breathing.

Life was not an accident. It was an intentional act of Almighty God.

8. (:8) Where did God put the man He had made?
9. (:9) What did God put in the garden?

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Where did God put the man He had made and brought to life? On the earth. In a garden. In a garden filled with every pleasant and beautiful and yummy thing you and I could ever imagine. It was perfectly sized and stocked to feed and satisfy the man. It was to be the peaceful home of a man greatly loved by God.

10. (:9) what 2 trees are specifically named in the garden?

And the Lord God made sure the garden contained 2 trees necessary for the eternal continuation of life and love:

- A tree of life. To eat of it meant life would go on forever and ever.
- A tree of the knowledge of good and evil. To eat of it was forbidden, but obedience to that directive was the love part of this paradise. (More about this later)

11. (:10-14) What 4 rivers flowed out of Eden?

From this ultimate garden flowed 4 rivers:

- *Pishon*
- *Gihon*
- *Hiddekel*
- *Euphrates*

Their purpose was to water the garden, and, from there, the whole earth.

12. (15&16) What was man told to do in the garden?

The garden was the start. I'm just imagining here, but to me it looks like from there the Lord intended man to tend the creation of God as it grew and spread out throughout the planet, and then to keep it organized and trimmed and producing as it continued to spread.

So we can see that the Lord God had a full and satisfying never-ending life thought through and planned for the man He had made. That's what the garden and the tree of life were for.

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13. (:16) What was man told not to do in the garden?
14. (:17) What was man told would happen if he ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil?

God didn't stop with just a beautiful place for this man to live. He also had love planned for this man. Not just a great, wonderful, healthy and prosperous life, but a life overflowing with love. That's what the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was for.

The Lord God knew that the only way true love could live and grow and spread in the man's life was for that man to completely and utterly trust the One Who made him. The man needed to trust that His Maker knew what was best. That His Maker would decide what was good and what was evil. And that His Maker would keep him from any harm.

So the Lord God put a tree in the garden that was not to be eaten. And the man would be able to choose to trust the Lord God. To obey the Lord God. To know that the Lord God knew the difference between good and evil, and all man needed to do was follow the leading of the Lord God. The man would be able to choose to love the Lord God. Love cannot be forced. And love cannot be programmed. Love must be an "eyes-wide-open choice". The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was for love.

If the man would choose to disobey the One Who loved Him, then the man would be choosing to turn away from the Lord God, and turn away from love, and he would die.

15. (:18) Why did God make a helper for man?

Why did the Lord God make a helper for man? Because man was made to love. He could not be happy alone.

16. (:19) What else was formed out of the ground besides man?
17. (:20) Who gave the animals their names?

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I think the Lord God first brought all the animals He had made (also made from the dust of the earth), and paraded them before man. There was a huge celebration - a party- as man named each of these animals and realized that each of them had a mate, a partner - an animal just like them, but different in the most fun way possible. Different sexes. Designed for procreation. The same, but different. With a grand lifelong purpose - fill the earth with others just like us.

After naming all those diverse and stunning animals, the man felt a keen sense of loneliness. All the animals God had created had a partner. A counterpart. Man did not.

Adam fell asleep then, filled with a longing he probably couldn't even quite put his arms around. He felt happy, cared for, but incomplete. The Lord God knew, of course, that man felt this way. There were no secrets between the Maker and this man He loved.

18. (:21-25) Was woman made the same way man was?

So while Adam slept, the Lord God performed a surgery and a miracle. The last miracle of creation. The Lord God took a piece of Adam's body - his rib - and from it the Lord God fashioned a partner for Adam. God made a woman. The woman was not made from the dust of the earth. She was made from the man. She was made to be perfectly a part of him, and yet different. She was made to be carefully protected by him, as if he was protecting his own body.

When Adam awoke, there was the woman. And he knew immediately what the Lord God had done. His heart filled with love for the Lord God Who met this hungering need, And his heart filled with love for the woman, who would now be his partner for life. He named her "woman". Later, after the tragedy that would change their lives, Adam called this woman "Eve". But for now, she was woman, he was man, and they knew a purity of happiness none of us, their descendants, have ever experienced.

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Genesis Chapter 3 - Questions

Question to be thinking about: What difference does it make to my life today that Adam & Eve sinned?

Read the whole chapter, then answer these first 5 Observation Questions:

1. Who?
2. What happened?
3. Where?
4. When?
5. Why?
6. (:1-7) What four "stages" of temptation did Eve experience?
 - (:1&2)
 - (:4&5)
 - (:6)
 - (:6)

How would you define "sin"?

7. (:8-13) What was Adam & Eve's response to God when they disobeyed?
 - What was Adam's response to God's question?
 - What was Eve's response to God's question?
 - What do you not see in their responses?
8. (:14-24) What was the result of sin?
 - For the serpent? (Satan)
 - For Eve?
 - For Adam?
 - For all creation?
 - Why did Adam & Eve have to leave the garden? (:22)

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Application Questions:

9. Is temptation the same thing as sin? (James 1:13-15) If not, when does temptation become sin?
10. Can you find 2 "promises" in Chapter 3? Something which would give hope to a fallen man and woman?
11. Why is there still a guard at the entrance to the garden today? (since a redeemer has already come)
12. What happens when I sin as a believer?
13. What difference does it make to my life today that Adam & Eve sinned?

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A few facts about Satan from scripture:

- He was an angel, created by God. (Rev. 12:1-4, Job 1:6&7)
- He rebelled against God, wishing to be greater than God. (Isaiah 14:12-15)
- He inspired 1/3 of all of God's angels to rebel with him (Rev. 12:1-4)
- He tempted Eve & Adam to also rebel against God, trusting what he (Satan) said over what God had said. (Genesis 3)
- When Adam and Eve trusted (worshipped) Satan, they forfeited their inheritance (creation) to him. (II Cor. 4:4)
- He (Satan) is an extremely powerful being in God's creation. (II Cor 4:4, John 12:31)

He continues today to:

Tempt (Matt 4:3)

Accuse (Rev. 12:10)

Destroy people (I Peter 5:8)

Lie (John 8:44)

Murder (John 8:44)

Bring darkness (Col. 1:13, Eph 6:12)

- Jesus came to destroy Satan and his work (I Jn. 3:8)
- Jesus' death on the cross and resurrection from the dead destroyed Satan's work. (Romans 5: 18&19)
- Jesus' return will totally destroy Satan forever. (Rev. 20)

Genesis Chapter 3 - Answers

We're going to meet Satan in Genesis Chapter 3. He hasn't been mentioned before as we've talked about God's creation....but he was there - a part of God's creation - and he played a despicable role in the events of Chapter 3.

So we're going to start out this week's study with a look at who Satan is, where he came from, and how we should think about him.

Satan, as I said, was a part of God's creation. When God finished His 6 days of creation and looked at it all, and said, in Genesis 1:31 "...it was very good", He meant that all He had created was perfect, complete, and very, very good. That sweeping statement about His creation included the very powerful angel who was initially named "Lucifer", but whom we now know as Satan, or, the devil, or the evil one.

How did a perfect angel created by our perfect God become the evil one? Did God create something evil? No! We read about it in Isaiah 14:12-14. Look

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A Verse-by-Verse Study of the Book of Genesis

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what happened after God created this beautiful, powerful and perfect angel named Lucifer:

"How you are fallen from heaven,
O Lucifer, son of the morning!
How you are cut down to the ground,
You who weakened the nations!
¹³ For you have said in your heart:
'I will ascend into heaven,
I will exalt my throne above the stars of God;
I will also sit on the mount of the congregation
On the farthest sides of the north;
¹⁴ I will ascend above the heights of the clouds,
I will be like the Most High.'

Lucifer made a choice, a choice which changed his eternal nature and destiny. He chose to rebel against the One Who created him. He chose to try to exalt himself above the One, True God. He chose to love himself more than he loved His Lord. I personally think Lucifer saw this beautiful, perfect world Jesus had created, and he lusted after it. He wanted it for his own. So he decided to fight for it.

His rebellious choice lost him his place amongst the heavenly angels - he immediately lost his home in heaven, and his ability to serve his God. His name was changed to Satan.

But what he didn't lose, at least not right away, was his power and his life. He was cast out of heaven, and had to roam throughout God's creation. He apparently was allowed to come back to heaven every once in awhile (which we see happening in the story of Job (Job 1:6-12)). But he would never live in heaven again - he was cast out from his home there forever.

So he began to live on the earth, still having great power, and also having a large group of demons which serve him....and where did those demons come from? One third (yes, 1/3) of all God's created, perfect angels rebelled with Satan right after

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the creation of this world, and became his minions on earth when he was cast out.
(Revelation 12:4)

His first act to take back this beautiful world from God was to show up in the garden of Eden, in the form of a serpent, and to talk to Eve.

Read the whole chapter, then answer these first 5 Observation Questions:

1. Who?
 2. What happened?
 3. Where?
 4. When?
 5. Why?
-
6. (:1-7) What four "stages" of temptation did Eve experience?
 - (:1&2) She began to minimize the generosity of God. The very fact that the serpent was himself questioning the goodness of God opened the door for her to either follow him in beginning to doubt God, or to slam the door in his face. She followed.
 - (:4&5) She heard the serpent say that God was a liar...and she did not disagree. She did not fight back.
 - (:6) She looked at the tree and considered how great it would be to eat of the fruit. She began to plan to disobey.
 - (:6) She ate. She disobeyed. She sinned.

How would you define "sin"? Sin is doing or thinking anything God says not to do or think...or not doing or not thinking anything God says to do or to think. Sin is putting "me" before God. Sin is worshipping me.

7. (:8-13) What was Adam & Eve's response to God when they disobeyed?

They tried to cover themselves up, because they were ashamed of who they had become. And they tried to hide from God.

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- What was Adam's response to God's question? It was the woman's fault.
- What was Eve's response to God's question? It was the serpent's fault.
- What do you not see in their responses? No repentance. No taking the blame for their own actions. No "I'm sorry...I was wrong". No "Oh, Lord God, what have I done to You?" No thought for anyone but themselves.

8. (:14-19) What was the result of sin?

- For the serpent? (Satan) The animal, the serpent, will be cursed above all animals. He will crawl around on his belly (he must not have been a "crawler" before this). The fallen angel, Satan, is told that the children who come from Adam and Eve will hate him and consider him their enemy. And that someday one of the Descendants of Adam and Eve would crush him forever. He (the serpent) will try to kill this Descendant, but will only bruise Him.
- For Eve? She would have pain and sorrow in what should have been a joyous part of her life - child bearing and child rearing. And she will be ruled over by her husband - something she and her future daughters would not like.
- For Adam? He will end up working hard to make a living. What should have been pure joy and very easy will become hard and heartbreaking. He will die.
- For all creation? Thorns and thistles - weeds and all unpleasantness - these were never planned to be a part of God's creation.

Why did Adam & Eve have to leave the garden? (:22) The Lord God showed great mercy as He made it impossible for them to re-enter the Garden of Eden and never be able to partake of the Tree of Life. For if they had, they would have lived forever in their sinful, dying condition. He had plans to offer them something much better than what they deserved - but it would be awhile now before He would bring it to pass.

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A Savior would come someday and get rid of their sin problem forever. Their job was to believe the Lord God when He promised this. To believe God this time. And not to try to clean themselves up. Their future was dependant on God providing the solution - not they themselves providing it. They would have to wait for His time and His place. They would have to live by faith.

Application Questions:

9. Is temptation the same thing as sin? (James 1:13-15) If not, when does temptation become sin?
10. Can you find 2 "promises" in Chapter 3? Something which would give hope to a fallen man and woman?
11. Why is there still a guard at the entrance to the garden today? (since a redeemer has already come)
12. What happens when I sin as a believer?
14. What difference does it make to my life today that Adam & Eve sinned?



Genesis 4 - Questions

Adam & Eve (:1&2)

1. What kind of questions do you think Eve had during her pregnancy?
2. Why do you think Eve said what she said in verse 1?
3. What kind of questions have you had through the years as you have raised children?
4. Where have you gone to get answers?
5. Where did Adam & Eve go to get answers?
6. What would Adam & Eve have dreamed...wanted....for their son's futures?

Cain & Abel (:2-10)

7. What kinds of "careers" did Cain & Abel choose?
8. Why would Cain & Abel have been bringing an offering to God?
9. Why would God have honored one offering but not the other?
(Hebrews 11:4)
10. What did God tell Cain to do about the problem of his offering not being accepted?
11. What did God warn Cain would happen if he didn't get this right?
12. Why did Cain kill Abel?
13. What did God mean: "your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground"?

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The Punishment (:11-15)

14. What two things made up Cain's punishment?

- a.
- b.

15. Did Cain repent?

16. Why did God protect Cain instead of sentencing him to death?

The Results of Sin (:16-24)

17. If you were from the family line of Cain, what could you point to as the well-known parts of your family history?

Seth (:25 & 26)

18. If you were from the family line of Seth, what could you point to as the well-known parts of your family history?

19. What does it mean..."call on the name of the Lord..." ?

Genesis 12:8

Genesis 26:25

I Kings 18:24

Ps. 116:17

Joel 2:32

Zephaniah 3:9

I Cor. 1:2

Genesis 4 - Answers

Adam & Eve (:1&2)

1. What kind of questions do you think Eve had during her pregnancy?

Some of her questions would have been the same as the one I had, I would guess. But some of them would have been very different:

- What does a baby look like?
- How long will I be carrying this baby?
- Will he/she be full-grown at birth?
- How will this baby come out of me?
- What will it feel like?

2. Why do you think Eve said what she said in verse 1?

Because she really knew she had received help from God to survive this birth. I am old enough to have gone through the birth process without an epidural....and I'm pretty sure Eve wondered at some point during her labor whether or not she would live through it.

And also, she probably was wondering if this "man"-child was the promised One the Lord had told them about. Was this the "seed of the woman" who would get rid of their sin problem forever?

3. What kind of questions have you had through the years as you have raised children?

Mine? When to realistically expect what behaviors? How to discipline with love and fairness? When to get mad, when to be patient? How to enforce bedtime? What kind of food to feed when? When to pick up the baby? When to let him/her cry? How to teach? How to listen? What friends to stay away from? What freedoms to give? What freedoms to take away?

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4. Where have you gone to get answers?

Some answers I dragged from deep within me, from my experiences as a child, from my mother's wisdom. Some answers I learned from my friends as they raised their children.

Some answers I got from the Lord. I loved spending time reading my Bible every day and asking the Lord to teach me how to discipline, how to love, and even how to get the strength to keep up with them. I remember when alone time for me was when I was in the bathroom, with 3 toddlers and a dog whining at the door. ☺ I'm not sure those years contain all good memories, but I do remember how good it was to know the Lord was never far away.

5. Where did Adam & Eve go to get answers?

Well, their only choice was to go to God. No experience to call on from themselves or from others.. No friends to imitate. Could they really go to God? Hadn't they lost their sweet, cool walks in the garden with Him? Yes, they had lost those walks, but they had not lost God. They would learn to hear Him, to listen for His leadings, and to respond in faith. They were lost....but not left. They were sinners...but the God of mercy still loved them. They learned to pray.

6. What would Adam & Eve have dreamed...for their son's futures?

First, they would have wanted one of their sons to be the promised Savior. Then, they would have wanted their sons to learn to know the God who created them. Then, like us, they would have wanted to see their sons grow to work and take care of themselves. They would have wanted happiness for them. Peace for them. Forgiveness for them.

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Eventually, they would have realized their sons, too, would have families of their own, and they would have wanted healthy, happy children for them and a future full of good things.'

Cain & Abel (:2-10)

7. What kinds of "careers" did Cain & Abel choose?

A farmer. A herdsman.

8. Why would Cain & Abel have been bringing an offering to God?

This is significant. Adam and Eve would have taught them, as they grew, to return again and again to the presence of the LORD. To approach Him. They would have taught them how to pray...and that approaching God in prayer was not possible if a person was stained with sin. They would have taught them that blood must be shed in order to pay the price for sin. They would have taught them how to make a blood-sacrifice.

9. Why would God have honored one offering but not the other? (Hebrews 11:4)

Hebrews 11:4 gives us a hint. Abel offered his offering in faith, Cain did not. Abel drew near to God knowing he had no righteousness of his own to make him worthy to enter God's presence. He offered a sacrificed animal, signifying the horrible price which must be paid to wash away sin.

Cain apparently approached God feeling capable and proud of his accomplishments. He brought the fruit of his labors, and arrogantly supposed God would be pleased with him.

But God was not. God could not be approached with anything but repentance for sin and reliance upon God for forgiveness.

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10. What did God tell Cain to do about the problem of his offering not being accepted?

He told him to back up and do things the way he should have in the first place. He told him to exercise faith, not pride.

11. What did God warn Cain would happen if he didn't get this right?

He warned him that a horrible sin was waiting to pounce on him.

12. Why did Cain kill Abel?

Jealousy. Pride. Unwillingness to believe in God. Hatred of someone who did believe in God. But mostly, Cain killed Abel because he would not repent of his sin or pride in the way he approached God. His pride sin left the door wide open for his murder sin.

13. What did God mean: "your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground"?

Abel's blood, which Cain spilled on the ground when he killed him, was not silent. It was witness against Abel.

Revelation 18:24 talks about this blood. It talks about the rotten, horrible world system which began in the heart of Cain, and has continued ever since, up to our time, opening the door to horrible, heart-wrenching sin, and spilling the blood of countless men and women.

It began with Cain. Pride and self-importance grow into murder and death every time. It took the life of Abel. It took the life of Jesus. But it will not stay around forever.

"In the world you shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer...I have overcome the world." - *Jesus* (John 16:33)

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The Punishment (:11-15)

14. What two things made up Cain's punishment?

- a. You will not have any success growing things
- b. You will be a wanderer - no settling down in a homeland.

15. Did Cain repent? It doesn't look like he did. He pleaded for God to make his punishment more bearable. But He did not repent.

16. Why did God protect Cain instead of sentencing him to death? Because Cain carried the seed of future generations within him. Someone in one of those future generations needed to live so he/she could come to faith in the Maker of Heaven and Earth.

The Results of Sin (:16-24)

17. If you were from the family line of Cain, what could you point to as the well-known parts of your family history?

First sin

First murder

First polygamy

First killing in self-defense

Seth (:25 & 26)

18. If you were from the family line of Seth, what could you point to as the well-known parts of your family history?

First sin

First grief of death of a sibling

First people to call upon the Lord.

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19. What does it mean..."call on the name of the Lord..." ?

What do each of the following verses tell you about "calling on the name of the LORD"?

- Genesis 12:8 Abraham called on the name of the LORD every time he stopped, before he moved on to his next destination. He was worshipping and asking for guidance.
- Ps. 116:17 Calling on the name of the LORD had to do with giving thanks to the LORD.
- I Cor. 1:2 Calling on the name of the LORD indicates a person of faith.
- I Kings 18:24 Calling on the name of the LORD is prayer.
- Genesis 22:14 Calling on the name of LORD involved sacrifice.
- Joel 2:32 Calling on the name of LORD is the way to deliverance
- Zephaniah 3:9 Calling on the name of the LORD puts you in a place of ability to serve the God of Gods.

Application Question: What are two main lessons you take away from this chapter?

1.

2.



Genesis 5 - Questions

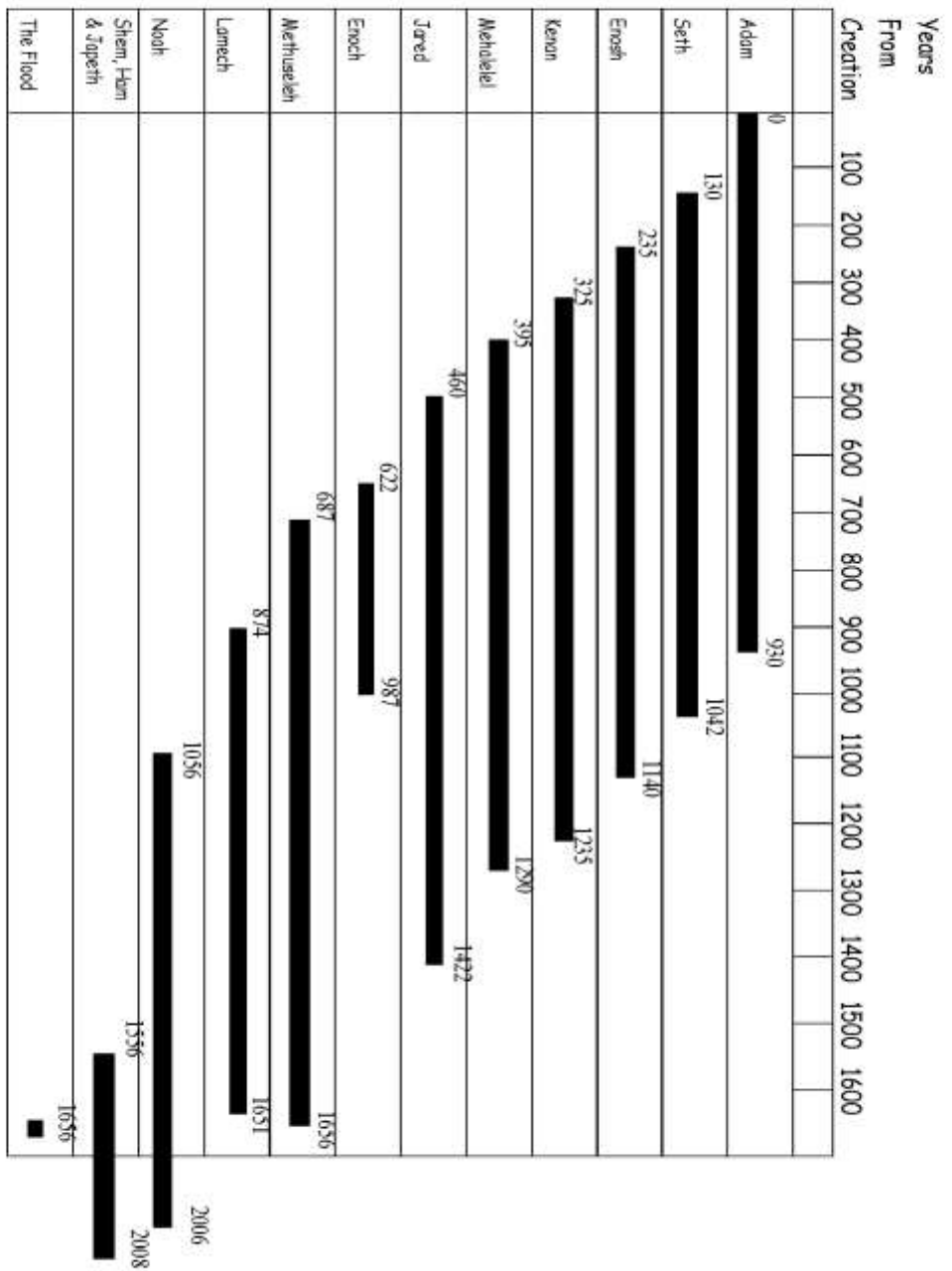
Do you recognize any names in this genealogy?

1. :1&2 In what way did God bless them?
2. :3-31 What did all these men have in common?
3. :3-31 What can you learn from the timetable on the next page?
4. :3-31 What can you learn about God from the timetable?
5. What happened to all the people who came from Adam?(except Enoch)
Why?
6. :21-24 What happened to Enoch? Why?
7. Is there anyone else in scripture who did not die?
II Kings 2:1-11
8. Is there anyone else prophesied by scripture who will not die? I Thess. 4:13-18
9. Is there any chance one of the 2 witnesses of Revelation is Enoch?
(Revelation 11)

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Wife, Mother

From Adam to Noah



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Genesis 5 - Answers

Do you recognize any names in this genealogy?

Genesis 5:1&2

1. :1&2 In what way did God bless them?

If we could just number the ways God blessed these people....on our fingers....we wouldn't have enough fingers, would we? He gave them life. He gave them each other. He gave them a world to live in. He gave them food. He gave them abilities to harvest, grow, and manage that food. He gave them scenery. He gave them innumerable animals to fill their days and nights with fun. He gave them authority over the whole earth - dominion over this world He had created. And on and on and on.

Look at Psalm 8:6-8: "You have made him (man) to have dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet. All sheep and oxen - even the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea that pass through the paths of the seas."

The Lord God gave man so much - and Adam and Eve threw it all away with one rebellious act. They handed over dominion of the earth to satan - because he became the master of this world when the masters of this world obeyed him instead of God.

Genesis 5:3-32

2. :3-31 What did all these men have in common?

Adam, Seth, Enosh, Cainan, Mahalalel, Jared, Enoch Methuselah, Lamech, & Noah. What did they all have in common? They were all created by God. They were all born. They all had sons. They all died. They all ate vegetarian diets.

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3. :3-31 What can you learn from the [timetable chart?](#)([click here to view the "From Adam to Noah" chart on kathleendalton.com](#))

- Men lived a much longer time then that we do now.
- The first-born son was the one who passed on the family line
- It was sometimes a very long time before a son was born
- One man, Enoch, did not live nearly as long as the others.
- Noah waited 500 years for his sons to be born - and then they were born in the same year. Triplets?
- Adam was still alive when 9 generations had been born from him.
- Methuselah died in the same year as the flood.
- Methuselah's son died before he did.
- Noah died only 2 years before his son, Shem, did.

4. :3-31 What can you learn about God from the [timetable chart ?](#)

I like learning things from charts. I'm sure there's much more to learn about God from this passage, but just from the timetable chart, here's what I learned:

- God is patient. He is willing to wait for a long, long time for the right man to do the job.
- God is generous. Even though each of these men deserved to die - they were all sinners - yet still God gave them a long, long life to enjoy before their death.
- God is the perfect Creator. The world God created was marred by sin, but was still so beautiful and clear of pollution that people could live even almost to 1,000 years!
- God wanted men to fill His earth - that's probably one reason He gave them such a long time to live.
- God loves all people - women, too, of course. But He did choose the men to pass on the family line.

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5. What happened to all the people who came from Adam?(except Enoch)
Why?

Everyone died a natural death. Why? Because they inherited that sin nature and punishment for sin from Adam.

6. :21-24 What happened to Enoch? Why?

Enoch, because he had such a heart for God, did not die a natural death. His body was simply taken up to heaven - they call it "translated" to heaven. His body did not die - it was just taken up to heaven. Why? Well, one reason was his life of love for God. But God probably had other reasons - this may be something you want to put on your "throne List"....that list of questions you have for God as you someday stand before the throne.

7. Is there anyone else in scripture who did not die?
II Kings 2:1-11

Yes, there was one other man in the Old Testament who did not die, but was taken up to heaven, much the same as Enoch, I suppose. His name was Elijah. He was a prophet of God, and was caught up to heaven, with others watching, in a chariot of fire.

8. Is there anyone else prophesied by scripture who will not die? I Thess. 4:13-18

Yes!!!! There will be a whole generation of believers in Jesus who are caught up to heaven without dying. This event is called the Rapture, and happens sometime during the Last 7 Years (or Tribulation) just before Jesus' return to earth. When the Rapture occurs, everyone alive at that time who is a believer in Jesus will be snatched up to heaven, and also everyone who has ever believed in Jesus but is dead will be snatched up, too.

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9. Is there any chance one of the 2 witnesses of Revelation is Enoch?
(Revelation 11)

Now here's an interesting little something to hide away in the back of your mind. I don't think scripture is totally clear on this - it's just a possibility. There are 2 Witnesses who appear during the Last 7 Years (tribulation) and preach outside the temple in Jerusalem. They appear before the church leaves in the Rapture, but then they stay to continue preaching after the church is gone. They cannot be harmed by anti-christ (even though he tries to) until the very end of that Last 7 Years. Then they are killed by anti-christ, lie dead in the streets of Jerusalem for 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ days, and then are resurrected to heaven! Some people think that since Enoch and Elijah are the only 2 people from the Old Testament who never died, they will be the 2 Witnesses. Do you think that's a possibility?

Genesis 6 - Questions

The Reasons for the Flood

1. What were the reasons for the flood?
 - (:1-4)
 - (:5-7)
 - (:8)
2. Why couldn't God just let sin go on? Isn't that what He is doing today? God knew we were going to keep on sinning even after Noah and his family were saved in the flood. Why didn't He just destroy everyone and everything instead of saving a few?
3. How bad is sin, really? How about "insignificant" sins? What do they really harm? How about sins no one ever finds out about? Is there a difference between the sins of the unbelievers and the sins of believers?
4. From Romans 1:18-32, what is the underlying cause of all sin?
5. What is God's solution for our sin problem?
6. Does our sin problem go away when we become true believers in Jesus? (Romans 6:1) (I Jn. 1:9)
7. What should I do about past sins?

Why Noah?

8. From verse 9, name two reasons God chose Noah:
 1. 1.
 2. 2.

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9. 6:8&9 Why did Noah find favor (grace) in the eyes of the Lord? (Ephesians 2:8&9)
10. Have I experienced God's favor (grace)? In what way?
11. Do I want God's favor (grace)? More of God's favor (grace)? What happens to people who have God's favor (grace)?
12. Verses 11-13 make it pretty clear God wanted to destroy the earth. What else is pretty clear because God chose Noah?

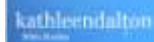
The Instructions:

13. What are the details we see in verses :14-21 about the construction of the ark?
(:14)
(:15)
(:16)
(:17)
(:18)
(:19)
(:20)
(:21)
14. What do you learn about God from these details?
15. What do you learn about Noah from verse 22?
16. 6:18 What covenant was God going to "establish" with Noah?
(8:30 - 9:17?)

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The logo for Kathleen Dalton, featuring the name "kathleendalton" in a lowercase, sans-serif font, with "www.kathleendalton.com" in a smaller font below it, all on a blue rectangular background.

17. What is a covenant?

Bi-lateral?

Uni-lateral?

Application Questions:

1. Is there any unconfessed sin in my life? What should I do about it? Could it possibly still be doing any harm to me or anyone else?
2. Do I trust God to take care of me....like Noah trusted God to take care of him and his family?
3. If I find I have areas where I don't trust God, what should I do?
4. Is the desire of my heart to obey God in every area of my life?

Genesis 6 - Answers

We have three (3) really major topics to cover in this chapter of *Genesis*. We're going to talk about sin, grace, and covenants with God.

Sin - because the world, through sinning, had gotten itself into such a degraded state of affairs by *Genesis* Chapter 6.

Grace - because one man, Noah, was shown the grace of God.

And Covenants - because God took Noah & his family off the ark which saved them from the flood and made a covenant with them.

Genesis 6:1-8

The Reasons for the Flood

1. What were the reasons for the flood?
 - (:1-4) Something evil and ugly happened on the earth just before the days of Noah. Many Bible scholars agree that probably what this passage is talking about is a time when demons ("sons of God" would be those angels created by God which followed Satan in his rebellion against God) slept with human women and produced giant offspring. The earth began to fill with these half demon/half persons who loved sin and hated God.
 - (:5-7) The Lord hates what has happened. He has a desire to wipe the whole earth and all its inhabitants out of existence.
 - (:8) But the Lord also loves mankind. (John 3:16) He finds one man, Noah, who does love and trust in Him - and He decides to save mankind by saving the family of Noah and anyone else who would repent and follow Noah onto the ark.
2. Why couldn't God just let sin go on? Isn't that what He is doing today? God knew we were going to keep on sinning even after Noah and his family were

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saved in the flood. Why didn't He just destroy everyone and everything instead of saving a few?

There are 2 questions here - both of them are worth asking.

First - why not just let sin and sinners just exist? Why be so passionate to wipe out sin? The answer to that one is sad. Sin doesn't just stay bad. It gets worse. And worse. And worse. And eventually it destroys completely and agonizingly. God couldn't let sin just exist as long as God cared about mankind. Sin was going to destroy everything and everyone eventually.

Second - Why not destroy it all then? Why save a few? The answer to this question is happy. God knew you and I were going to be born someday - and He didn't want to destroy us along with the whole world until we had our chance to believe.

So you can see that God had more in mind than just the salvation of Noah and his family from a flood. The flood gave Noah and his family the chance to trust in God at that time in history...and also to know that someday a final solution to their sin problem would also be supplied by this God they loved and trusted.

The generations which came from Noah (including you and me) also have had our chance to trust that God could and would and did provide a final solution to our sin problem. That solution was Jesus Christ - Who appeared on earth some 2,500 years after the flood of Genesis 6.

In effect, God saved Noah with an ark so that generations later God could save the rest of us with a cross.

3. How bad is sin, really? How about "insignificant" sins? What do they really harm? How about sins no one ever finds out about? Is there a difference between the sins of the unbelievers and the sins of believers?

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Was it only the really big, bad sins which brought this worldwide flood? From scripture we learn that certain things are true of sin - no matter how big or small. There's a list below of nine (9) of those true characteristics of sin. Read them through and judge for yourself how significant even a small sin is:

1. Romans 1:29-32

Sin gets worse and worse

One sin does not usually just stop there. Sin leads to other sin...to other sin....to worse and worse sins.

2. John 8:34, Prov. 5:22

Sin enslaves, ensnares

Sin is like a trap hidden in the woods. The unsuspecting person steps into the trap, thinking he can keep going forward, only to find that the sin has held him in place. He can't move forward. He can't wriggle free.

3. Psalms 38:4,5

Sin brings guilt

Guilt cannot be sidestepped. The heavy burden of it can show up in all kinds of ways in our lives. Guilt which is not acknowledged and dealt with can cause depression, physical sickness, and even death. It can destroy families, and end lives in loneliness and uselessness.

4. Numbers 32:23

Sin can't be kept secret

When any of us sins, we want it to be kept quiet. We usually don't want anyone else to know. But it never stays quiet. Sin will always be known to all. Shouted from the housetops, sometimes.

5. Hebrews 11:25

Sin does give pleasure

It helps to understand this. There is pleasure in sin. But only for a little while. It doesn't last. Guilt sets in soon and even more sin must be added in order to get back the pleasure. Like an addiction to heroin, sin craves more, and the trap is very powerful.

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6. Proverbs 14:1

Sin tears down

Whatever you have tried to build up....the good things you have tried to do...they can all be speedily torn down by just one sin.

7. Exodus 34:7

Sin must be punished

The LORD has no choice. The nature of sin is that it must be dealt with. Punishment must follow.

8. Romans 6:23

Sin brings death

And the very worst punishment for sin is death...and it always comes. The Good News of Jesus Christ is that He has taken our punishment. Amazingly, we don't have to be punished if we will accept Jesus' gift.

9. Romans 6

Sin has results...even for the forgiven Christian

Yes, sin has results, even for a Christian who has truly believed in Jesus. Forgiveness of sin and removal of the penalty of death do not mean that the scars of sin will not remain in our lives. We will usually bear them our whole lives, until some day we have new bodies in heaven.

So...addictions will still have a strong pull

Divorces will still bring pain.

Disobedience to parents will still destroy families

Lying will still foster lack of trust

Sexual sin will still bring disease and destroy marriages

Cheating will stand land us in jail.

As you look over these 9 truths about sin, I think you'll conclude as I have:

- The flood wasn't because of the big sins.
- The flood was because of little sins....and big sins.
- The flood wasn't a judgment.
- It was a mercy.
- It was salvation offered to all.

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4. From Romans 1:18-32, what is the underlying cause of all sin?

The underlying cause of all sin is the human heart which is fully aware of the presence of God and the Holiness of God, and constantly chooses to not worship and obey and glorify God. Instead the human heart desires to glorify only itself. (Romans 1:21 "...because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened..."

5. What is God's solution for our sin problem?

God's solution has always been the same. He would come as a human, live the perfect life, offer His sinless life as a payment for our sin, die on a cross, then after 3 days, rise from the dead - the first human being to conquer death. His life for ours. The great trade.

Our part in this transaction? Believe and accept. Noah's part in this transaction? Believe and accept.

6. Does our sin problem go away when we become true believers in Jesus? (Romans 6:1) (I Jn. 1:9)

Yes, the judgment for our sin goes away. We will never have to pay the awful price of separation from God through death. Not ever. Our life is eternal from the moment we believe and accept.

But no, part of our sin problem doesn't go away yet. The desire to sin is still with us as long as we are in our current bodies. We will still struggle with sin. We will still fail. But we will no longer be contented to be that way. The Holy Spirit comes to live within us when we believe and accept. He will not let us live happily in sin ever again. He will push one over and over to the throne of God where we can admit our sin and ask the Lord to change us.

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7. What should I do about past sins?

So...what if I have sinned - either yesterday or maybe 20 years ago? What if I have done something I have kept secret for years? What if I have hurt others, or lied, or cheated, or stolen, or murdered. Should I just keep going and hope I don't do those things anymore? Or should I do something more intentional to make those sins right?

1. Make sure you are a true believer - have you believed and accepted?
2. Admit your sin to God.
3. Ask Him to change you.
4. Admit your sin to anyone who was hurt by your sin.
5. Offer to make recompense when it is appropriate.
6. Go forward.

Why Noah?

8. From verse 9, name three (3) reasons God chose Noah:

1. Noah was a just man. Meaning - Noah was righteous in the eyes of God. What makes a man righteous in the eyes of God? Only 2 things can do that:
 1. Never having sinned. Would this even have been possible? (Romans 3:23) Or,,,
 2. Made righteous by faith. (like Abraham to come later, Noah would have "believed God and been declared righteous." Genesis 15:6.Which do you think it was?
2. Noah was "perfect" in his generations. Meaning - The blood line of Noah had not been compromised with the evil of demons cohabiting with humans. And remember - the seed of the Messiah resided in Noah. He didn't know it...but we do.
3. Noah walked with God. Meaning - just like Enoch of old, Noah had a personal relationship with God and talked with Him every day. This is a natural result of being righteous in the eyes of God.

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9.6:8&9 Why did Noah find favor (grace) in the eyes of the Lord? (Ephesians 2:8&9)

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."

The word "grace" means "unmerited favor". In other words, no one can "earn" or be good enough to deserve God's grace.

So...why did Noah find favor (grace) in the eyes of the Lord/ Not because he was good enough. Not because he was first righteous and then God chose him.

Instead, God first decided to pour His grace on Noah, and then Noah had a desire to believe in and walk with God. Grace is God's gift. Faith is our own response to that grace - if we choose to. After God gives His grace, people can still choose to not have faith...why they would I'll never understand...but they can, and they do.

God poured out His grace on Noah. Noah chose to believe in and love the Lord God. Therefore, God chose Noah for an awesome and unbelievably hard job. An impossible job. Noah would only be able to do this job as he loved and trusted his God day by day.

What was the job God gave Noah? It was two-fold:

1. Preach to all those who would hear about the judgment of God that was coming. 2nd Peter 2:5, Hebrews 11:7
2. Build an ark. A place of safety for all who responded to the grace of God being poured out on them by God.

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10. Have I experienced God's favor (grace)? In what way?

11. Do I want God's favor (grace)? More of God's favor (grace)? What happens to people who have God's favor (grace)?

12. Verses 11-13 make it pretty clear God wanted to destroy the earth. What else is pretty clear because God chose Noah?

God didn't want to destroy all the people - He wanted them to have a chance to choose faith.

The Instructions:

13. What are the details we see in verses :14-21 about the construction of the ark?

(:14) The ark is to be made of gopherwood (NKJV). It should have dividers in it to make separate rooms, and it should be made waterproof with pitch.

(:15) It shall be 300 cubits long, 50 cubits wide, and 30 cubits high.

(:16) It shall have a window about 18 inches from the top, and it shall have a door in its side. It shall have 3 floors, or levels within it.

(:18) Noah and his family (8 in all) shall enter the ark when it is finished, and when God says to do so.

(:19) Bring two (2) of all kinds of animals with you onto the ark. I will make sure they come. You get them on. Birds and animals and creatures- but no fish - they will stay in the seas.

(:20) Two (2) of each kind, after their kind...which means a male and a female of each species.

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(:21) Bring food for people and animals

14. What do you learn about God from these details?

I think it's obvious that God knows and cares about the details. To me that means that He also knows and cares about the details of my life, too.

15. What do you learn about Noah from verse 22?

Noah obeyed. He may not have understood all the implications of what God was saying at first (after all, Noah had never seen rain, nor floodwaters, nor perhaps even the ocean!), but he knew and trusted God. So He obeyed down to the last detail. Noah was still going to make bad decisions in his life in the future...he was still going to sin....but right here and now he chose to listen to the Lord God and do exactly what He said.

16. 6:18 What covenant was God going to "establish" with Noah?

When we get to chapters 8 and 9 we'll learn more about this covenant, but for now the important thing to note is that God was not keeping Noah in the dark about what would happen after the flood. He was making promises to Noah for the future. That's what His covenant would be. (8:30 - 9:17?)

17. What is a covenant?

A covenant is a promise between 2 or more people. There are two (2) kinds of covenants:

Bi-lateral? - Each person in the covenant promises to do something. The keeping of those promises keeps the covenant in place. For instance: When I agree to purchase a house, I make a covenant with the current homeowner. I will pay money for the house. And the current homeowner makes a covenant with me. He will give me ownership of the house when I pay the money. This is 2 promises which make up a covenant.

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Uni-lateral? - A Unilateral covenant is when only one of the persons involved in the covenant makes the promise. The other one is simply the recipient of the benefits of the covenant. For instance: When a married couple has a baby, they are in effect making a promise to love and protect and raise that child to adulthood. The baby makes no promises. It will be nice if the baby grows and learns to be kind and giving and a worthwhile son or daughter, but the parents still have the responsibility to raise the child whether the child turns out good or not. In this case, the child gets the benefits of the unilateral covenant made by the parents to the child.

Was this covenant God was going to make with Noah and his family going to be bilateral or unilateral? Wait until Chapters 8 and 9 and we'll see.

Application Questions:

18. Is there any unconfessed sin in my life? What should I do about it? Could it possibly still be doing any harm to me or anyone else?
19. Do I trust God to take care of me....like Noah trusted God to take care of him and his family?
20. If I find I have areas where I don't trust God, what should I do?
21. Is the desire of my heart to obey God in every area of my life?

Genesis 7&8 - Questions

7:1-5

1. Can you tell from the passage whether just Noah was "righteous"? Or the whole family?
2. Can you "save" your family?
3. God commanded Noah to take "by sevens" the male and female of every "clean" animal and "by two" the male and female of all animals that are "unclean". What is the difference between "clean" and "unclean" animals?

7:6-16

4. What is the sequence of events?

Noah & family enter the ark

Animals come to Noah

Rain Begins

Animals enter the ark

7 days pass

Springs come up from the deep

God shuts the door

5. Is there significance in the fact that God gave us precise details and exact dates (2nd month, 17th day) when the flood came?
6. What is meant by "fountains of the deep"? (11)

7:17-24

7. Was the flood really worldwide?

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8. What parallels can be drawn between the ark and Jesus Christ?
9. What parallels can be drawn between the flood and God's final judgment?
10. What were the purposes of the flood?
11. What are the purposes of God's final judgment?

When God spoke unto Noah,
And told him build the ark,
The Lord knew well the vessel
Would cheerless be and dark.
So God said "Build a window"
With outlook toward the sky
So when it's dark and lonely
You'll see Me standing by"

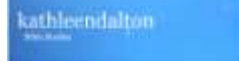
The storms may come, but fear not
Oh, Noah I am nigh
And through the open window
You'll see Me standing by.

12. What is our window?
13. Why did Noah enter the ark?
Why did Noah leave the ark?
14. How do you think Noah and his family felt as they left the ark?
15. 8:17 What can every living creature now do...now that they are off the ark?
16. 8:20 What was the first thing Noah did after he and the animals left the ark? (:20)

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17. How is that similar to your response when you heard of salvation through Jesus?
18. 8:21-22 What promise does God make as Noah comes off the ark?
19. Has God kept this promise?
20. Even in the final judgment at the end of times is this promise still in effect? (Rev. 19)

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Genesis 7&8 - A Little Quiz Off the Ark!!!

1. Match these: (Draw lines to match items from one column to the other)

7 days	Time to load up the animals
2 nd Month, 17 th day, year 600	Sent the raven & dove out
40 days, 40 nights	Left the ark
5 months	On the ark, no land to be seen
7 th Month, 17 th day, year 600	Dove brings back olive leaf
10 th Month, 1 st day, year 600	Flood begins
40 days after mountains can be seen	Cover off of the ark
7 days after raven and dove sent out	Dove disappears
7 days after dove returns with leaf	Total time in ark
1 st Month, 1 st day, year 601	Tops of mountains seen
2 nd Month, 27 th day, year 601	Rains during this time
1 year 10 days	Ark rests on Mt. Ararat

Put the above events in order

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.

Genesis 7&8 - Answers

7:1-5

1. Can you tell from the passage whether just Noah was "righteous"? Or the whole family?

In my Bible, the NKJV version, it says: "...I (God) have seen that you are righteous before Me in this generation". The "you" could be singular, and then refer only to Noah...or it could be plural, and then refer to the whole family.

So, were these 8 people all trusting in God as they entered the ark, or was just Noah? Did they all have faith? Were they all saying words similar to these in their hearts? "Our soul waits for the LORD; He is our help and our shield. For our heart shall rejoice in Him, because we have trusted in His holy name. Let Your mercy, O LORD, be upon us, just as we hope in you." (Psalm 33:20-22)

Let's go to some other passages in scripture to see if we can get an answer to this question:

- ⁸ Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying: ⁹ "And as for Me, behold, I establish My covenant with you and with your descendants^[a] after you, (Genesis 9:8)
- "...in the days of Noah, while *the* ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water." I Peter 3:19b

I don't think there is a clear answer to this question, but here are my conclusions:

1. Eight people got into the ark. The whole world around them refused to join them. That in itself might lead us to assume they were all people of faith - why else would you leave all common sense behind and do such a foolish-looking thing?
2. God established His covenant with all 8 of them as they stepped of the ark. His covenant was non-conditional - they didn't have to do anything to receive the benefits of His promises as part of this covenant. Would God have offered this covenant to them if they were not people of faith? The answer

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to that is surprising. This Noahic covenant was not one of promising eternal life - instead, the covenant simply said "Here's the way things will be different for the whole world after the flood." These were promises of God to the earth and all who lived on it and would live on it from that time forward. Many of those would be non-believers, but still God offered and has kept this covenant to all. So this line of reasoning doesn't give us any answer, one way or the other, to our question.

3. I Peter 3:19 says 8 souls were saved by water. Now we know they were saved from the flood - but they also were a very strong illustration of the future salvation of many people - a salvation from the judgment of God. A salvation which would require a step of faith. This verse convinces me that the family of Noah were not just tagging along with faithful Dad, but were people of faith themselves.

2. Can you "save" your family?

This is why I am asking this question: Too many people in our world today are resting in the fact that they are safe in the circle of God's love and protection simply because their parents are people of faith. The Bible just doesn't teach this. Every person must stand before the LORD on their own and answer the question: "Have you believed in Jesus?"

We can pray for our families, talk to our families, influence our families in a hundred different ways. But we cannot save them. We cannot guarantee their position in eternity simply because we are ourselves believers in Him.

3. God commanded Noah to take "by sevens" the male and female of every "clean" animal and "by two" the male and female of all animals that are "unclean". What is the difference between "clean" and "unclean" animals?

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Clean animals would have been OK for eating and for sacrificing. Unclean animals were not OK for either eating or sacrificing, but are still a part of God's creation and necessary for the functioning of the world. Here are some examples of unclean animals: camel, rabbit, pig, and anything with paws (dog, cat, bear, lion, tiger...etc.).

Noah would have taken extra of the clean animals so that there would be some for eating, some for sacrificing, and some saved for letting loose into the post-ark world so that they could begin to create more animals of their kind.

7:6-16

4. What is the sequence of events? Is the following sequence of events right? If not, what order should they be in? (see the chart on the following page)

Noah & family enter the ark
Animals come to Noah
Rain Begins
Animals enter the ark
7 days pass
Springs come up from the deep
God shuts the door

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Event	Explanation
Noah & family enter the ark	First, Noah and his family enter the ark. Everything is ready.
Animals come to Noah	Then, the animals begin to arrive, 2 by 2, and in 7's.
Animals enter the ark	Then the animals enter the ark. Noah and family get them organized within the ark.
God shuts the door	Once all the animals are in, God shuts the door behind them. At this point, all of Noah's family, and all animals, birds, insects are in the ark.
7 days pass	This had to be really hard for Noah and his family. 7 whole days pass with Noah and family inside the ark, with all those animals. Waiting. Waiting for God to begin the rain and begin the flood. What do you think was going through their minds?
Rain Begins	Now they hear the sound they have been waiting for. They have never heard this sound before. Raindrops hitting the roof of the ark.
Springs come up from the deep	The flood itself begins - not just because of the amount of rain coming down from the heavens, but also because of the waters which flow up from below the earth.

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5. Is there significance in the fact that God gave us precise details and exact dates (2nd month, 17th day) when the flood came?

We've seen before that God is a God of details. We see that again. He also seems to be a God of timing. He cares about when things begin and when they end. He plans ahead and appears to be calm and ready for things to start happening. He also asks us to put our timing to the side and be willing to work within his plans.

6. What is meant by "fountains of the deep"? (11)

I've only been a part of one flood in Indiana. We had been having lots of rain for a couple of weeks, as I remember. One Saturday the rain just came and came and came, and the little creek behind our church got so full it couldn't easily pass under the roadway next to our church. The water began to flood the roadway, then backed up into our church parking lot and across the street it backed up into the little apartments next to the road. People were surprised by the waters which crept into their apartments and then got deeper and deeper. Refrigerators began to float. The people in the apartments scrambled to find ways out of their apartments. Many tried to cross the roadway, where the waters were now at least waist-deep, and made it to our church building, which was a little higher above the waters. The waters got as high as the church doorway, but stopped there.

Ours was a little flood - nobody was seriously injured...they were just scared a little and anxious to get to somewhere safe. It came not just because of the rain, but also because of the waters which had nowhere to go from the creek behind the church, and the water which was already built up in the ground from the previous weeks of precipitation.

"Fountains of the deep" would have been accumulations of waters underground which bubbled up because there was nowhere else to go.

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7:17-24

7. Was the flood really worldwide?

The passage seems to include every possible part of the world being covered by the flood.

8. What parallels can be drawn between the ark and Jesus Christ? (Chart is from Nancy Guthrie's Bible Study on Genesis - "The Promised One" - page 96)

Ark	Christ
The ark was a divine provision of grace (Genesis 6:13-14)	John 3:16, Rev. 13:8
The ark was a refuge from divine judgment (Genesis 6:17-18)	Acts 4:12, Romans 5:9-10
God invited Noah and his family to come into the ark. (Genesis 7:1)	Matthew 11:28, Acts 16:31
The ark was a place of absolute security (Genesis 6:14, 7:16, 8:18-19)	John 10:28, 18:9, Colossians 3:3, I Peter 1:5
The ark bore the judgment of God in the form of the flood (Genesis 7:17-18)	John 12:32-33, I Peter 2:24
All of those outside the ark perished (Genesis 7:21-23)	Acts 13:40-41

9. What parallels can be drawn between the flood and God's final judgment?

It has been promised. It is coming. It will not wait once it starts. The flood was water. The final judgment will be fire. Those who survive will be the ones who have taken the way of escape offered by God.

10. What were the purposes of the flood?

To cleanse the earth. To give a fresh start. To keep man from totally destroying himself before the Savior could come.

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11. What are the purposes of God's final judgment?

To re-make the earth. To give a fresh start. To save mankind out of this world of sin and usher them into the home that will last forever.

(the following is a little song I learned years ago)



When God spoke unto Noah,
And told him build the ark,
The Lord knew well the vessel
Would cheerless be and dark.
So God said "Build a window"
With outlook toward the sky
So when it's dark and lonely
You'll see Me standing by"

The storms may come, but fear not
Oh, Noah I am nigh
And through the open window
You'll see Me standing by.

12. What is our window?

The Bible is our window. Through it we see Jesus standing by in the midst of our storms.

13. Why did Noah enter the ark?
Why did Noah leave the ark?

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These are just 2 simple questions to focus our minds on what is key to the story of Noah: Noah believed in God and trusted God and therefore obeyed God, no matter what. God was the center of this story. And Noah's kind of belief is true belief. No other kind of belief is the kind of belief God requires. Noah was not a perfect man - we're going to see that clearly in Chapter 9 - but he had faith in God, Who is perfect.

14. How do you think Noah and his family felt as they left the ark?

Frightened. Relieved. Excited. Curious. Adventurous.

15. 8:17 What can every living creature now do...now that they are off the ark?

Be fruitful and multiply. The earth needed to be filled again.

16. 8:20 What was the first thing Noah did after he and the animals left the ark? (:20)

Make a sacrifice to God. Why? Because Noah knew the only reason he was alive was because of God. And his whole future was totally dependent on God. And he also knew he didn't deserve a lick of this. So he sacrificed to God, killing innocent animals and shedding their blood so that he would never forget - someday someOne innocent, one of his own descendants, would be the final sacrifice for sin, and would wash away all of his guilt and imperfection forever.

17. How is that similar to your response when you heard of salvation through Jesus?

Very similar indeed. When I realized Jesus had died for me....not just for the whole world, but for me....I was so grateful that I just wanted to give something back to Him for what He had done for me. But I knew I had nothing to offer Him. I knew His sacrifice was priceless - I could never match it. So I just told Him He could have my life, if He wanted it. It wasn't much, but it was all I had.

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18. 8:21-22 What promise does God make as Noah comes off the ark?

Never again will He wipe all life from the face of the earth through a flood.

19. Has God kept this promise?

Yes.

20. Even in the final judgment at the end of times is this promise still in effect?
(Rev. 19)

In the end, God does wipe all unbelieving men from the face of the earth. They die because He judges them for their sin of not believing in Him. But not all men are wiped out, and not all animals are wiped out. And it's not by a flood. It's by fire.

So, yes, God keeps His promise to the end.

Genesis 9 - Questions

So....What is a covenant?

- An agreement, vow, or promise between at least 2 parties
- Can be one-sided (unilateral) or two-sided (bilateral)...key word is "if".
- There are terms
- It is binding
- Can't be set aside if all parties are keeping their sides
- There is something given as proof

1. What are some covenants we use in our daily lives?
2. (9:1-17) What are the terms of this covenant God established with Noah?
 1. Between:
 2. Is there an "if"?
 3. What are the terms?
 -
 -
 -
 -
 -
 -
 4. What was given as proof?
 5. Has it ever been set aside?
 6. What are we to remember when we see the sign?
 7. What is God to remember when He sees the sign?
3. (9:18-9:28) What exactly happened here?
4. Why does Canaan get cursed for Ham's problem?

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5. What are the parts of this curse?
 - a. Who is not included?
 - b. What is Canaan's future going to look like?
 - c. Of the three brothers, whom will rule over whom?
6. Did the curse come true? Gen 10:15 I Kings 9:20-21
7. What covenant protects all of us from the curse of sin?
Jeremiah 31:31, John 3:36, I Cor 11:25

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Genesis 9 - Answers

So....What is a covenant?

- An agreement, vow, or promise between at least 2 parties
- Can be one-sided (unilateral) or two-sided (bilateral)...key word is "if".
- There are terms
- It is binding
- Can't be set aside if all parties are keeping their sides
- There is something given as proof

1. What are some covenants (or contracts) we use in our daily lives?

Right off the top of my head I can think of:

- A. Marriage
- B. Purchasing a house
- C. Credit Card

2. (9:1-17) What are the terms of this covenant God established with Noah?

1. Between: God and Noah and all his descendants and all creation
2. Is there an "if"? (In other words, is there a phrase which says "if you do this the covenant is broken")? No
3. What are the terms?
 - Be fruitful & multiply
 - Fill the earth
 - Animals shall you and you will be over them
 - You may now eat animals
 - Do not eat meat with the blood
 - If you (or an animal) kill a man, you must by men be killed. (This is not a deal-breaker-type "if". It's a rule, given by God)
 - I (God) will never destroy all animals and mankind by a flood again.

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4. What was given as proof? Rainbow
5. Has it ever been set aside? No
6. What are we to remember when we see the sign? God's promise
7. What is God to remember when He sees the sign? God's promise

3. (9:18-9:28) What exactly happened here?

Noah got drunk and as a result was lying naked, exposed, in his tent. His son, Ham, found him that way, and instead of respecting his father and covering him up so that he would not be exposed, he made a joke out of it, and humiliated his father's naked body. Shem and Japheth were honorable and covered up their father, even backing into the tent so as not to gaze on his naked body. They honored their father, and also honored God, because they recognized that Noah's nakedness was supposed to be covered because of the sin all of them carried around in their bodies, ever since Adam and Eve. Remember? Adam and Eve left the garden clothed by God because of the sin they would now carry within them for the rest of their lives. This sin they passed on to all their descendants, Noah and his sons included, of course.

4. Why does Canaan get cursed for Ham's problem?

Many times future generations suffer because of their parents' sin. It's an ugly, but true fact of life. Just look at all the generations which have suffered because of Adam and Eve's sin! (Exodus 34:7)

5. What are the parts of this curse?
 - a. Who is not included? Shem, Japheth, and their descendants
 - b. What is Canaan's future going to look like? A servant to his brother's descendants
 - c. Of the three brothers, whom will rule over whom? Shem

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6. Did the curse come true? Gen 10:15, I Kings 9:20-21

Yes - and we see it at least in part in 1st Kings 9:20&21. One of the descendants of Canaan were the Amorites, and they are listed as permanent slaves under the rule of King Solomon.

7. What covenant protects all of us from the curse of sin?
Jeremiah 31:31, John 3:36, I Cor 11:25

The Good News coming from this ugly little story is that God's curse on Ham and his son, Canaan, becomes God's blessing to the whole world! God's curse was that Canaan would have to be a servant while Shem was a ruler. That was hard on the descendants of Canaan. But it turned out to be the biggest blessing the world ever would know...because the Jewish people would be the descendants of Shem, and the way Shem would end up ruling the world was in Jesus, the Messiah.

The covenant which God made with Shem, Ham and Japheth (the whole world) was one which established who would rule over who in the nations of men.

But the New Covenant was coming - through the coming Descendant of Shem (Jesus) - which God would make with the whole world. It was one which established Who would give up everything in order to serve, and save, the whole world.

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Genesis 10&11 - Questions

Genesis 10 - The Descendants of Noah



(Map taken from dovemediaworks.com/blog/?p=9)

(1-5) The clan of Japheth headed toward the north side of the Mediterranean Sea (Southern Eurasia and Russia)

(6-20) The clan of Ham - the south side of the Mediterranean Sea (northern Africa to Iraq) (Canaanites settled in present-day Israel)

(21-31) The clan of Shem headed toward north of the Persian Gulf (present day Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Iran) (Jews...beginning with Abraham.... descend from the clan of Shem)

Which son of Noah might you descend from?

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Genesis 11

(11:1-9) the Tower of Babel is something which happened as men began to move away from Mt. Ararat and the ark

1. (:1) What was true of men before this chapter?
2. (:2) What part of the Noahic covenant did men break as they moved eastward?
3. (:3 & 4) What was their purpose in building a city and a tower?
4. (:5) Why did God visit them at this time?
5. (:6) What conclusion did God come to? What did He know would happen if they continued on their course of action?
6. (:7 & 8) How effective was the LORD's course of action?
7. How do you suppose people reacted to this?
8. Did God keep whole families together at this time, or break them apart?
9. What do we learn from this passage about God?
10. How do differing languages affect us today?

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Genesis 10&11 - Answers

Genesis 10 - The Descendants of Noah



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(1-5) The clan of Japheth headed toward the north side of the Mediterranean Sea (Southern Eurasia and Russia)

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Which son of Noah might you descend from?

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Genesis 11

The Tower of Babel....The Descendants of Shem

(11:1-9) the Tower of Babel is something which happened as men began to move away from Mt. Ararat and the ark. (illustration at the right is Athanasius Kircher's illustration of the Tower of Babel, taken from www.rereviewed.com/roguesemiotics/?p=686)

11. (:1) What was true of men before this chapter?

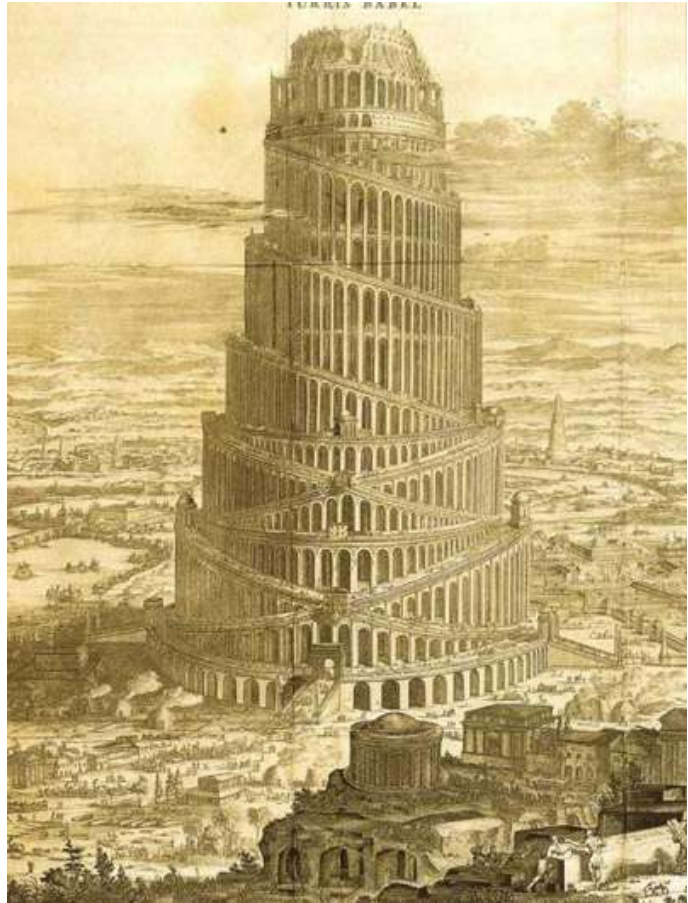
All people used the same language. They were slowly migrating away from Mt. Ararat, but staying together as a group.

12. (:2) What part of the Noahic covenant did men break as they moved eastward?

Refer back to Genesis 9:7. God intended for men to populate the whole earth. To spread out and have children and fill the earth. What were they doing here? They were settling in, gathering their forces together, refusing to move on and populate the earth. They were rebelling against God's plan.

13. (:3 & 4) What was their purpose in building a city and a tower? They were making themselves powerful and strong....but refusing to trust God.

14. (:5) Why did God visit them at this time? Checking on them.



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15. (:6) What conclusion did God come to? What did He know would happen if they continued on their course of action?

He had a reason for telling them to populate the earth. The earth needed to be managed - kept fruitful. And He didn't want them gathering their forces together in rebellion against Him....there was no telling what horrible things they might achieve...in rebellion against His ways. They were on a track to totally destroy themselves before the Savior of the World was set to arrive. He protected them by stopping their rebellion.

16. (:7 & 8) How effective was the LORD's course of action?

Most effective. The city was never finished. The unfinished tower was a monument to the power of God to make sure His will is accomplished. Look at Revelation 17:12-17 to see the wisdom of God in using whatever means He chooses to accomplish His purposes.

17. How do you suppose people reacted to this?

Fear, no doubt. Anger? Did they admit that God had done this? Did any of them choose faith in Him at this point?

18. Did God keep whole families together at this time, or break them apart?

The genealogies we see in Chapters 10 and 11 prove that God gave similar language to families, and kept them together.

19. What do we learn from this passage about God?

Well, one thing I know for sure - I can't rebel against God and get away with it. And I can't stop His purposes, no matter what I do.

20. How do differing languages affect us today?

They make it very difficult to spread the Gospel. It slows us down, but it doesn't stop us from working at it. Wycliffe Bible Translators is a case in point. Sometimes it takes years to translate even a portion of the Bible into a previously

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unknown language. But they are doing it. Here is their Vision Statement from their website: www.wycliffe.org:

"Today about 200 million people do not have the Bible in their own language. Wycliffe's vision is to see the Bible accessible to all people in the language they understand best. "

(11:10-32) Look at the "Noah to Abraham Chart" (attached) and notice how long each man lived. We begin this chart with birth of Noah at year "0". (it was actually year 1056 when Noah was born, but we'll keep it simple by starting with "0")

What conclusions do you come to as you look at the next 2 charts?

-
-
-
-
-
-

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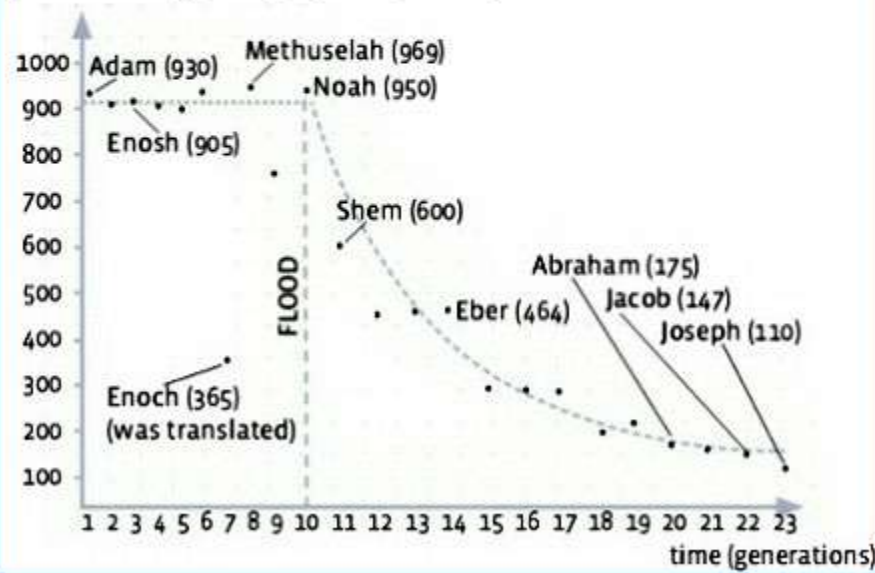
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Ages of the Patriarchs

In the genealogy of Gen. 5, the patriarchs who lived before the Flood had an average life span of about 900 years. This contrasts with the genealogy of Gen. 11:10–26 where the ages of the post-Flood patriarchs dropped rapidly and gradually leveled off.

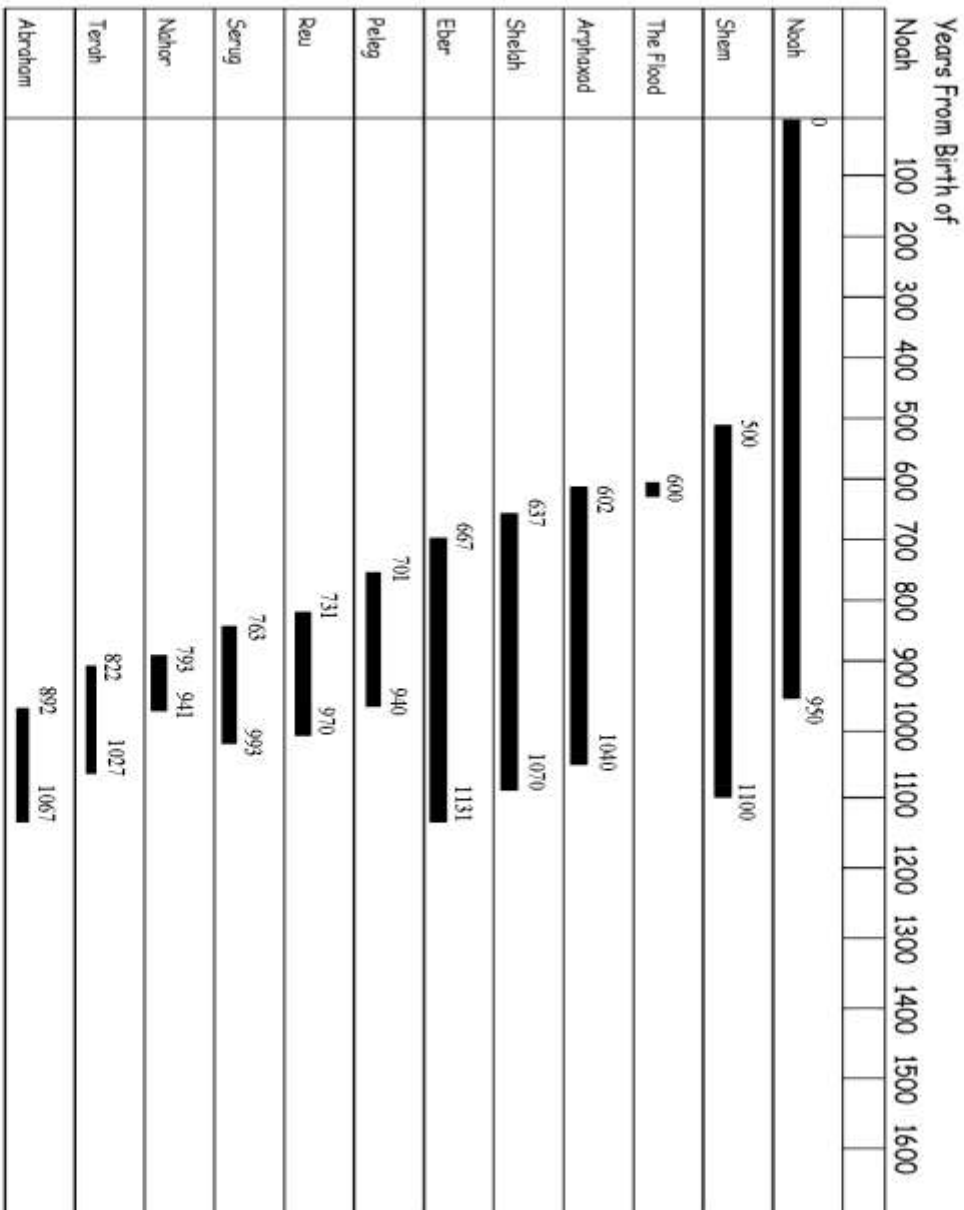


(chart found at <http://dovemediaworks.com/blog/>)

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Wife, Mother

**From Noah to Abraham
(Line of Shem)**



967 - Abraham left
Haran to go to
Promised Land

992 - Isaac is born

Genesis Chapters 12 & 13 - Questions

1. *12:1 Why do you think it was necessary for Abram to leave everything in order to do what God wanted him to do?*
2. *12:2-3 What are the different parts of this covenant God makes with Abram? Does Abram have to do anything to receive these promises?*
 - a
 - b
 - c
 - d
 - e
 - f
 - g
3. *12:4-5 Who else went with Abram? Because they went, too, does that indicate faith in God on their part?*
4. *12:6-7 What is one more promise God gives Abram as he arrives at the tree of Moreh?*
5. *12:8-9 Why does Abram build an altar everywhere he goes? What does this tell us about Abram?*
6. *12:10-20 Why did Abram do what he did in Egypt? Why did God protect him?*
7. *13:1-7 What problem did Abram face as he returned to the Negev?*
8. *13:8-13 Why did Abram let Lot choose? Hadn't the land been given to Abram? Wasn't he a person with more authority and more rights than Lot?*

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9. 13:14-18 Lot chose the land which held the most promise. It was beautiful, well-watered, like a garden. Abram was left with the hilly land of Canaan which could only prosper if God brought rain and controlled disaster. Why was God pleased with Abram?
10. When you are faced with choices in life, you feel that you have a responsibility to choose the smartest, safest, most promising way - that God expects you to do that. When would that not be the case?

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Genesis Chapters 12 & 13 - Answers

1. 12:1 Why do you think it was necessary for Abram to leave everything in order to do what God wanted him to do?

Well, for one thing, it looks like God wants Abraham to start something new. It wasn't going to be an extension of what Abraham's father or Abraham's relatives had already done. It was going to be a brand, new thing. The only way to start such a brand, new thing would be to cut ties with the past, with the people of the past, and leave himself open to new ideas, new ways of doing things, and direct communication from God Himself. He probably also was going to be cutting ties with past sins and old, dysfunctional ways of going about life. This was going to be doing things in the ways of God.

The other obvious answer to this question is that God asked Abraham to leave everything behind....so even if he didn't understand it....that is what he must do.

I am reminded of a passage in the New Testament, Luke 14:25-33. In essence, Jesus is telling all of His "followers" that they have to meet the same standard Abraham was told to meet: "So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:33)

2. 12:2-3 What are the different parts of this covenant God makes with Abram? Does Abram have to do anything to receive these promises?
 - A You will be a great nation
 - B I will bless you
 - C I will make your name great
 - D You will be a blessing to others
 - E I will bless those who bless you
 - F I will curse those who curse you
 - G All families of the earth (from that time to as long as the earth lasts) will be blessed in your blessing

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Does Abraham have to do anything to receive those blessings? In other words, is there an "if"? Yes. He had to take the step of obedience of leaving all behind and going in the direction God pointed.

Let's look at God's covenants with mankind again, to see what now might be different about this new covenant with Abraham:

1. Covenant with Adam & his descendants

- in the image of God
- rule over animals
- be fruitful & fill the earth
- subdue the earth
- eternal life
- vegetarian
- don't kill

2. Covenant with Noah & his descendants

- meat to eat
- never destroy earth with a flood again/rainbow
- animals fear men
- don't eat blood
- human government
- don't kill: punishment - death

3. Covenant with Abraham & his descendants

- leave your country and your father
- great nation
- blessed
- name great
- those who curse you will be cursed
- all people blessed through them/him
- land to pass on to offspring

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Are the Adamic or Noahic covenants set aside because of this new covenant with Abraham? No. They are now all 3 in place. The Abrahamic covenant covers all of Abraham's descendants from this point on....and also, to a certain extent, all people of the world.

What is different about the Abrahamic covenant? It is based on a "nation", not just on the total population of the world. There are nations now, and God has a plan to reach the whole world by blessing and communicating with one nation in particular. Why? What has changed that He must do this?

Remember, at this point the whole world is not speaking the same language any more. They are divided into nations - each nation finding it very difficult to communicate with the other nations.

So God's plan was ingenious (of course). What could not be easily communicated through words would now be communicated through pictures. The Jewish people would be asked to live a certain way and practice certain things so that they could be a non-verbal picture to the rest of the world of what God was like, and what it would take to be in a right relationship with Him. For instance: when animals were offered on the altar of sacrifice the world could see that:

- the result of sin was always death.
- SomeOne had to die in order to make the results of sin go away,
- The One, True God of the Jews could not be appeased personal acts of righteousness - they would never be enough to get rid of sin forever.
- To be right with the One, True God, a person had to have faith. Faith that the One, True God would somehow provide a way to be perfect enough to know Him and be right with Him forever.

And how could the world see all these "pictures" which the Jewish people would live out with their lives? The One, True God gave a piece of land to the Jewish people - to Abraham - which would turn out to be in the middle of the traffic trading pattern of the world. Nations from the north would have to pass through Israel to go south. Nations from the south would have to pass through Israel to go north.

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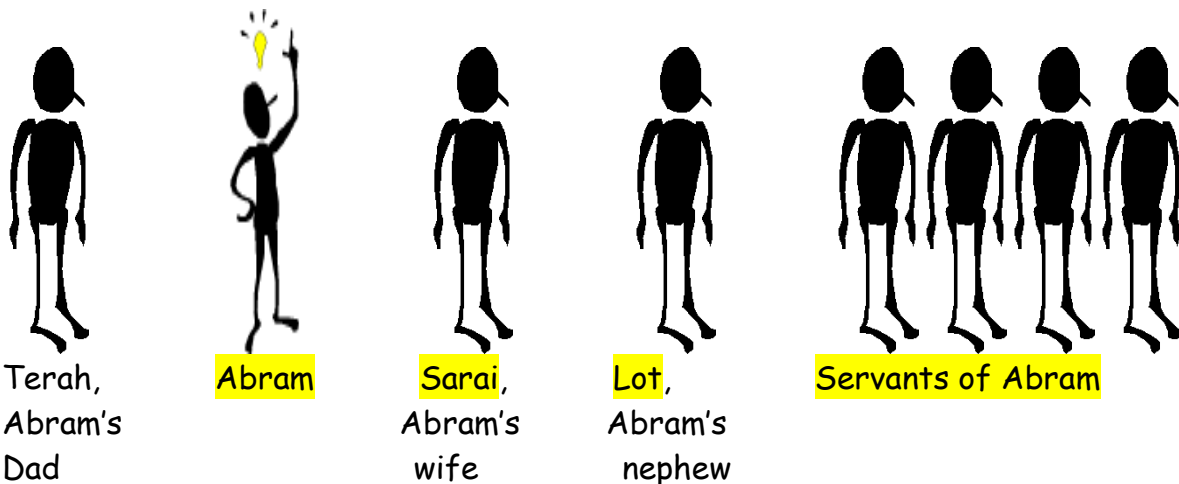
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Nations from the east would have to pass through Israel to go west. Nations from the west would have to pass through Israel to go east. Ingenious.

And as they passed through, they could see how the Jewish people lived and how they worshipped the One, True God, and they could learn from the pictures they saw what God was all about and how to be right with Him....and they could and would take those stories back to their countries, no matter how far away they were, and no matter what different language they spoke.

3. 12:4-5 Who else went with Abram? Because they went, too, does that indicate faith in God on their part?

Here are the ones who were living in Haran at the time God called Abraham to a new life: (The highlighted ones are the ones who left Haran and followed God's directions)



Because they went with Abram, does that indicate they also had faith in the One, True God? We don't know for sure.

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4. 12:6-7 What is one more promise God gives Abram as he arrives at the tree of Moreh?

The One, True God promises that not only will the land be given to Abraham, but it will also be given to his descendants. It will belong to Abraham's descendants whether Abraham is alive or not.

5. 12:8-9 Why does Abram build an altar everywhere he goes?
What does this tell us about Abram?

Abraham is constantly reaffirming his faith in the One, True God. He knows that none of this will come to pass without God bringing it about. His sacrifices acknowledge his own need for forgiveness of sins - and that he is looking forward to the One, True God taking care of those sins once and for all someday. Abraham had faith. He believed God would do what He said He would do.

6. 12:10-20 Why did Abram do what he did in Egypt? Why did God protect him?

I think Abraham was trying to survive the best way he knew how. He had a lot to learn about trusting God to take care of him and his family.

7. 13:1-7 What problem did Abram face as he returned to the Negev?
He had been blessed already. His flocks and herds and the people necessary to take care of all of it had greatly increased. But also Lot had been blessed, too. There was friction between the people of Abraham and the people of Lot. Friction in the little family group which started out from Haran. Also, I think we might see here that Abraham continued to trust God and offer Him sacrifices, but Lot did not. Abraham was continuing in the way of faith. Lot was not.

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8. 13:8-13 Why did Abram let Lot choose? Hadn't the land been given to Abram? Wasn't he a person with more authority and more rights than Lot?

Yes, Abraham was the patriarch - the older, wiser one in charge. He made this decision, I think, because he knew that peace in the family was essential to the future of his little group. And also, he knew that God's promise to bless him was not based on his own ability, but on God's. So he decided to believe God could bless him even if he allowed Lot to choose the best land for himself.

9. 13:14-18 Lot chose the land which held the most promise. It was beautiful, well-watered, like a garden. Abram was left with the hilly land of Canaan which could only prosper if God brought rain and controlled disaster. Why was God pleased with Abram?

God knew that Abraham had made a faith choice. *"Without faith it is impossible to please God."* Hebrews 11:6

10. When you are faced with choices in life, you feel that you have a responsibility to choose the smartest, safest, most promising way - that God expects you to do that. When would that not be the case?

Genesis Chapter 14 - Questions

1. :1-12 Who's who, and who's making war with who?

Amraphel - King of Shinar
Arioch, King of Ellasar
Cherdolaomer, King of Elam
Tidal, King of nations

The 4 kings to the left have conquered the 5 kings below and have demanded they serve them and pay tribute to them for 12 years. In the 13th year the 5 kings below rebel and try to win their freedom.

They end up in a battle in the Valley of Sidim, and the 5 kings end up defeated. Those who don't die in the battle run to the mountains, and the 4 kings go to the towns of Sodom and Gomorroah and take all the people as slaves and all their goods.

Bera, King of Sodom
Birsha, King of Gomorrah
Shinab, King of Admah
Shemeber, King of Zeboiim
(no name), King of Bela
(Zoar)

2. :12 Who gets caught up in the crossfire of this political situation?
3. :13 Abram has not chosen to live in Sodom or Gormorrah or any of the other cities being attacked and destroyed in this chapter. Why does he have to get involved?
4. :14-16 What does Abram do, and is he successful?
5. :17 Which king shows up to thank Abram for what he has done?
6. :18 Who is Melchizidek, King of Salem? Have we seen him before?

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7. :19-20 What does Melchizidek do for Abram? Who gave who a tithe? What does that tell us about Melchizidek? What does that tell us about Abram? (see Psalms 110:4, and Hebrews 7:1-10)
8. :21-24 What does the King of Sodom want to give to Abram in thanks for what he has done? Why does Abram refuse?
9. Abram shows us what it takes to survive in the world scene...in other words, what kind of behavior God blesses as we deal with political enemies or friends. What can you learn from this chapter about how to walk by faith through political upheaval?

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Genesis Chapter 14 – Answers

What is "politics"? Governments. Laws. Armies. Kings, presidents, governors. Wars. Nations. Groups of people band together to make life work for them, and part of that banding together includes protecting themselves from other groups of people who would like to have the blessings of life for themselves, even if they have to take it away from another group of people. Politics is simply the way any group of people figures out how to live together, under one set of laws and protections, in order to be safe, happy and prosperous.

It's an incongruity....but in order to be safe, happy and prosperous, people have to give up a little of what they value. They give up some independence, they work together, and they protect themselves from the other sinful people in the world. And sometimes they get caught in the crossfire of two groups of people fighting for what they want. That's politics.

This is nothing new. It's all a part of our world today, and it was all a part of Abraham's world, too. In today's chapter, both Lot and Abram get caught in the crossfire.

1. :1-12 Who's who, and who's making war with who?

Amraphel – King of Shinar
Arioch, King of Ellasar
Cherdolaomer, King of Elam
Tidal, King of nations

The 4 kings to the left have conquered the 5 kings below and have demanded they serve them and pay tribute to them for 12 years. In the 13th year the 5 kings below rebel and try to win their freedom.

They end up in a battle in the Valley of Sidim, and the 5 kings end up defeated. Those who don't die in the battle run to the mountains, and the 4 kings go to the towns of Sodom and Gomorroah and take all the people as slaves and all their goods.

Bera, King of Sodom
Birsha, King of Gomorrah
Shinab, King of Admah
Shemeber, King of Zeboiim
(no name), King of Bela
(Zoar)

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2. :12 Who gets caught up in the crossfire of this political situation?

Because Lot, Abram's nephew, lives in Sodom, both Lot and Abram are affected by the politics (war) of the region.

3. :13 Abram has not chosen to live in Sodom or Gormorrah or any of the other cities being attacked and destroyed in this chapter. Why does he have to get involved?

Abram is not attacked, nor is he a part of either coalition of kings, but he sort of has no choice but to try to rescue his nephew. Family ties are still strong, even when one member of the family (Lot) hasn't been too fair with another member of the family (Abram). (Genesis 13:8)

4. :14-16 What does Abram do, and is he successful?

He organizes his trained men - from that we have to conclude that Abram is used to having to fight wars - and he attacks the 4 kings who have captured Lot and his family. Abram's warring party chased the 4 kings all the way up into Syria - and then recovered Lot, his family, and all that was Lot's, and also everyone else from Sodom.

Abram chose not to live in Sodom himself - and we're going to see later what a desperately wicked place it was - but still, he shows kindness and mercy by bringing them all back to their homes, intact and with all their stuff.

5. :17 Which king shows up to thank Abram for what he has done?

Only the king of Sodom shows up to thank Abram.

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6. :18 Who is Melchizidek, King of Salem? Have we seen him before?

Now here's a puzzle. Melchizidek is not mentioned anywhere else in Genesis, but he seems to be a pretty big player in the region. He was not only a king, but also one who ministered the Lord to anyone who would listen. He was not a pagan - not an idol-worshipper. He was a true worshipper of the One, True God, the same God Abram worshipped. Perhaps he is a left-over from the time of Noah, a man who had the truths Noah taught passed down to him, and he believed, and because a valuable servant of the One, True God.

7. :19-20 What does Melchizidek do for Abram? Who gave who a tithe? What does that tell us about Melchizidek? What does that tell us about Abram?

Melchizidek blesses Abram. (The greater blesses the lesser). He recognizes that Abram is the up and coming leader of the people who worship the One, True God. God Most High has chosen Abram to spread the truth about Him to the world, and Melchizidek somehow knows that.

It is almost like a crowning ceremony. The Old king is passing on the crown to the new king.

And Abram understands all of this, too. He openly demonstrates his submission to the one who has served the Lord God the longest - by offering him a tenth (tithe) of the proceeds of his battle. He bows in submission to Melchizidek, stating for all the world to see that Melchizidek is the greater.

This is a true, real-life event, not just a story to teach us something.

But it definitely does teach us something - something referred to in later portions of the Bible. Look at Psalm 110:4 and Hebrews 7:1-10. Both of these passages

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indicate that Jesus, the King and Priest Who was yet to come in Abram's day, was Himself a Priest - the same kind as Melchizedek.

So what kind of priest was Melchizedek? He was a priest to the whole world, not just a priest to Israel. The priests of Israel (later on, after the Jews were in the promised land) were important, but they only ministered to Israel. Melchizedek ministered to anyone in the whole world who wanted to worship the One True God. And in the same way, so does Jesus.

Jesus is a priest - the scriptures tell us so. He is, in fact, a Prophet, Priest and King. But He is not priest of only Israel. He is a Priest to the world.

When Abram submitted to Melchizedek he may not totally have understood what he was doing, he just knew it was the right thing to do. But we understand now, looking back, that he was symbolizing the fact that no matter how important and loved the children of Israel would be, they would never be so loved or cared for that God would turn His back on the rest of the world. The Lord chose the Jewish people to show Himself to the world so that they could all worship Him. The Jewish people were for reaching the world, not for cutting off the world. Melchizedek was for reaching the world, not for cutting off the world. Jesus is for reaching the world, not for cutting off the world.

8. :21-24 What does the King of Sodom want to give to Abram in thanks for what he has done? Why does Abram refuse?

The king of Sodom wants the people back - to take them home again. But he tells Abram to keep all the stuff - all the possessions, the jewels, the gold, the valuable stuff the 4 kings had taken and Abram had recovered.

He is essentially offering to pay Abram for going to war on his behalf. It is a reasonable offer.

Abram refuses because he knows that if he takes the "prize money", so to speak, people will say that he was made rich by the king of Sodom....or that he was made

In The Beginning God...."

A Verse-by-Verse Study of the Book of Genesis

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rich by his own power and strength. And Abram's commitment to the One, True God is greater than that. He has specific promises from the One, True God, and he wants the whole world to know that he is not going out and grabbing those promises - they are being bestowed on him by one much greater than any man. One much greater than himself. Abram will be a great and powerful man someday, but he wants the world to know there is no man who will ever be greater than the One, True God.

Thank you, Abram, for the reminder. That is sometimes easy to forget.

9. Abram shows us what it takes to survive in the world scene...in other words, what kind of behavior God blesses as we deal with political enemies or friends. What can you learn from this chapter about how to walk by faith through political upheaval?

What kind of political behavior does God desire from us?

- Accept the fact that politics is a reality of life. Don't hide your head in the sand and pretend you will never have to deal with it.
- Think it through. Be prepared to face political situations. Yes, there may be war. Learn how to live with war if you have to. Don't blame God for what men have brought on themselves.
- Be loyal to your family - to those who look to you for support and survival.
- Submit yourself to those greater than you. Submit yourself to authorities. Accept the fact that you are most probably not so tremendously important in the world scene that everyone else has to step aside for what you want.
- Focus your eyes on the blessings of God - coming from God. Don't think blessings come from any person. They don't.

Genesis Chapter 15 - Questions

1. (:1) I am always curious, when the LORD says "Do not fear" - why is the LORD saying "Do not fear"? Abram has just finished winning a major battle against powerful adversaries. Why would he be afraid? (hint: you can tell from the LORD's words after the "do not fear".)
2. (:2,3) Was your answer to Question #1 right?
3. (:2,3) Who is going to inherit Abraham's fortune if he dies right now?
4. (:4,5) What was the promise God made to Abraham?
5. (:6) What is faith? What does faith do for us? Was Abraham righteous before God? Why?
6. (:7) The LORD is about to "strike a covenant" with Abraham. How does He begin?
7. (:7-11) What is Abraham told to do to set things up for the "covenant-striking"?
8. (:12) A deep sleep comes upon Abraham...can you remember other people in scripture who fell into a deep sleep so that the LORD could do something huge in their life? (Genesis 2:21, Genesis 28:11)

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A Verse-by-Verse Study of the Book of Genesis

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9. Why would God do that?
10. (:13-21) What are the good and bad things God promises will happen to Abraham and his descendants?
11. (:16) Why were they going to have to be slaves in a foreign land for 400 years?
12. (:17) What action on the LORD's part sealed this covenant?
13. Was this covenant conditional or unconditional? (Is there an "if"?) And what difference does that make to us? *(Romans 4:11 "And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them.")*

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Genesis Chapter 15 - Answers

In this chapter:

- Abram is specifically promised a son from his own body
- Faith is defined
- The LORD covenants with Abraham unconditionally
- Abraham becomes the father of all who believe

So far, in Abram's relationship with God, the Lord God has promised Abram that He will give him a new land, and make him a great nation, and make his name great, and will make him a blessing to the whole world.

Abram has believed these promises, evidenced by his willingness to leave the land of his fathers and go to a new place, following the Lord's direction.

But Abram doesn't have some specifics - like, for instance, how will God make him a great nation when he doesn't even have a son? Will God give him a son....or will Lot be the one who carries on the family name and receives the promises from God....or will even a servant in Abram's household be the one who carries on the family name (which was an accepted custom in those days for men with no son to inherit the family fortune).

Abram has already figured out that Lot won't be the one. And there is no son yet, after all this time....so.....perhaps it will be one of Abram's trusted servants who will inherit the blessings of God????

Discussion Question: What are some of the things which make you afraid? If you are studying this by yourself, take the time to make a list of your biggest fears. If you are studying with a group, come up with a group list of fears. I just want you to go into this chapter having some inkling of how Abram must have felt as he approached the future with no son. He must have felt he had to do something!!! This was a reasonable fear - for with no one to pass on the

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A Verse-by-Verse Study of the Book of Genesis

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family responsibility to, the whole family and all the people connected with that family, could perish at the father's death.

1. (:1) I am always curious, when the LORD says "Do not fear" - why is the LORD saying "Do not fear"? Abram has just finished winning a major battle against powerful adversaries. Why would he be afraid? (hint: you can tell from the LORD's words after the "do not fear".)

Abram was afraid - since no son had appeared as God promised, was the Lord going to abandon Abram someday because of his lack of ability to produce an heir? Yes, Abram was protected by God now, but would God change his mind?

2. (:2,3) Was your answer to Question #1 right?
3. (:2,3) Who is going to inherit Abraham's fortune if he dies right now?

Right now, Eliezer, his slave, is the next in line.

4. (:4,5) What was the promise God made to Abraham?

Very specifically, The Lord God says, no, it will not be Eliezer or any other servant. It will be a son...who comes from Abram's own body. And then, to cement the promise firmly in Abram's mind, the Lord God shows Abram all the stars in the night sky. He promises that the family of Abram will be so numerous they will not be able to be counted...just like the stars.

I can't imagine being walked outside by the Lord, and told to look up at the heavens He created. Would that help me believe?

5. (:6) What is faith? What does faith do for us? Was Abram righteous before God? Why?

"Faith is the evidence of things not seen..." (Hebrews 11:1) Faith is hearing or reading something true and believing it even if you can't yet see it. Abram's faith

In The Beginning God...."

A Verse-by-Verse Study of the Book of Genesis

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in God was not based on seeing something happen. It was based on believing that if God said it, then it was true - it would happen.

Abram was not having faith in his faith at this point. He was having faith in God. God said it. It's true. Abram had faith in God.

"And he believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness" (:6)

Abram was righteous before God. God looked at Abram and saw righteous Abram. Why? Because Abram believed. Not because Abram had never sinned...or never sinned from this point on....but because God said it and Abram believed it.

6. (:7) The LORD is about to "strike a covenant" with Abram. How does He begin?

This is going to be a contract. Between God and Abram. God starts by stating Who He is. I AM. This is going to be a contract between the I AM and Abram.

7. (:7-11) What is Abraham told to do to set things up for the "covenant-striking"?

The picture we see here of "striking a covenant" was a commonly accepted practice in Abram's day. A man would sacrifice animals (signifying the fact that this is a very serious covenant since something had to die to make it happen), then cut the animals in half lengthwise, and lay one half of the animal on one side of a "path", and the other half of the animal on the other side of the "path".

Then both parties of the covenant would walk between the cut halves of the animals, down the center of the path, signifying that if they broke the covenant, death would be the result for the one breaking the covenant.

Abram was told by the Lord God to sacrifice a heifer, a goat, a ram, and turtledove and a pigeon, cut them in two (but not the birds - too small), and lay the half-bodies on either side of the path.

In The Beginning God...."

A Verse-by-Verse Study of the Book of Genesis

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Abram guarded the dead carcasses until the Lord God showed up to cut the covenant with him. But God didn't show for a long time. Abram fell asleep - a deep and troubling sleep, and in his sleep the Lord God appeared to him .

8. (:12) A deep sleep comes upon Abraham...can you remember other people in scripture who fell into a deep sleep so that the LORD could do something huge in their life? (Genesis 2:21, Genesis 28:11)

- Adam went to sleep so the Lord could create Eve out of one of Adam's ribs. (Genesis 2:21)
- Jacob (grandson of Abram) went to sleep while he was running away from a mess he had created, and the Lord appeared to him. (Genesis 28:11)

9. Why would God do that?

Well, in Adam's case it was probably to protect him from the trauma of the "surgery". In Jacob's case it was probably to remove all other distractions so Jacob could hear God's message.

Does God speak to people in sleep....or in dreams? Yes. Does He always? No. It's up to Him how He wants to communicate with us....not up to us to demand a certain method. One thing is for sure, though. God will never tell us in sleep or in a dream to do something which He has already said in His Word (the Bible) not to do. God doesn't contradict Himself.

10. (:13-21) What are the good and bad things God promises will happen to Abram and his descendants?

So now, as Abram sleeps, the Lord appears to him and gives him even more clarity about His promises. He tells Abram:

- He will, indeed, have descendants, and they will actually be slaves in a foreign land for 400 years before they inherit the land God has promised to Abram.
- Abram will live to a good, old age.

In The Beginning God...."

A Verse-by-Verse Study of the Book of Genesis

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- He describes the borders of this land He is giving to Abram and his descendants: River of Egypt on the south, Euphrates River (in present-day Iran) to the north.
- And He names the different nations who will be conquered by Abram's descendants as they claim the land the Lord God has given to them.

11. (:16) Why were they going to have to be slaves in a foreign land for 400 years?

Apparently the Lord God knew how long it would take before the current occupiers of this promised land would be totally sold out to sin - no more possibility of any of them coming to faith in the One, True God. God would wait until the sin of the Amorites was complete. Total. No going back. Then He would direct the children of Abram to conquer the land.

The land was promised to Abram. But possession would not be his (or his descendants) for 400 years.

12. (:17) What action on the LORD's part sealed this covenant?

Here's the very interesting part about this covenant between the Lord God and Abram: Whereas usually both parties to the covenant would walk on the path between the slain animals, in this covenant only the Lord God Himself walks that path - Abram is still sleeping. The Lord God, looking like a burning torch, walks the path between the pieces of sacrificed animals and makes a one-sided promise. There is no "if" you do this, I will do this. The promise is all on God's side - "I will do this", guaranteed. Abram cannot undo the promise at this point by lack of action or even by lack of belief. The promise has been made by God. He does not ever go against His Word.

13. Was this covenant conditional or unconditional? (Is there an "if"?) And what difference does that make to us?

In The Beginning God...."

A Verse-by-Verse Study of the Book of Genesis

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This is an unconditional covenant. No conditions necessary for fulfillment. Abram had already believed in the One, True God. Now God says: "Watch and see what I will do".

The reason this matters to us is that our eternity rests also on an unconditional covenant with God. Jesus - God - has told us that He died in our place. He paid the ultimate price for our sin. *"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."* (Romans 5:8).

And also that He not only died but also rose again, and is alive today, and is coming back for us soon. *"I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am there you may be also."* (John 14:2-4)

The question for us is: do we believe what He has said? If we do, then we are righteous in God's sight. If we do not, we are still ugly sinners (just like the Amorites of old) in God's sight. *"He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe in the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him"* (John 3:36)

If we, like Abram, simply believe what God has said, even though we haven't actually "seen" eternity, we will go to heaven. And the Lord Himself will make that happen. He will perform it. The promise is His. He says to us, in effect, "You believe Me...I will do the rest".

Some people think that Abram had to be circumcised (later) in order to receive all the promises of God. But that can't be true - because in verse 6 of this chapter, Abram is declared righteous because of his belief in God, long before he was ever circumcised. The circumcision came later, so that Abram could openly declare to the whole world what had already happened in his heart - He believed God.

(Romans 4:11 "And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of

In The Beginning God...."

A Verse-by-Verse Study of the Book of Genesis

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all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them.")

In the same way, we, as Christians, are not saved when we are baptized. In that moment when we surrender our lives to Jesus, believing in Him, we are declared righteous before God. We should definitely be baptized after that, to show the world that we have believed, but the baptism comes after the faith. The moment of faith is the moment of salvation.

There's one more reason this matters to us. The promise of the land to the Jews was unconditional. No matter how badly the Jews (Abram's descendants) failed, the land was still theirs, from the River of Egypt to the River Euphrates.

That promise is yet to be fulfilled. An unbelieving Jewish nation still has a promise waiting to come true for them. The Good News is that when the Lord does fulfill that promise, the descendants of Abram will no longer have their backs turned on their Messiah, Jesus. They will come to openly believe in Him at some time in the Last Days - and will joyfully receive their promise from God soon after that!

"In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and uncleanness" Zechariah 13:1

"Therefore say, 'Thus says the Lord God: "I will gather you from the peoples, assemble you from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel." Ezekiel 11:17

"Yes, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will assuredly plant them in this land, with all My heart and with all My soul." Jeremiah 32:41

Genesis 16 & 17 - Questions

Chapter 16

1. (:1-4) Who, What, When & Where?
2. (:4-6) What do you think of Abraham's actions here?
 - Was Abraham showing little faith...or was he just doing the best he could with the knowledge he had?
 - Had Abraham ever been told "only Sarah"?
 - Had he ever had any hints? (ch. 12?)
 - What had Abraham suggested in ch 15 as a possible solution to their problem?
 - Should Abraham have agreed to Sarah's plan?
 - Should he have allowed Sarah to abuse Hagar?
 - What mistake do both Abraham and Sarah share?
3. (:7-10) We know from reading on in Genesis that the child of Hagar was not the son God had promised Abraham. In fact, the son of Hagar would turn out to be an enemy of the promised son. Why, then, was the angel of the LORD protecting Hagar?
4. (:11-12) What is the angel's prophecy about the child Hagar will bear?
5. (:13-16) How would you describe Hagar's understanding of the One, True God? Do you think she had faith in God?

Chapter 17

6. (17:1-2) How long did Abraham wait after the birth of Ishmael before God spoke to him again?
7. (:3-5) What was the significance of this change of name?

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8. (:6-14) Is anything different about this renewal of God's covenant with Abraham? It has been said that "God has no grandchildren". What does that mean...and how does this covenant prove that?

9. (:15-22) God specifically tells Abraham that Sarah will be the mother of the promised son. Why does God specifically want Sarah, and no one else?

10. (:23-27) What did Abraham do in response to God's words to him?

Waiting on God is sometimes so difficult - but the end result is always hope.

The result of waiting: Isaiah 40:31
 Psalm 40:1-3

Why does God wait? Isaiah 30:18
 II Peter 3: 8,9

What to do when it seems God is waiting?
 Luke 18:1-8
 II Peter 3: 11,12
 Habakkuk 3:17-19 (memorize this)

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Genesis 16 & 17 - Answers

Waiting on God.

Waiting. Interminable stretches of time which bring you again and again to the brink of doubt and discouragement. How can you keep on believing in the promise made to you when the fulfillment just never seems to come?

Adoniram Judson felt called of God to be a missionary in 1810. He left for the mission field with his wife, Ann, in 1812, and after a change of plans from India to Burma, they arrived on their field of ministry in 1813. Three years just waiting to finally get to the place God had asked them to go.

3 years.

For 6 years they met and loved and talked to the Burmese people in Rangun about Jesus. For 6 years they prayed and believed and adjusted to the heat and the disease. And finally, "on the 27th of June, over 7 years of waiting after leaving America, and almost 6 after arriving at Rangun, Mr. Judson had the joy of baptizing Moungh Nau." One convert after 7 years.

Adoniram's wife, Ann, died while they were ministering in Burma, but still he continued on. He married again and he and his new wife ministered together until her death. He married again and he and his new wife kept ministering the Gospel message to the Burmese people another few years, until, in 1950, Mr. Judson died.

Mr. Judson was imprisoned, tortured, was sick unto the point of death many times. He buried 2 wives and children. He waited and waited and waited to see God perform the promises He had given. At his death, it is said that he left behind him in Burma seven thousand Christians, sixty-three churches, and one hundred and sixty three missionaries.

What if he had given up? What if he had not waited? In 2013, over 8,000 Burmese people live on the south side of Indianapolis, most of them having

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A Verse-by-Verse Study of the Book of Genesis

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fled their homeland because of religious persecution. Many, many of them have faith in Jesus today because Adoniram Judson was willing to wait.

1. (:1-4) Who, What, When & Where?

It seems like the first few verses of every chapter help set the "scene" for the reader, doesn't it? We can answer a lot of questions from these first 6 verses of chapter 16:

- Who? Sarai & Abram, husband & wife
Sarai's maidservant, of Egyptian descent, Hagar
- What? What is the story line here? Sarai has not been able to have children. She suggests that Abram produce a child by having sexual relations with her maidservant, Hagar. This was an acceptable and legal act in this time. Sort of like a surrogate mother arrangement today. Abram follows Sarai's suggestion, and Hagar does indeed become pregnant with Abram's child. Hagar loses respect for her mistress when this happens, and despises her. Sarai is humiliated. Sarai ends up angry with Abram, and she abuses her servant, Hagar.
- When? This happens 10 years after Abram and Sarai first migrate to the land of Canaan, after God had told them to, and promised them children.
- Where? This happens in the land of Canaan. The land God had promised to Abram.
- Why? Sarai states her belief that God has been responsible for her not having children. It looks like she feels it is time to take things into her own hands. Abram complies...why? Maybe he, too, felt that it was time to act....perhaps waiting on God was not what God meant when He gave those promises. When everything goes wrong, Sarai reacts as a normal person would - she blames her husband, and lashes out at the woman who is making her feel like a failure

In The Beginning God...."

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2. (:4-6) What do you think of Abraham's actions here?

- Was Abram showing little faith...or was he just doing the best he could with the knowledge he had?
- Had Abram ever been told "only Sarai"?
- Had he ever had any hints? (ch. 12?)

Abram had two reasons to believe that God's promise to him would be fulfilled through the union of himself and Sarai:

- a) In the beginning God had said: One man, One woman
Gen 2:24
- b) In Genesis 12 Abram saw that God was protecting his wife, Sarai, from being taken as another man's wife.

The question is, then: Did Abram 'get it'?

- What had Abram suggested in ch 15 as a possible solution to their problem? Abram himself had suggested another way for God to give him an heir. God made it very clear at that time that the son which would be given to Abram would come from his own body.

- Should Abram have agreed to Sarai's plan?

What is your personal opinion here?

- Should he have allowed Sarai to abuse Hagar?

This was common practice in their culture, too. Sarai "owned" Hagar, and could treat her any way she chose.

- What mistake do both Abram and Sarah share?

Again...what do you think?

Here's my opinion at this point: The Lord God called Abram and Sarai out of a pagan culture to a relationship with Him. He asked them to leave Ur and go to a place of His choosing, and He asked them to believe the promises He made to them. They did. They believed. They obeyed.

In The Beginning God...."

A Verse-by-Verse Study of the Book of Genesis

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But, along the way, they had much to learn. Even though they had left Ur, they still were a part of a culture which was foreign to the Lord God when they arrived in Canaan. I think God was slowly and effectively cutting them off from their culture through every new test and every new decision. He was showing them how to do things His way. He was teaching them what He was all about. It took a long time.

They goofed here. They stepped out of His way of doing things. They took things into their own hands when they should have continued waiting.

But in Chapter 12, God protected Sarai from being ruined by another man. He wouldn't let it happen. And in Chapter 15, God stopped Abram from choosing his servant to be his heir - because this wasn't God's plan.

Why, then, didn't God throw up a roadblock to this act of Abram and Sarai's? Why not protect them again as they were learning His ways?

This is question we need to be asking. We know Abram and Sarai were sinners, making mistakes, wanting to have faith....The question is: Why didn't God protect them from themselves this time?

The answer follows.

3. (:7-10) We know from reading on in Genesis that the child of Hagar was not the son God had promised Abraham. In fact, the son of Hagar would turn out to be an enemy of the promised son. Why, then, was the angel of the LORD protecting Hagar?

Why does the Lord tell Hagar to return to the camp of Abram and Sarai? Because she and her child will die if they do not. The Lord did not want Hagar or her son-to-be to die at this point. He wanted them to live. He valued their lives, and He saved their lives by sending this angel to protect them and turn them around.

Why? This is a pure picture of the grace of God. God had chosen Abram (and his future son, with Sarai, Isaac) to be the "chosen people". But the "chosen people"

In The Beginning God...."

A Verse-by-Verse Study of the Book of Genesis

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were not chosen to be the only people whom He would pour out His grace on....they were chosen to be the people who spread the news of the One, True, God to all the other people. They were special for the job they were chosen to do, but not special in the sense that they were the only ones God loved.

God loved the children of Hagar, too. He had a plan to come to the earth as a human being and die for every person who ever lived. His grace always, from the beginning of time, extended to every person on earth.

Even to Hagar, and even to Hagar's son, who would be a "wild man", "his hand against every man". God loved them and wanted them to live - and to produce future children - so that God could love them and offer them salvation. Do we think God only offered salvation only to the Jews? How crazy is that? The Jews may not have been "wild men" "whose hand was against every man", but they were sinners who time and again pulled away from God and His ways. The playing field was level then. It's level now. We are all sinners in need of a Savior. God has simply chosen different places for each of us to be when we finally see that need and respond.

4. (:11-12) What is the angel's prophecy about the child Hagar will bear?

He will be a son

He will be named Ishmael

God has heard her

He shall be "wild"

He shall be a fighter - wars will surround him

He will be surrounded with his own people - his name will continue

What people group came from the union of Abram and Hagar? The Arabs. In Old Testament times they became a wild, savage, cruel people. Worthy of salvation? No. And neither are the Jews. And neither are we.

In the book of Habakkuk, the prophet asks God why He is allowing the Jewish people to live such sinful lives. God answers by saying: "Wait and see what I am about to do, Habakkuk. I am about to punish the Jews for how they are living, and

In The Beginning God...."

A Verse-by-Verse Study of the Book of Genesis

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for their lack of faith in Me. And the way I will punish them is to send the cruel, savage children of Ishmael to conquer them and kill them and abuse them"

Habakkuk is horrified. Why, Lord God, would You use such a filthy group of people to do such terrifying things to the people You love? Surely You could figure out how to do this differently?

Do you know how God answers? He tells Habakkuk to mind his own business. He is God. He decides what is best. Trust Him. (Habakkuk 2:20)

Read Habakkuk 3:17-19 to see the prophet's response. God's grace is all we need.

5. (:13-16) How would you describe Hagar's understanding of the One, True God? Do you think she had faith in God?

What do you think?

6. (17:1-2) How long did Abraham wait after the birth of Ishmael before God spoke to him again?

13 years.

7. (:3-5) What was the significance of this change of name?

"Abram" means "Exalted father"

"Abraham" means "Father of a Multitude"

The Lord was emphasizing again the extent of His blessing. It was going to be mind-boggling.

8. (:6-14) Is anything different about this renewal of God's covenant with Abraham? It has been said that "God has no grandchildren". What does that mean...and how does this covenant prove that?

In The Beginning God...."

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Every Jewish man from Abraham on would have to individually make the decision to believe in the One, True God. The sign of that belief would be circumcision. The circumcision never "saved" any Jewish person - it was always a symbolic, very personal act which confirmed the fact that God wanted relationship with individuals, not just with corporate nations.

"God does not have grandchildren" just tells us that our children do not inherit our faith. They must stand before God themselves, One on one - and bow the knee to the One, True God. Their faith must be their own. It cannot be ours. Faith is personal.

9. (:15-22) God specifically tells Abraham that Sarah will be the mother of the promised son. Why does God specifically want Sarah, and no one else?

First of all - God wanted Sarah because God wanted Sarah. It was entirely up to Him, and she was the woman of His choice. He loved her and gave her this purpose in life.

And second - God chose Sarah because by the time she would give to birth to the promised son, Isaac, it would be obvious to everyone that it was a miracle of God. Sarah was so old by that time that there would have been no natural explanation for this pregnancy and safe birth.

10. (:23-27) What did Abraham do in response to God's words to him?

Abraham and his whole household (including Ishmael) were circumcised. We are not told whether they all willingly took this sign of belief in the One, True God. Abraham obeyed the Lord God. The people in his household took the sign of circumcision in obedience to him, but the personal decision of faith was their own. We won't know until heaven who in that household was a person of faith, and who was simply doing what they were told to do.

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Waiting on God is sometimes so difficult - but the end result is always hope.

The result of waiting: Isaiah 40:31
 Psalm 40:1-3

Why does God wait? Isaiah 30:18
 II Peter 3: 8,9

What to do when it seems God is waiting?
 Luke 18:1-8
 II Peter 3: 11,12
 Habakkuk 3:17-19 (memorize this)

Are you waiting on God for anything? What does this passage teach you?

Genesis 18&19 - Questions

Chapter 18

1. (:1) Abraham is known as one of the greatest men in the Bible....
What kind of dwelling did he live in?
 - Does this teach us that if we want to be great spiritually we should live in a tent?
 - What does this teach us?
2. (:2-8) How do we know that one of these three "men" is actually God?
3. (:9-21) Now we see 2 purposes of God in this visit. What are they?
 1. :9-15
 2. :16-21
 - Abraham is called the "friend of God" in II Chronicles 20:7, Isaiah 41:8, and James 2:23. What about this passage in Genesis would cause you to agree with that?
 - Do you consider yourself a "friend of God"?
 - What is life like for a "friend of God"?
4. (:22-33) Why does Abraham work so hard to negotiate the lives of the people of Sodom? What is another term for "negotiating" with God? Hebrews 4:16.
5. Why did the whole town of Sodom have to die? Ezekiel 33:11&12 says that God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked.

Chapter 19

6. (:1) Who arrives in Sodom? Who is at the gate?
7. (:2&3) Is this Middle-eastern hospitality...or something else?

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8. (:4&5) What did the men of Sodom want?
9. Does it seem odd to you that they would be so open about their desires?
What does that show us about the condition of that city?
10. (:6-8) What in the world is Lot doing when he suggests that his daughters come out and satisfy these men?
11. (:9-10) What would have happened if the two men had not intervened?
 - a. .
12. With things this bad, why do you think Lot still lives in this city?
13. (:11-16) How many righteous did the LORD find in Sodom?
14. (:17-22) Why does Lot plead to flee to Zoar, not the mountains?
15. (:23-26) What does Lot lose because he had lived so long in the midst of sin?
16. (:27-29) How does the LORD answer Abraham's prayer of Genesis 18:22-31?
17. What does that tell us about prayer...and about the LORD?
18. (:30-38) Did the daughters of Lot do something wrong here?

APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

19. How does God look at homosexuality?
 1. Leviticus 18:22, 29
 2. Leviticus 20:13
 3. Romans 1:26&27

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4. I Corinthians 6:9&10

5. I Timothy 1:8-11

So....what if someone says to me: "I'm gay...and you say that the Bible says being gay is sin....how can a loving God deny me the right to a loving relationship with another person? We're not hurting anyone else....I can't help the way I'm made...."

20. We've seen it before...what is the result of sin?

21. In what ways is our culture just like Sodom and Gomorrah?

22. Should we protect ourselves and our children from our culture? How?

23. Did Lot deserve to be saved from the fire and brimstone?

24. What is that a picture of?

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Genesis 18&19 - Answers

This is such an amazing passage in scripture. First, Abraham meets his God, face-to-face, and then he dares to "bargain" with his God, as he begs for the life of his nephew, Lot. I'm thinking that it would be impossible to get myself past the shock of meeting God Himself - and then somehow wrap my head around the audacity of making a request of God.

But then, I ask myself, isn't that just exactly what I do every day when I approach my God in prayer? I actually meet with Him. And then I ask Him for something. I think I have become calloused to the reality of what is happening when I pray.

Three men approach a tent in the desert. We find out that One of them is actually God Himself - the other two are angels (we'll talk more about that).

They have a message to deliver. Abraham, the "friend of God", is about to meet God Himself, in the flesh....and he can't help wondering....is this really Him? How could this be? And who are these with Him...and why would He be actually sitting down and eating outside my tent? *"Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it."* (Hebrews 13:2)

And then Abraham hears their message and he knows for sure Who he is talking to. He (and Sarah) can hardly believe they are seeing and hearing all this!

Next, One of the three men - the LORD - has a special, private message for Abraham. He tells Abraham what He is about to do to the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Abraham learns in the next few hours what it means to make heart-wrenching, intentional, exhausting, humiliating "intercessory prayer" for someone you love, who probably doesn't even deserve what you are doing.

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Chapter 18

1. (:1) Abraham is known as one of the greatest men in the Bible.... What kind of dwelling did he live in?

The answer is simple - Abraham lives in a tent. Now this probably isn't a pup tent, or even a roomy 6-person tent. This is most likely a tent which looks more like a household when you walk into it. But still, it's moveable and temporary.

- Does this teach us that if we want to be great spiritually we should live in a tent?

The answer, of course, is no. My point is: Make sure you don't spiritualize what you read in scripture. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that just because Abraham lived in a tent we should, too.

- What does this teach us?

Just remember - these were real people living real lives. All wandering travelers lived in tents in those days. The literal application of a passage does not mean we have to live as they did then in order to connect with God the way they did.

2. (:2-8) How do we know that one of these three "men" is actually God? We surmise that from the actual Hebrew words used in this passage:

The Hebrew word is:	Its English Equivalent:	How it is written in translations:	It means:
YHWH	Jehovah	LORD	The personal name of God
Adonai	Master	Lord	A description of a type of ruler
Elohim	Supreme God	God	An attribute: supremeness

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When the three men first arrived at Abraham's tent, he addresses one of them as "Lord". Does that mean he immediately realized that this was, indeed, the LORD?

No. In fact, the Hebrew word Abraham uses in verse 3 for "Lord" is "Adonai". That can be a word used for any type of ruler. Abraham saw this man and his companions as having authority, but he still didn't know exactly Who they were.

But further on in the story, verse 13 to be exact, the writer of Genesis uses the Hebrew word "YHWY" for the speaker, the actual, personal name of God. So, at this point, the writer lets us know this is the LORD Himself who is talking with Abraham. Does Abraham recognize the LORD? Yes - we'll see, as the chapter goes on, that Abraham is very aware of Who he is talking to.

3. (:9-21) Now we see 2 purposes of God in this visit. What are they?
 3. :9-15 - The LORD is re-affirming His promise that Abraham and Sarah will have a son - in fact, this time He is putting a specific date to it. He says "according to the time of life"...in other words, in about 9 months.
 4. :16-21 - And then the LORD is telling Abraham that He is about to bring down judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah, where Abraham's nephew, Lot, lives.

Abraham is called the "friend of God" in II Chronicles 20:7, Isaiah 41:8, and James 2:23. What about this passage in Genesis would cause you to agree with that?

This passage in Genesis is so personal! It shows such an intimate relationship between the LORD and Abraham. The LORD has made a promise that He confirms again He will keep. And the LORD shares with Abraham something that will affect Abraham very much. The LORD decides not to hide these distressing facts from His friend, Abraham.

- Do you consider yourself a "friend of God"?

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- What is life like for a "friend of God"?

Abraham's life was not easy. He was greatly blessed of God, but not with ease and lack of troubles.

4. (:22-33) Why does Abraham work so hard to negotiate the lives of the people of Sodom? What is another term for "negotiating" with God? Hebrews 4:16.

Let's be simple. Abraham was praying. He was talking to the LORD about the situation his nephew, Lot, had gotten himself into. Hebrews 4:16 calls this type of prayer (for someone else's need) "intercessory prayer".

Why is he working so hard? Abraham loves this nephew and feels responsible for him, even though Lot had made his own bad decisions about living in such a colorful but sinful city. Abraham, through no fault of his own, has a heavy burden to carry - his love and care for Lot feels heavy because he can't change Lot, but he still feels responsible for him. So he prays.

5. Why did the whole town of Sodom have to die? Ezekiel 33:11&12 says that God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked.

The LORD doesn't want people to make sinful decisions and to therefore suffer because of the choices they have made. But the LORD cannot have anything to do with sin. He can mercifully wait to deliver judgment for sin. But eventually it must be done. When the LORD died on the cross He was judging sin. He was taking the punishment Himself. The people of Sodom had their chance to look forward to that event happening someday and to trust that He would take care of their sin. But most of them had not done that. Abraham is pleading with the LORD not to destroy those cities if He even could find 10 people who had trusted in the LORD's payment for sin which would come someday. Would the LORD find 10 people?

Chapter 19

6. (:1) Who arrives in Sodom? Who is at the gate?

The two angels (the two men who visited Abraham with the LORD) come now to the city gate. They are on a mission for the LORD. They are going to find out if the sin of Sodom is as bad as they think.

Not coincidentally Lot is at that gate as they arrive. Lot probably didn't know it, but he had an appointment with the two angels of the LORD that night.

7. (:2&3) Is this Middle-eastern hospitality...or something else?

This definitely is Middle-eastern hospitality...but it also is Lot knowing how his city is going to respond to visitors. He has no doubt seen it before. Visitors arrive in the city, and as the sun sets the men of the city find those visitors, wherever they have lodged, and they demand to see them. They have evil intents.

8. (:4&5) What did the men of Sodom want?

This city is so far gone in sin that the people of Sodom totally expect this sinful, violent thing to happen to any visitor who enters their city. The men of Sodom want to have homosexual relations with the visitors that night.

9. Does it seem odd to you that they would be so open about their desires? What does that show us about the condition of that city?

Romans chapter 1 tells us about the downward spiral of sin. (Romans 1:28-31). Each despicable sin leads to an even worse sin, spiraling down to the point that those who take part in each worse sin not only do it, but also cheer on others who do it, too. This city was at the bottom of the spiral. It looks like only Lot and his family are left to say "no" to each worse sin.

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10. (:6-8) What in the world is Lot doing when he suggests that his daughters come out and satisfy these men?

This part I don't really understand. Maybe Lot was trying to shame the men of the city. Maybe he knew they would never take him up on his offer because they were all homosexual.

11. (:9-10) What would have happened if the two men had not intervened?

The men of the city would have broken down the door and killed Lot, as well as everyone else in the house.

12. With things this bad, why do you think Lot still lives in this city?

Why, then, are they still living there? Why are they not so disgusted and so afraid of the sin around them that they flee that place? Unfortunately, the reason is probably because they are also so attracted to the world they live in. There are fine things to enjoy. Fine entertainments. Beautiful clothes. Sumptuous food. They probably think they can just ignore the sin and still enjoy the city.

13. (:11-16) How many righteous did the LORD find in Sodom?

Only 4. Lot, his wife, and Lot's 2 daughters. The two men who were betrothed to marry Lot's daughters practically laughed in Lot's face when he suggested that they flee the city with them.

14. (:17-22) Why does Lot plead to flee to Zoar, not the mountains?

He still doesn't want to leave all the comforts of city living. He is hoping to live in the plains so that he can easily access a nearby city. He is bargaining with God, but not the same way Abraham did. He is asking for his own selfish pleasures. He is addicted to pleasure and can not stand the thought of being totally cut off.

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15. (:23-26) What does Lot lose because he had lived so long in the midst of sin?

There is always a price to pay for sin. Yes, Jesus paid the price for sin on the cross - so if we believe in Him the sins we commit cannot send us to Hell. But those sins of ours still leave scars in our lives. Lot was a man of faith (2nd Peter 2:7), but his attraction to sin put him in a precarious position, and he paid a steep price for hanging on to sin so long. He lost his wife, who could not stand to part from her things. And later, he was used in a plan of incest by his daughters, who probably knew no better, for they had been raised in a world which worshipped sin.

16. (:27-29) How does the LORD answer Abraham's prayer of Gen. 18:22-31?

Abraham asked for the whole city to be saved. That could not be done. But the LORD does yank Abraham's beloved nephew out of the flames. Lot is saved from the judgment and the death.

17. What does that tell us about prayer...and about the LORD?

The LORD loves us and loves for us to pray - to plead with Him for the lives and souls of those we love. He answers - but not always in the way we pictured it.

18. (:30-38) Did the daughters of Lot do something wrong here?

Oh, sure. This is incest, pure and simple. They were looking out for their own selves, their own future - no matter what. They did not know they could trust the One, True God for their futures - they didn't know they could obey Him and trust Him for the outcome. Or..if they did know that, they decided to do it their own way anyway.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

19. How does God look at homosexuality?

1. Leviticus 18:22, 29

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2. Leviticus 20:13
3. Romans 1:26&27
4. I Corinthians 6:9&10
5. I Timothy 1:8-11

So....what if someone says to me: "I'm gay...and you say that the Bible says being gay is sin....how can a loving God deny me the right to a loving relationship with another person? We're not hurting anyone else....I can't help the way I'm made...."

God says, clearly stated in those verses above, that homosexual acts are sin. They are not good and they are not OK and they are not just a lifestyle choice. They are a choice to rebel against the LORD.

Does everyone who participates in homosexual sin actually realize they are sinning against the LORD? Maybe not right away. But they eventually bear in their bodies, in their spirits, the scars which result from sexual sin. It is inevitable.

Do we love and care for many who are caught in this particular sin? Then find a way to lovingly and honestly address the fact. The results of your bravery to do that are not guaranteed....but if we don't....the results are definitely guaranteed.

20. We've seen it before...what is the result of sin?

Suffering and death.

21. In what ways is our culture just like Sodom and Gomorrah?

In every way. I think we are also at the bottom of the Romans 1 spiral of sin.

22. Should we protect ourselves and our children from our culture? How?

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Yes! Any way we can! It takes thought and prayer and in almost every case a willingness to suffer loss. But we can't let them end up like Lot's daughters.

23. Did Lot deserve to be saved from the fire and brimstone?

No.

24. What is that a picture of?

Me. I didn't deserve to be yanked out of the fire, either. The playing field is level. The ones I intercede for in prayer are no different than me. They just haven't found out yet the overcoming joy of knowing Jesus and bowing to His authority.

Genesis 20&21 – Questions

Chapter 20

1. 20:1-5. Here we go again. When have we seen this very same scenario played out before?
2. What is wrong with Abraham? Doesn't he have even more reason now to be protecting Sarah from some other man? What is he thinking?
3. 20:6 Why did the Lord keep Abimelech from defiling Sarah?
4. 20:7 Why does the Lord seem to elevate Abraham in Abimelech's eyes? Hadn't he just done a really wrong, stupid thing?
5. 20:8-21 What do we learn from Chapter 20?
6. How old was Sarah when this happened?

Chapter 21

7. 21:1-2 The long-awaited child has arrived. Safe and sound. Exactly as God had promised. How do you think Abraham and Sarah felt?
8. What promises are we still awaiting fulfillment of? How do you think we will feel when those promises come true?
9. Let's find some promises of God. Divide up into tables and look up the following passages. Read through them together and list all the promises you find:
 - John 10
 - Romans 8
 - Ephesians 1
 - James 1
10. 21:3-7 There was much _____ going on when Isaac was born!

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11. 21:8-21 What happens when Isaac is weaned (probably 3-5 years old)?
12. Do you feel like Ishmael doesn't deserve this?
13. How do you think Abraham feels at this point?
14. Did Abraham have a grueling decision to make? Why did he make it?
15. 21:22-33 Neighbor trouble. Abraham, living with daily proof of God's Almighty hand on his life, still has to live through every-day problems. How does he handle it?
16. Have you ever had a mountain-top experience with God, only to be brought back down to earth by life's realities? What can you learn from Abraham?

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Genesis 20 & 21 - Answers

OK - remember the background here. Abraham knows now much more than he knew the last time he played this little game with half-truth. The last time he did this (Genesis 12:10-20) he knew that the Lord God had promised to make him the father of a great nation. He knew that he would sometime in the future have a son who would carry on his family name and inherit the land God was giving him. But he didn't know then that God was very serious about who this child's mother was going to be, too. He didn't know then that only Sarah would be the appropriate one to bear this child of promise.

But now he is very sure that Sarah is the chosen mother, just as he is the chosen father. He knows that trying to make Eliezer his servant be the chosen son was wrong. He knows that trying to produce a child through Hagar was wrong. He knows beyond the shadow of a doubt that Sarah will be the mother of the child who will hold their future in his very existence.

So...for goodness sake....why is he risking Sarah's reputation and her safety by once again telling the lie..."she is my sister"...in order to save his own life and livelihood? Wasn't this long-awaited promise from God more important than life itself?

Chapter 20

1. 20:1-5. Here we go again. When have we seen this very same scenario played out before?

Genesis 12:10-20

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2. What is wrong with Abraham? Doesn't he have even more reason now to be protecting Sarah from some other man? What is he thinking?

We aren't told in this passage why Abraham did this again. We are only told that he did, so we can only guess as to reasons.

So here are my guesses:

- a. Even though Abraham knew in his heart that the promises of God were still coming, his head told him that he had to survive if he were ever going to see those promise come to pass. Survival won out over faith.
- b. Sarah was not a young girl at this point. Powerful people like King Abimilech did not usually reach out to take old women to be a part of their harem. Common sense won out over faith.
- c. Abraham knew in the back of his mind that he still had Hagar and Ishmael. Yes, the Lord God had said that Ishmael was not the son of promise, but, Abraham did love him so much, and, maybe he had not heard God right...perhaps he justified this in his own mind because circumstances seemed to indicate the son to carry on his name had already arrived. Circumstances won out over faith.
- d. And finally, maybe Abraham just was weary of waiting. Maybe he hadn't been walking with the Lord for awhile. Maybe what he knew in his head was that God had promised, but what he knew in his heart was that he hadn't talked to God in a long while and his walk through the world had defiled his faith. A skimpy walk with God had won out over faith.

3. 20:6 Why did the Lord keep Abimilech from defiling Sarah?

Abimilech says to the Lord in his dream: "I didn't know! I am innocent of wanting to do anything wrong here!" And God answers him: "I know you did not mean to sin against me."

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The sin, you see, would not have primarily been against Abraham and Sarah. The sin would have been first and foremost against the Almighty God of Abraham. It was His plan. It was His desire. It was His promise.

And even when we sin unwittingly, it is still sin, and it still carries a result.

Abimilech was saved from God Almighty from committing a sin which would have meant his death and the death of his people. God alone chose Sarah for a specific purpose. God alone would make sure it came to pass.

If He has chosen you for a purpose, you can be sure He will bring you to the point that you fulfill that purpose. (Ephesians 2:10)

4. 20:7 Why does the Lord seem to elevate Abraham in Abimilech's eyes?
Hadn't he just done a really wrong, stubborn thing?

Again, this wasn't about Abraham, was it? God is further protecting Abraham, who still had a job to do for Him. Abimilech is a man of power in this culture. He could easily have killed Abraham for shaming him in such a way. God elevates Abraham in Abimilech's mind so that Abraham and Sarah can safely leave.

5. 20:8-21 What do we learn from Chapter 20?

- Even when we are walking by faith we still sin
- God has a job for each of us to do. He will accomplish his will.
- This was about God, not about Abraham, not about Sarah
- God protected Sarah, too, again
- Abraham was a prophet. A man of prayer. That was more important in the end than anything else.

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Chapter 21

6. 21:1-2 The long-awaited child has arrived. Safe and sound. Exactly as God had promised. How do you think Abraham and Sarah felt?

Was it wild, abandoned joy? Was it quiet, sweet wonder?

7. What promises are we still awaiting fulfillment of? How do you think we will feel when those promises come true?

Here's the promise I think of every day: To see His return. Will we jump and shout and holler? Will we sigh with relief? Will we dance in the streets? Will we cry? Will we celebrate with all those who have been watching from above and waiting for us?

I don't know how I will feel then. I only know how I feel now. And right now there is a growing sense of urgency within me - to see His face, soon!

Let's find some promises of God. First, read through the following Ephesians 1 passage. Notice, marked in yellow, all the promises we have from Jesus:

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

⁴ According as **he hath chosen us in him** before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

⁵ Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

⁶ To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein **he hath made us accepted in the beloved.**

⁷ In whom we have redemption through his blood, **the forgiveness of sins,** according to the riches of his grace;

⁸ Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;

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⁹ Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

¹⁰ That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

¹¹ In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

¹² That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

¹³ In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

¹⁴ Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

Now, read through the following James 1 passage, and underline the promises for yourself:

² My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

³ Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

⁴ But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

⁵ If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

⁶ But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

⁷ For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

⁸ A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.

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⁹ Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted:

¹⁰ But the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away.

¹¹ For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways.

¹² Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

The point of this little exercise is to remind us that the Word is chock-full of promises - they are ours to remember, talk about, and enjoy. Let the promises of God wrap around you when you are discouraged. Let them write your melody when you celebrate.

8. 21:3-7 There was much laughter going on when Isaac was born!

9. 21:8-21 What happens when Isaac is weaned (probably 3-5 years old)?

The truth of who the promised son is finally has to be dealt with. Abraham has to make a gut-wrenching decision. Does he separate himself from the first son of his flesh in order to fully follow the promised son of his faith?

10. Do you feel like Ishmael doesn't deserve this?

Again....it isn't about Ishmael or Isaac. It's about God. What Ishmael deserves is death. What Isaac deserves is death. What they got was the hand of God on their lives - totally undeserved. Ishmael has a choice to make. Does he continue on his life believing in the God of his father? Or does he turn away from the One, True God and do things his own way. That's the only decision that counts.

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11. How do you think Abraham feels at this point?

Broken-hearted. But he is obeying the One, True, God. His faith has to feel huge while his heart is crying.

12. Did Abraham have a grueling decision to make? Why did he make it?

Because he decided for faith, not sight.

13. 21:22-33 Neighbor trouble. Abraham, living with daily proof of God's Almighty hand on his life, still has to live through every-day problems. How does he handle it?

This time he handles it well. He says the proper things - works within his culture to be respectful and get things accomplished. But he also tells the truth.

14. Have you ever had a mountain-top experience with God, only to be brought back down to earth by life's realities? What can you learn from Abraham?

Mountain-tops are little glimpses of heaven. Valleys are going to happen. At least they will until we are someday in heaven with the One Who in this life has gracefully given us the occasional mountain-top.



Genesis 22 - Questions

Genesis 22

1. :1&2 What did God ask Abraham to do? Why would God ask such a thing?
2. :3&4 Why would Abraham obey such an order?
3. :5-8 What did Abraham expect to happen?
4. :9-12 What was God trying to accomplish with this trial?
5. :13-14 God provided the sacrifice for Abraham to use once He saw that Abraham would withhold nothing from Him. What does that tell you about the sacrifices God asks us for?
6. What did Abraham learn through this experience?
7. :15-18 God's promise of land and descendants is restated once more to Abraham...and then Abraham returns, with his alive, promised son, to live in that promised land...a land not controlled by Abraham, but controlled by the Philistines. What does that tell you about Abraham's faith?
8. :20-24 Who are these people, and why would Abraham care about them?

Application:

9. What do you learn from this chapter?

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Genesis 22 - Answers

Abraham has much wealth, and many people to care for. He has to make decisions not only for his own well-being, but also for the protection of many others. He has to keep his flocks watered and fed. And his slaves and family fed and clothed. And he has to try to keep his enemies from hating him so much for his wealth that they kill him to get it. And he has to deal with his own heartache of having to send away his beloved son, Ishmael, in order to protect his other beloved son, Isaac. Sort of a balancing act on a highwire, at times.....

But there was one way to make the right decisions. One way to have peace when feelings raged inside of him. One way to wisely handle a whole group of people who looked to him for leadership.

That way was faith. Abraham, at this point in his life, has had to continually trust God to someday give him the land He had promised, even though, as he walked through that land it still technically belonged to someone else. That took faith. That took trusting God's Words and God's timing.

God has His own time for everything. Our job is to fit into His time, not try to force Him to fit into ours. How could a promise - of land - given to Abraham, be fulfilled after Abraham died...and still be considered a promise to Abraham? Because Abraham someday would be there when the promise was finally fulfilled. (Isaiah 2:2&3, Zechariah 14:16) Death isn't a problem for God's promises.

Abraham has learned this lesson about the land that would someday be his. But now - there is a faith lesson to be learned about the son who was promised...who is alive and with him...who is to Abraham the greatest gift he has ever received from the LORD...

How is he going to learn that the gifts of God cannot be loved more than the Giver of the gifts?

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Genesis 22

1. :1&2 What did God ask Abraham to do? Why would God ask such a thing?

God asks Abraham to give back his gift. His son, Isaac, who was promised to Abraham, and who Abraham waited for for many years, and who meant more to Abraham than anything in the world...God asks Abraham to give that gift back... to offer his own son as a sacrifice - a literal sacrifice, slain on an altar.

This idea had to be unthinkable when Abraham first heard it from the LORD. What? Lord God, you don't want us to sacrifice our children on an altar like all the heathens do around us! Abraham - trust Me. But Lord God, Isaac means all the world to me! Abraham - more than Me? But Lord God, no one in my family will understand this - I will be hated and shunned forever! Abraham - do you love Me? Trust Me.

Why would God ask this? We'll see.

2. :3&4 Why would Abraham obey such an order?

But Lord God...how can I? I don't have it within me to do this! I could not possibly make my feet walk to that place of sacrifice and then tie my beloved son to the altar, and then raise the knife.....

Abraham - do you know Who I Am? Do you believe that I would never ask you to do anything that wasn't for your best? Do you believe that I love you? Do you believe that I keep my promises? Do you remember that I promised you would be the father of many nations, and that Isaac would be the way I would fulfill that promise? Do you believe I keep my promises?

Yes, Lord, I do.

Then obey Abraham. Trust me.

Yes, Lord.

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3. :5-8 What did Abraham expect to happen?

From these verses it is clear that Abraham may not have known how the LORD God was going to do it, but he believed that he and Isaac would walk back down together from that mount of sacrifice. Did Abraham think the LORD would raise Isaac from the dead after he was sacrificed? We don't know - all we know is that Abraham was planning on walking back home with his alive son.

4. :9-12 What was God trying to accomplish with this trial?

He was helping Abraham see Who he believed in, and how to have faith in that One. Faith, you see, is not for the things we can see, but for the things we can't. Abraham's faith had grown as he waited so long for gift of God - the son of promise. Now that the gift of God was here, there was so much more to have faith for. There was a whole future for a whole world. There was a Savior to come. There was salvation to be provided. The LORD was giving Abraham the privilege of having faith in the whole promise - not just the first part of it.

5. :13-14 God provided the sacrifice for Abraham to use once He saw that Abraham would withhold nothing from Him. What does that tell you about the sacrifices God asks us for?

He asks us to make the sacrifice....and He also provides the sacrifice.

6. What did Abraham learn through this experience?

To trust the One, True God for not only the blessings you can see, but also for the ones which are coming.

7. :15-18 God's promise of land and descendants is restated once more to Abraham...and then Abraham returns, with his alive, promised son, to live in that promised land...a land not controlled by Abraham, but controlled by the Philistines...to wait for many more promises to come. What does that tell you about Abraham's faith?

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Faith isn't faith if it lives in a bubble. Faith is faith when all around things look impossible. Faith is believing God, taking Him at His word, when it sure doesn't look like God is right. Faith is faith. Faith is not sight. Faith is not a good feeling. Faith is trusting God....no matter what. (Hebrews 11:1)

8. :20-24 Who are these people, and why would Abraham care about them?

These people are the family Abraham left behind when he, by faith, followed God's directions to leave and go to the promised land. Why does Abraham care about them? He is going to choose a wife for his beloved son, Isaac, from amongst these people.

Application:

9. What do you learn from this chapter?

God's promises are for real life. We can trust that the promises of God are strong and true even in the worst times of life...because we see how Abraham, a great man of faith, walked through the worst of life and learned faith as he went.

" for in it the righteousness of God is revealed, from faith to faith; as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith' " Romans 1:17

Genesis 23&24 – Questions

Genesis 23

1. :1 How old was Sarah when she died? How old was Abraham when Sarah died? How old was Isaac when she died? (Genesis 17:17) (Genesis 21:5)
2. Read through Chapter 23 and answer these questions:
 - a. How did buying this plot of ground help Abraham as he grieved the loss of his wife, Sarah?
 - b. The land was his in the sense that the Lord had given it to him. Why would he be so desirous to pay money for it?
 - c. What do you learn about Mediterranean bargaining from this chapter?
 - d. What do you learn about the value of a funeral and a burial from this chapter?

Genesis 24

:1-4

3. What was Abraham asking for when he asked his servant to "put his hand under his thigh"?
4. Which servant did Abraham choose for this job? Why?
5. What was the servant's job?
6. Why did Abraham not want his son, Isaac, to have a wife from the people who lived near him?

:5-9

7. Did Abraham want his son to go back to his native land?
8. Why not?
9. What did Abraham expect to happen so that a woman from his own family would be willing to come away with this servant of Abraham's?

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:10-14

10. What does this passage tell you about Abraham's trusted servant?

:15-28

11. What does this passage tell you about Rebekah?

:29-51

12. What does this passage tell you about Laban?

:52-61

13. Why would Rebekah have been willing to leave so suddenly with a stranger, to leave her home forever and be married to a man she had never met?

:62-67

14. What does this passage tell you about Isaac?

Summary Questions:

1. What was Abraham waiting for? What did Abraham do as he waited?
2. What does God promise to do as we wait? (Psalm 27:14)
3. What gives us hope as we wait? (Psalm 130:5)
4. What are some of God's major reasons for waiting? (Isaiah 30:18)
5. Is God aware of how hard it is for us to wait? (Psalm 40:1)
6. What is a wonderful result of waiting? (Isaiah 40:31)
7. What else is waiting, with us, for fulfillment of God's promises? (Romans 8:19-23)
8. What is the main promise of God we are waiting for today? (I Thessalonians 1:10, Titus 2:13, Hebrews 9:28)

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Genesis 23 & 24 – Answers

We have seen Abraham waiting on God's promises to be fulfilled, and growing in his faith as he waited. In today's chapters we see a couple of very practical things Abraham does as he waits. He grieves for his wife, Sarah, when she dies. And he makes arrangements for a wife for his son, Isaac.

You see, life goes on as we wait. It's OK. God gives us many blessings as we patiently wait on Him.

A Few Facts:

- The cave Abraham purchased in which to bury Sarah was also used to bury Abraham, Isaac, Rebekah, Leah, and Jacob.
- The amount Abraham paid for the cave was high for those days.
- Ephron would benefit tax-wise if he sold Abraham the field as well as the cave
- The journey to Mesopotamia was over 500 miles
- Watering 10 camels was hard work
- The veil was a sign of modesty and respect

Genesis 23

1. :1 How old was Sarah when she died? How old was Abraham when Sarah died? How old was Isaac when she died? (Genesis 17:17) (Genesis 21:5)

Sarah was 127 when she died. If we do a little math, we can answer these other questions. We know from Genesis 17:17 that Sarah was 90 when Isaac was born, and Abraham was 100. So Abraham was 10 years older than Sarah. That means Abraham was 137 when Sarah died. And Isaac was 37 when Sarah died.

2. Read through Chapter 23 and answer these questions:
 - a. How did buying this plot of ground help Abraham as he grieved the loss of his wife, Sarah?

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I would guess that it was a help to Abraham to know that he was doing the last thing he could do for her - giving her a place to rest in the land God had promised to the both of them.

- b. The land was his in the sense that the Lord had given it to him. Why would he be so desirous to pay money for it?

The land was not his in reality yet. He knew that it would be his, and his family's some day, but they didn't yet have all the rights to the land. They had not purchased it, and they had not won it in battle. There were still people living in that land who considered it theirs. So Abraham wanted a clear and uncontested title to this little part of that land. He was willing to wait for God to work out His promises about the land as a whole, but for now he knew he needed title to this piece where he could bury Sarah.

- c. What do you learn about Mediterranean bargaining from this chapter?

It seems to me that the people who lived here were extremely polite and complimentary in everything they said to Abraham, and offered him land for free - but that Abraham was wise to insist on paying for it - since that is probably what the owners of the land were wanting all along. The bargaining included a lot of flowery praise which was just for the purpose of making everyone feel good, but was not to be taken at face value as the bargaining moved toward its logical conclusion - a sale.

- d. What do you learn about the value of a funeral and a burial from this chapter?

I think a burial and funeral are essential parts of the healing which is so badly needed at the death of a loved one. From my own personal experience, having laid to rest a Mom and a Dad, and a Mother-in-law and a Father-in-law, the pain of putting a loved one in the grave

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releases the one left behind to go on living. It doesn't put that loved one "away" where they won't be thought of anymore...but it does help the healing process for the one who must find a way to keep living life. I think it probably helped Abraham to have a plot of ground he could go back to again and again - a "connection" somehow with this woman who had walked by his side for so long. And I know that it helped future generations of the children and grandchildren of Abraham and Sarah to have a place they could point to and remember her - to proclaim to themselves and to the world that she had lived and died and was real.

Genesis 24

:1-4

3. What was Abraham asking for when he asked his servant to "put his hand under his thigh"?

This was a personal, intimate act, reserved for times when the most personal of promises were made.

4. Which servant did Abraham choose for this job? Why?

The oldest servant, the one who had been with Abraham the longest, and no doubt the one Abraham trusted the most. This was the most important job Abraham had to do right now. To choose the right wife for his son, Isaac, one who would also love and respect the One, True God, would mean the family would go forward in the right direction. To choose the wrong wife might mean the end of a family of faith.

5. What was the servant's job?

Search for the right woman amongst the people Abraham had come from.

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6. Why did Abraham not want his son, Isaac, to have a wife from the people who lived near him?

The people who lived around Abraham and Isaac were Canaanites, idol worshippers. It was highly unlikely a Canaanite woman could be found who worshipped only the One, True God.

:5-9

7. Did Abraham want his son to go back to his native land?

No - Isaac was not to go back there.

8. Why not?

Abraham wanted to take no chances that Isaac would never come back to live in the promised land. Abraham took very seriously his promises from God of a land and a future and descendants. He was willing to do everything possible to stay right where the Lord had put him.

9. What did Abraham expect to happen so that a woman from his own family would be willing to come away with this servant of Abraham's?

He expected an angel of God to go before his servant and prepare the way for this woman to be found and brought back to Isaac.

:10-14

10. What does this passage tell you about Abraham's trusted servant?

He was trusted for a reason. He fulfilled all that Abraham asked him to do - and this servant was also a God-fearer. The servant was also a believer in the One, True God.

:15-28

11. What does this passage tell you about Rebekah?

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She was gutsy. She was strong. She was thoughtful of others and could be counted on. She was a people-person. She was brave. And she, also, wanted to know and have faith in the One, True God.

:29-51

12. What does this passage tell you about Laban?

Laban was smart. He had an eye for money. He knew how to bargain. He had some idea of Who the One, True God was.

:52-61

13. Why would Rebekah have been willing to leave so suddenly with a stranger, to leave her home forever and be married to a man she had never met?

The culture she lived in was going to eventually ask her to marry and live with her husband's family. That idea was not new to her. She was apparently ready to make the marriage decision. And perhaps she was ready for an adventure. She knew it would be hard and frightening, but she was up for it. I think she had been prepared by God for this next step in her life.

You see, God cared who the wife of Isaac would be. The choice of the woman was just as important as the choice of the man. We saw that with Sarah, and we'll see it with many more wives and mothers to come in the long genealogies of the Jews.

:62-67

14. What does this passage tell you about Isaac?

I think I see Isaac as a sensitive man - emotional. His new wife helped him get on with life after his mother's death. We see in the next few chapters of Genesis that Isaac never really had great accomplishments attached to his name. I think he was a lover, not a fighter. ☺

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Summary Questions:

15. What was Abraham waiting for? What did Abraham do as he waited?

He was waiting for the promises of God to be fulfilled. A land, a spiritual heritage. Abraham never saw the fulfillment of all of God's promises in his lifetime on this earth. In heaven, he is still waiting for the complete fulfillment.

16. What does God promise to do as we wait? (Psalm 27:14)

He strengthens us.

17. What gives us hope as we wait? (Psalm 130:5)

His Word.

18. What are some of God's major reasons for waiting? (Isaiah 30:18)

He wants to be gracious to us - in order to give to us even more than we thought He was going to.

He wants to extend mercy to us - to bathe our lives in so much love and healing that we sigh with joy.

19. Is God aware of how hard it is for us to wait? (Psalm 40:1)

Yes. He also waits. He leans in to us as we groan with the waiting.

20. What is a wonderful result of waiting? (Isaiah 40:31)

We become stronger.

21. What else is waiting, with us, for fulfillment of God's promises? (Romans 8:19-23)

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The whole earth. The whole creation.

22. What is the main promise of God we are waiting for today? (I Thessalonians 1:10, Titus 2:13, Hebrews 9:28)

For the return of Jesus Christ, to take us home with Him for all eternity.

Genesis 25 & 26 - Questions

Genesis 25

:1-6

9. How many other wives did Abraham have besides Sarah?
10. How many sons did Abraham have with his wife, Keturah?
11. Are those sons and their offspring Jews today?

:7-11

12. How old was Abraham when he died? How long did he live after Sarah died? Who saw to his burial? Where was he buried?

:12-18

13. How old was Ishmael when he died? How many sons did he have?

:19-21

14. What does Rebekah have in common with her deceased mother-in-law, Sarah?

:19-28

15. How long did Isaac and Rebekah have to wait for their first children to be born? What were the names of the twins? How were they different from one another?

:23

16. What prophecy did the Lord give to Rebekah about the twins?

:29-34

17. What does this passage tell us about the character of Esau? The character of Jacob?

Genesis 26

18. :1-5 What important thing did Abraham have, which Isaac inherits?

19. :6-11 What not so great thing did Isaac inherit from Abraham?

20. :12-14 What happened to Isaac, just like it happened to Abraham?

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21. :13-18 Just as the surrounding peoples were _____ of Abraham, so they were also _____ of Isaac.

22. :19-22 What did Isaac do in the same way Abraham had done it? (see Genesis 21:22-34)

23. :23-25 What did the Lord do for Isaac, just as He had done for Abraham?

24. :26-31 Did Isaac relate to his neighbors the same way Abraham had?

25. :32-33 Why was water so important?

26. :34-35 Which of Isaac's sons was definitely not following in his father's footsteps? Why wasn't he?

Summary Questions:

- What heritage are you passing on to your children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren?
- What are some practical, fun ways we can pass on the heritage of loving the Word of God to future generations?

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Genesis 25 & 26 - Answers

Genesis 25

:1-6

1. How many other wives did Abraham have besides Sarah?
2. How many sons did Abraham have with his wife, Keturah?
3. Are those sons and their offspring Jews today?

Here's the thing to realize from these verses: Abraham did have other children besides Isaac...but Isaac was the only "son of promise". Isaac was the only son of Abraham through whom the promises of God would pass. Isaac was the only "Jew". The other children of Abraham were loved by and blessed by their father, but only the son of promise would be the one to fulfill the promises of God to Abraham - a land and descendants greater in number than the sand of the sea.

Let's take this a generation further: Isaac had 2 sons. But only one of those sons, Jacob, was a believer in the One, True God. Only Jacob would be the one to fulfill the promises of God to Abraham and Isaac.

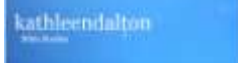
The Jewish nation today are any descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. None of the other sons of Abraham or Isaac have ever been Jews. The promises of God to the Jews are only for the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

:7-11

4. How old was Abraham when he died? How long did he live after Sarah died? Who saw to his burial? Where was he buried?

Abraham was 137 when Sarah died. And then he died himself at the age of 175. So he lived 38 years after her death. His sons, Isaac and Ishmael, buried him in the same cave Abraham had purchased 38 years previously when he buried Sarah.

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:12-18

5. How old was Ishmael when he died? How many sons did he have?

Ishmael lived to 137 years. He had 12 sons.

:19-21

6. What does Rebekah have in common with her deceased mother-in-law, Sarah?

Rebekah was also barren. She could not conceive. The twins born to her were a result of prayer. The pregnancy was a work of God.

:19-28

7. How long did Isaac and Rebekah have to wait for their first children to be born? What were the names of the twins? How were they different from one another?

From :20 and :25, Isaac was 40 when he married Rebekah, and 60 when the twins were born. So they waited 20 years for children. The twins' names were Jacob and Esau, and they couldn't have been more different...in appearance, interests, emotional make-up, and most of all - in their desire to know and believe in the One, True God.

:23

8. What prophecy did the Lord give to Rebekah about the twins?

The Lord told Rebekah that the older of her twins (Esau) would end up serving the younger (Jacob). He also told her that these two men would both produce strong, powerful nations.

:29-34

9. What does this passage tell us about the character of Esau? The character of Jacob?

Jacob was a schemer. Esau loved the world.

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Genesis 26

10. :1-5 What important thing did Abraham have, which Isaac inherits?

The blessing of God.

11. :6-11 What not so great thing did Isaac inherit from Abraham?

The sin of deviousness.

12. :12-14 What happened to Isaac, just like it happened to Abraham?

Prosperity.

13. :13-18 Just as the surrounding peoples were _____ of Abraham, so they were also _____ of Isaac.

Jealous.

14. :19-22 What did Isaac do in the same way Abraham had done it? (see Genesis 21:22-34)

Dealt wisely and kindly with his hateful neighbors - not a fighting spirit

15. :23-25 What did the Lord do for Isaac, just as He had done for Abraham?

Renewed the covenant

16. :26-31 Did Isaac relate to his neighbors the same way Abraham had?

Exactly the same. Respect. Caution

17. :32-33 Why was water so important?

Couldn't live without it.

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18. :34-35 Which of Isaac's sons was definitely not following in his father's footsteps?
Why wasn't he?

Esau married idol-worshippers.

Summary Questions:

- What heritage are you passing on to your children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren?
- What are some practical, fun ways we can pass on the heritage of loving the Word of God to future generations?

1. Read the Word of God to them.
2. Let them know you love the Word of God and read it every day.
3. Memorize scripture together.
4. Quote your memorized scripture to them
5. Have Bible Memory contests
6. Use scripture when answering questions.
7. The Bible in 90 Days. www.Biblein90days.org
8. Buy them great Bible study books or games:

- Kay Arthur Discover 4 Yourself Series



- Games like "Do U Know?"

Turn playtime into Bible-time with this fast-paced family card game. It's similar to Uno, but in addition to matching colors and numbers, players must answer questions about

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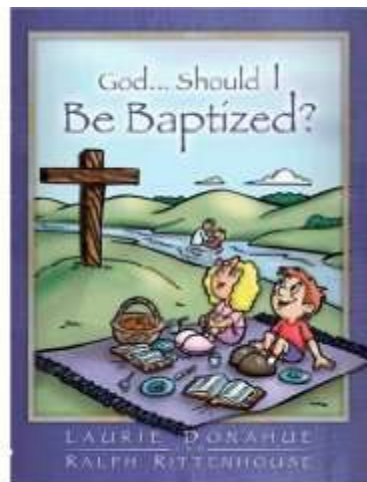
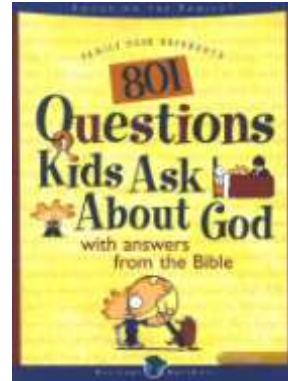
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- Great book to give the basics for salvation, baptism, and a daily walk with God

9. Plan a special meal, and invite them to come, letting them know that the reason for the evening is so that you can tell them your story of how you came to know Jesus.

10. Tell them stories from the Bible about Families, and the value of handing down the truth of the Word of God from one generation to the next. (Like the story of Ruth)

11. Put together a unique photo album. On the left side of the page put a picture, and on the right side, write the story of that picture....what was happening, who is in the picture...and what you learned from God during that time.

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12. Compile a family genealogy, and indicate what you know about each person's relationship to Jesus. Ask your children or grandchildren to help with the research or the compiling.
13. They need to see you praying.
14. Sing scripture choruses together.
15. If you play the piano, grab a hymnbook and let them turn the pages...talk about the words of the hymns. Learn some hymns together. Teach them to harmonize.
16. Take them on a short-term mission trip with you. What a rich experience for them to meet other kids their own age, in a different culture, who also love the Bible (in their own language) and Jesus.
17. Teach them a verse or two in another language. Pray for children who speak that language.
18. Take them to a baseball game, or fishing, or gardening...and talk about the things you are learning from the Lord.
19. Turn them on to a good Christian kids' website, like:
www.kidstalkaboutgod.org
20. Invite their friends over for dinner. Welcome them into the fellowship of your family as you pray before a meal, and talk about Jesus and scripture passages as you eat.

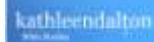
Psalm 119:112 says "*I have inclined my heart to perform Your statutes
Forever, to the very end.*"

- Are you fully committed to doing things God's ways until the end of your life?

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The logo for Kathleen Dalton, featuring the name "kathleendalton" in a lowercase, sans-serif font, with "Writings" in a smaller font below it.

- Do your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren know you spend time in the Word every day?

Proverbs 13:22 "A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children..."

Genesis 27 & 28 - Questions

27:1-4

1. What challenges of growing old is Isaac experiencing?
2. What does Isaac want to do for his son, Esau, before he dies?
3. What kind of food does Isaac especially like?

27:5-10

4. Which son is Rebekah most fond of?
5. What is Rebekah wanting Jacob to do?
6. What is Rebekah wanting for Jacob?

27:11&12

7. How does Jacob react to his mother's plan?

27:13-17

8. Is Rebekah doing a wrong thing?
9. Does she have any reason to think she might have the right to do this? (Genesis 25:23)

27:18-29

10. Is Jacob doing a wrong thing?
11. Does he have any reason to think he might have the right to do this? (Genesis 25:29-33)
12. What is wrong with Jacob and his mother that they are so willing to deceive Isaac in order to get what they want?
13. What blessings did Isaac give to Jacob (unaware that this was not Esau)?
14. Were those blessings still going to belong to Jacob even though he got them through deceit?

27:30-40

15. What happens now?
16. Why do you think Isaac was "trembling" when he found out what his younger son had done?
17. Why couldn't Isaac just take back his blessing to Jacob?
18. What blessings did Isaac give to Esau?

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27:41 - 28:5

19. How did Esau react to this situation?
20. How did Rebekah react to Esau's emotion?
21. What did Rebekah do to get Isaac to go along with her plan?
22. Where is Jacob being sent?
23. What blessing does Isaac give him before he goes?
24. What does this blessing tell you about Isaac's feelings for Jacob now?

28:6-9

25. How does Esau react to Jacob's escape ?
26. What does that tell you about Esau?

28:10-15

27. What is happening here?
28. Jacob already has the promise of the blessing of Abraham being passed on to him - his father, Isaac, gave him that blessing. Why does God give the blessing Himself?

28:16-22

29. What is Jacob's response to this dream?

APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

30. Is it ever right to do something wrong in order to make something right happen?
31. What is the difference between knowing about God and believing He exists...and having a personal relationship with God?
32. Does God want a personal relationship with us?
33. What was God willing to do to make sure you had a personal relationship with Him?

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Genesis 27 & 28 - Answers

27:1-4

1. What challenges of growing old is Isaac experiencing?
Probably the very same ones we face today. His eyesight is dimming - his whole body is dimming.
2. What does Isaac want to do for his son, Esau, before he dies?
He wants to pass on the family fortune, basically. All the property should go to Esau as the oldest. He should inherit the right to lead and have authority over the whole household. And also, in the special case of these people who have a relationship with the One, True God, Isaac might be wanting to pass on the special blessing of God to his oldest son - the blessing that says a land and a huge nation will come from them.

There's a problem here, though. Well, actually 2 problems. One is that Esau has already given away his birthright - remember? - when he was so hungry he sold it to Jacob for a bowl of stew.

And the 2nd problem is that Esau is not a worshipper of the One, True God. How can Isaac be so "blind" that he does not realize he cannot pass on the blessings of the One, True God to his son who does not believe in Him?

3. What kind of food does Isaac especially like?
He likes meat and potatoes.

27:5-10

4. Which son is Rebekah most fond of?
Rebekah loves Jacob the best.
5. What is Rebekah wanting Jacob to do?
Rebekah wants Jacob to lie to his father so that he can inherit the blessing he technically already has the right to - Esau sold him the birthright.
6. What is Rebekah wanting for Jacob?
She wants hope and a future for him. She is going about it the wrong way.

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27:11&12

7. How does Jacob react to his mother's plan?

He's not at all sure he can pull it off - he doesn't want to get caught lying to his Dad - but he does want all the blessings to pass on to him -

27:13-17

8. Is Rebekah doing a wrong thing?

Yes.

9. Does she have any reason to think she might have the right to do this? (Genesis 25:23)

She might feel Jacob has the right to get the inheritance....but she knows the deviousness is wrong. She might just be so sunk into her desire for things and security that she doesn't care if it's wrong. She might believe in the One, True God...but she sure isn't walking with Him.

27:18-29

10. Is Jacob doing a wrong thing?

Yes.

11. Does he have any reason to think he might have the right to do this? (Genesis 25:29-33)

Yes. But he's going about it the wrong way. We'll see - he will pay for this dearly.

12. What is wrong with Jacob and his mother that they are so willing to deceive Isaac in order to get what they want?

They don't seem to have a walk with God. They are not communicating with Him, or caring about Him. Jacob, I think, might say he believes in the One, True God at this point, but he probably doesn't. Not sure about Rebekah.

13. What blessings did Isaac give to Jacob (unaware that this was not Esau)?

Everything.

14. Were those blessings still going to belong to Jacob even though he got them through deceit?

Yes.

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27:30-40

15. What happens now?

Now the cork pops out of the bottle.

16. Why do you think Isaac was "trembling" when he found out what his younger son had done?

I think there might have been a couple of reasons: First, he is mad that he has been deceived in something which meant so much to him. But second, I think it's also possible he is trembling with fear of God - suddenly realizing how close he came to giving God's own blessings to one who he knew did not respect or fear God.

17. Why couldn't Isaac just take back his blessing to Jacob?

Once spoken, never to be undone.

18. What blessings did Isaac give to Esau?

He had to really stretch to come up with 3 things:

- You will live off the land
- You will be a fighter
- You will some day throw off the yolk of Jacob.

27:41 - 28:5

19. How did Esau react to this situation?

So angry he plans to kill Jacob once their father has died.

20. How did Rebekah react to Esau's emotion?

She is afraid for Jacob, and wants to get him to a safe place.

21. What did Rebekah do to get Isaac to go along with her plan?

She reminds Isaac of Esau's flaunting of his Canaanite girlfriends. Does Isaac want Jacob to stay and follow the evil ways of his brother?

22. Where is Jacob being sent?

To live with Rebekah's brother, Laban.

23. What blessing does Isaac give him before he goes?

He gives him the blessing of Abraham. He officially passes on the family blessing to Jacob. He makes a point of it.

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24. What does this blessing tell you about Isaac's feelings for Jacob now?

I think we see here that Isaac cared deeply for Jacob, even though they didn't have as much in common as Isaac and Esau. And I think Isaac realizes Jacob is the one God has put His hand on for the future of the family.

28:6-9

25. How does Esau react to Jacob's escape ?

He is mad and takes the opportunity to take out revenge on his parents by hurting them deeply - by marrying a Canaanite woman.

26. What does that tell you about Esau?

He is not just mad at Jacob. He is mad at God. He is not a believer in the One, True God.

28:10-15

27. What is happening here?

He encounters the One, True God for the first time in his life.

28. Jacob already has the promise of the blessing of Abraham being passed on to him - his father, Isaac, gave him that blessing. Why does God give the blessing Himself? The Lord is making sure Jacob knows this has to be a personal relationship, not just a legal inheriting.

28:16-22

29. What is Jacob's response to this dream?

Jacob has a lot to learn about the One, True God. He knows He exists now. He understands the import of the promises....but he doesn't yet want to have a personal relationship with Him. He basically is saying at this point: "If God will give to me, I will believe in Him. He will be my God if He will meet my needs."

He has a long journey to make before he someday falls on his knees before his amazing, patient Lord, and actually believes in Him.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

30. Is it ever right to do something wrong in order to make something right happen?

No.

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31. What is the difference between knowing about God and believing He exists... ..and having a personal relationship with God?

Big difference. The personal relationship is the only one which counts. The "knowing" and "believing" which are only in the head are not at all what God wants from us.

32. Does God want a personal relationship with us?

Oh, yes.

33. What was God willing to do to make sure you had a personal relationship with Him?

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16

Genesis 29 - Questions

:1-3

1. What is the first thing Jacob goes toward as he approaches the land of his destination?
2. What is a very practical reason Jacob would seek out a well?
3. If you were new to an area, what place would you go to meet people?

:4-6

4. Is it just a coincidence that Jacob meets up so soon with the very people he is seeking?

:7-10

5. What does Jacob do for these shepherds?
6. Does he have a motive other than just being helpful to a group of shepherds?

:11&12

7. Why is Jacob so emotional?

:13-15

8. Why all the kissing?
9. How long does Jacob stay with his uncle, Laban, as his guest?
10. Even though Jacob is Laban's guest for this month, does it look like he is also working for Laban? Why would he do that?
11. Is Laban offering Jacob a job?

:16&17

12. What was the difference between Laban's two daughters?

:18-20

13. What "wages" does Jacob ask of Laban in order to stay on and work for him?
14. Why is he willing to work this hard and this long?
15. What are some of the hard things we are willing to do because of love?
16. What was Jesus willing to do because of love? (John 3:16)

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:21-25

17. How could Jacob not have realized he was with the wrong sister?

:26-30

18. What do we now realize about Laban?

19. How is Jacob a lot like Laban?

20. Does Jacob get the girl he loves in the end?

21. What else does Jacob get?

:31-35

22. Who are the first 4 children born to Jacob?

23. Who is their mother?

24. What does Rachel have in common with Sarah and Rebekah?

APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

25. What do you suppose the LORD is teaching Jacob?

26. What do you suppose the LORD is teaching Rachel?

27. What good things are coming out of a bad situation?

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Genesis 29 – Answers

The Ultimate Dysfunctional Family

Look up the word "dysfunctional" in the dictionary
and you should see: "the families of Isaac and Jacob".

- It starts out so fine: Isaac and Rebekah love the Lord God and want to have a godly family.
- They have twins, Jacob and Esau...and downhill it goes.
- Rebekah loved Jacob the best.
- Isaac loved Esau the best.
- Rebekah stoops to lying and cheating (manipulating) in order to make her husband do what she wants him to do.
- Jacob is also a manipulator, and cheats Esau.
- Esau wants to kill Jacob.
- Jacob has to run away from his home.
- Esau does not love the One, True God.
- Jacob loves the One, True God, but he lives a life full of sin.
- Esau marries ungodly women in order to spite his mother and father.
- We will see...Jacob ends up with 2 wives...Esau has many
- Jacob in turn will be cheated and lied to by his uncle, Laban.
- Jacob in this chapter will bring 4 children into the world, all from a wife he does not love.
- The wife Jacob does love cannot have children.

How did it get so bad? Isaac was the "son of promise". All of God's magnificent promises to Isaac's father, Abraham, have passed on to Isaac. The land is his....the innumerable descendants will come from him....the future blessing of the world rests on his shoulders.

How did this little family full of the future get so off-track?

Where is the sweet relationship with the One, True God that Abraham had?
(we will see the answer to this in future chapters)

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:1-3

1. What is the first thing Jacob goes toward as he approaches the land of his destination?

He heads toward a well.

2. What is a very practical reason Jacob would seek out a well?

He was probably thirsty - in fact, a well was probably a place of stopping for all travelers, since a traveler had a basic need which could not be denied for long - thirst.

And, if he was looking for social contact the well was the place to find it. He would find out where he was, how far he was from where he was heading, and he would learn the latest news of the area. A well was a social place.

3. If you were new to an area, what place would you go to meet people?

:4-6

4. Is it just a coincidence that Jacob meets up so soon with the very people he is seeking?

No, of course not. We see over and over again that there are no coincidences. God's hand is always on every situation we find ourselves in.

:7-10

5. What does Jacob do for these shepherds?

He rolls the stone away and waters their flocks. A very kind thing for a traveler to do.

6. Does he have a motive other than just being helpful to a group of shepherds?

I think the very pretty shepherdess who has just arrived may have something to do with his generosity.

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:11&12

7. Why is Jacob so emotional?

For one thing, he's probably tired. He's away from home. He has found the little community of people he has been seeking. He's probably relieved that his journey is over. He might be lonely. He might be homesick and happy that he is once again with family.

And - as we have already seen and will see in future chapters - Jacob is a very emotional guy. That's the way he's wired up.

:13-15

8. Why all the kissing?

This is not romantic kissing - but simply an expression of "hello".

9. How long does Jacob stay with his uncle, Laban, as his guest?

One month.

10. Even though Jacob is Laban's guest for this month, does it look like he is also working for Laban? Why would he do that?

It was common practice to work alongside your host when you stayed with him. Of course...what else would you do? There were not a whole lot of vacation or recreational choices for what to do with yourself during the day.

11. Is Laban offering Jacob a job?

Yes.

:16&17

12. What was the difference between Laban's two daughters?

One was pretty - one was not.

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:18-20

13. What "wages" does Jacob ask of Laban in order to stay on and work for him?

Jacob can't go back home - so staying is a pretty good idea. And it would only be right for Laban to pay him, so the "wages" Jacob most wants he asks for: He wants to marry the daughter of Laban - the pretty one - Rachel.

14. Why is he willing to work this hard and this long?

Love.

15. What are some of the hard things we are willing to do because of love?

16. What was Jesus willing to do because of love? (John 3:16)

:21-25

17. How could Jacob not have realized he was with the wrong sister?

It was dark. They had been partying. She must have been very quiet - no conversation. Oh well - who knows? He definitely was surprised at seeing Leah beside him in the morning.

:26-30

18. What do we now realize about Laban?

He's devious.

19. How is Jacob a lot like Laban?

Also devious.

20. Does Jacob get the girl he loves in the end?

Yes.

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21. What else does Jacob get?

He gets a situation he did not ask for. A wife he did not want. He now is the husband of 2 wives - a disobedience to God's rules. And a whole keg of trouble will now open up as Jacob's family inherits another dysfunctional lifestyle.

:31-35

22. Who are the first 4 children born to Jacob?

Reuben, Simeon, Levi & Judah.

23. Who is their mother?

Leah.

24. What does Rachel have in common with Sarah and Rebekah?

She is barren. There will need to be a miracle for her to conceive and bare a child. Why so many barren women in this family? Opportunities for miracles - so that this little dysfunctional family will not forget Who is really in charge.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

25. What do you suppose the LORD is teaching Jacob?

26. What do you suppose the LORD is teaching Rachel?

27. What good things are coming out of a bad situation?

This dysfunctional family will embarrass us and make us mad as we read through the rest of their history. We will want to spank them, to lecture them, to throw up our hands in the air and we will be tempted to ask God to abandon them!but through them will come startling works of God. We will be shocked at God's plan for this crazy family, crippled with sin.

- The 12 sons of Jacob will become the 12 tribes of Israel - the nation of Israel.
- All 12 tribes will be miraculously brought out of Egypt at the time of the Passover.
- They will inherit the land of Israel - splitting it up into 12 different sections.

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- From one of these sons (Judah) will come the Messiah of Israel (about 2,000 years later)
- The New Jerusalem in the New Heaven and the New Earth will have 12 gates - each of them bearing the name of one of the 12 sons of Jacob.

Genesis 30 - Questions

By way of review, from chapter 29, verses 31-35, what are the names of Jacob's first 4 children? And who was their mother?

What is Leah thinking through all these births? Is God's hand in this obvious to Leah?

:1-2

1. Jacob and his favorite wife, Rachel, are having a little marital disharmony. What are they arguing about?

:3-8

2. What is Rachel's solution to their problem? Have we seen this solution before? How did it turn out last time?

What is Rachel thinking through these 2 births? Is God's hand in this obvious to Rachel?

:9-13

3. When Leah sees Rachel blessed with sons, even though they are from another woman, what is her reaction?

What is Leah thinking through these 2 births? Is God's hand in this obvious to Leah?

:14-21

4. What happens now?

What is Leah thinking through all these births? Is God's hand in this obvious to Leah?

:22-24

5. What finally happens?

What is Rachel thinking through in this birth? Is God's hand in this obvious to Rachel?

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:25-30

6. Jacob now has 2 wives, 2 concubines, and 12 children (11 sons and 1 daughter) What does he want to do?
7. What has happened to the wealth of Laban while Jacob has been with him?

:31-36

8. What plan does Jacob come up with as he agrees to stay a little longer with his uncle, Laban.
9. Why is he willing to stay?
10. Is Jacob trying to cheat his uncle Laban? Is his Uncle Laban trying to cheat him?

:37-43

11. What do you learn about Jacob as you read these verses?
12. After all this time with Jacob living with him, what does Laban not realize about Jacob?

See if you can fill in this table of the whole family of Jacob so far, and their mothers, in their order of birth:

	Leah	Bilhah	Zilpah	Rachel
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				

There is one more son of Jacob to be born, Benjamin - his birth will be later, on their way back to the land of Jacob's birth. That will make 12 sons in all.

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Genesis 30 - Answers

The Lord God had given "boundaries", or "laws" to the people He created. These were not "suggestions" for happy living. No - these were Laws - written in stone - which, if disobeyed, would bring sorrow and death to the ones who disobeyed, and quite often also to the other people in their lives. These other people were "innocent victims" of the disobedience of the people in their lives.

The Lord God, foreseeing such sorrow and suffering coming upon innocent people, laid down a few more rules and guidelines to protect the innocent. The rules and guidelines seemed to say "You shouldn't do such and such, but if you do, here are a few more rules to tell you how to behave in the difficult situation you have created."

At first look, it might seem that the Lord God is saying: "I don't want you to do this, but I know you will, so I guess I've changed my mind - you can do it."

But that's not at all what the Lord God was saying. For instance:

God's Law said "One man, one woman, one flesh". Genesis 2:24. From the beginning the definition of marriage was: One man, one woman, one flesh. Multiple wives were not OK. Homosexual unions were not OK.

But God, knowing the rebellious hearts of men and women, put another law in place to protect the children born into marriages with more than one Mom.

Deuteronomy 21:15-17 specifically protests the firstborn of a union between a man and the wife who is not his favorite.

Divorce also falls into this category. God hates divorce. But He put a "certificate of divorce" (Deut 24:1-4) into place in the days of Moses because He knew that divorce, though terrible, would definitely happen, and there would be innocent people to protect. See Matthew 19:3-9. When God allowed a "certificate of divorce" was He saying divorce was OK? Nope. He was saying the innocent parties should have some protection.

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So, here in Chapter 30, we see a situation where multiple wives will be producing multiple children. We know without being told that there will be much strife and unfairness as a result.

The Lord God actively worked in these lives - both the innocent and the guilty - protecting and helping and teaching - not because He all of a sudden thought multiple wives was OK, but because He was protecting the innocent.

And - we will see as we read - He also was keeping His hand of protection on the guilty - who someday would realize their sin and come for forgiveness.

By way of review, from chapter 29, verses 31-35, what are the names of Jacob's first 4 children? And who was their mother?

Reuben	Leah
Simeon	Leah
Levi	Leah
Judah	Leah

What is Leah thinking through all these births? Is God's hand in this obvious to Leah?
God

My heart breaks for Leah. She seems, all the way through this whole process of the birthing of the family of Jacob, to be so deeply wanting the love of her husband. She know he loves Rachel best. She gives God the credit, again and again, for giving her one more chance to be loved.

:1-2

1. Jacob and his favorite wife, Rachel, are having a little marital disharmony. What are they arguing about?

Rachel is to the breaking point. She desperately wants children, and stoops to the meanness of blaming Jacob for her infertility. Infertility is a painful, deep ache in the hearts of many women. There is no way to understand its depth unless you have also been infertile.

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Jacob lashes back - it's not his fault (evidenced by the other 4 children he and Leah have brought into the world)

Their love for each other is tested here. Is it enough to have the love of a good man when no children will ever come from your union? My common sense tells me yes, of course it is. But I have 5 children. There is no simple answer to this grief and shame which will not go away.

:3-8

2. What is Rachel's solution to their problem? Have we seen this solution before? How did it turn out last time?

Rachel says, "Fine, then! Take my maid and have children by her, and those children will legally be mine! I will not technically be barren if you can do this for me."

Jacob complies (just as his grandfather, Abraham, had complied years before). And not only does he comply once - but it seems he complied at least twice.:

Dan

Bilhah

(Rachel)

Naphtali

Bilhah

(Rachel)

What is Rachel thinking through these 2 births? Is God's hand in this obvious to Rachel?

She credits these two births to God's hand - and she sees them as a victory over her non-barren sister!

:9-13

3. When Leah sees Rachel blessed with sons, even though they are from another woman, what is her reaction?

True to the dysfunctional nature of this little family, Leah responds in jealousy to Rachel's blessing. She therefore takes her own maid, Zilpah, and gives her to Jacob so that he can produce children through her for Leah. She probably is assuming she is through bearing children herself.

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Gad

Zilpah

(Leah)

Asher

Zilpah

(Leah)

What is Leah thinking through these 2 births? Is God's hand in this obvious to Leah?

Leah is happy for 2 more sons for herself, but does not credit God. Is she growing calloused and bitter? Have God's blessings in her life gone uncared for? Is it because she still knows she is not the main love of Jacob's life?

:14-21

4. What happens now?

Leah's oldest son, Reuben, is old enough to be helping with the family business, and comes in from our in the field with a gift of something delicious for his mother. Now it is Rachel's turn to be jealous...and she offers to let Jacob sleep with Leah again in return for the same delicious gift for herself. Yikes! Husband for sale seems to be the commodity right now.

Leah brings forth not one more child, but three! Two sons and a daughter.

Issachar Leah

Zebulun Leah

Dinah Leah

What is Leah thinking through all these births? Is God's hand in this obvious to Leah?

Leah credits God with the 2 sons. There is no mention of how she feels about the daughter. She feels that now Jacob will at least give her as much attention as he does Rachel. He will "dwell" with her.

:22-24

5. What finally happens?

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Suddenly, out of nowhere, a son is born to Rachel. Her shame is over. The longing of her heart is satisfied.

Joseph

Rachel

What is Rachel thinking through in this birth? Is God's hand in this obvious to Rachel?

She credits God with the miracle. And she expects another son will come someday, too.

:25-30

6. Jacob now has 2 wives, 2 concubines, and 12 children (11 sons and 1 daughter) What does he want to do?

It's time to head back to a permanent home where his father still is alive.

7. What has happened to the wealth of Laban while Jacob has been with him?

Laban's wealth has increased greatly while Jacob has served him. He knows very well that Jacob has been the reason for his prosperity.

:31-36

8. What plan does Jacob come up with as he agrees to stay a little longer with his uncle, Laban?

Jacob agrees to stay a little longer - for Laban wants to garner a little more benefit from Jacob's abilities. Jacob suggests that the imperfect sheep and goats in Laban's flock be given to him - and that he stay on to increase Laban's and his own flock even more. Laban agrees - how can he lose?

9. Why is he willing to stay?

Jacob is willing to stay in order to increase his own wealth before he steps out on his own. And...Jacob knows something about himself...a talent he has acquired and nurtured in the years of serving Laban.

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10. Is Jacob trying to cheat his uncle Laban? Is his Uncle Laban trying to cheat him? Jacob is being shrewd - he knows he can accomplish a great increasing of his own flock by being able to insure that many, many of the future baby lambs and goats are imperfectly colored. Is he cheating? Is he simply being a good businessman? You decide.

Does Laban have something up his sleeve? Further chapters will tell us - yes!

:37-43

11. What do you learn about Jacob as you read these verses? He has a terrific sense of how to care for and prosper a flock! Today we would call it "husbandry". He has gone to the college of husbandry and graduated with top honors.

12. After all this time with Jacob living with him, what does Laban not realize about Jacob? Laban does not realize Jacob's great talent with the animals. He does not realize Jacob has perfected a way to determine the look of each animal produced.

Here's a look at the whole family of Jacob so far, and their mothers, in their order of birth:


Leah	Bilhah	Zilpah	Rachel
Reuben			
Simeon			
Levi			
Judah			
	Dan		
	Naphtali		
		Gad	
		Asher	
Issachar			
Zebulun			
Dinah (girl)			
			Joseph

There is one more son of Jacob to be born, Benjamin - his birth will be later, on their way back to the land where Isaac lives. That will make 12 sons in all.

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The logo for Kathleen Dalton, featuring the name "kathleendalton" in a lowercase, sans-serif font, with "www.kathleendalton.com" in a smaller font below it, all on a blue rectangular background.

APPLICATION:

13. How has God protected the innocent?
14. How has God protected the guilty?
15. Can you see, in your own life, how God has protected you when you were innocent?
And how about the times God has protected you when you were guilty?
16. How does that make you feel about God?



Genesis 31 – Questions

:1-3

1. What do you see in these verses which is encouraging for Jacob?

:4-13

2. Why did Jacob's "husbandry" work so well? Would that same technique work today?

:14-16

3. Are Jacob's wives OK with Jacob's plan? Why?

4. :17-21

Why is Jacob sneaking away? Why has Rachel stolen her father's household idols?

:22-24

5. Is God protecting Jacob as he flees? Why?

:26 - 32

6. Why is Laban so angry with Jacob? What reason does Jacob give for running away secretly?

:33-35

7. What would have happened to Rachel if she had been caught with her father's household idols?

:36-42

8. What had caused this relationship to go so bad?

:43-50

9. What is going to save this relationship? Is verse :49 a statement of love?

10. :51-55

What else is going to save this relationship?

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11. What can we learn from this chapter about relationships?

As believers in Jesus, we are citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven. This citizenship asks us to live differently than the world. For example, it asks us to maintain our relationships on a much higher level.

Here are some verses which will help us look at our relationships today with the eyes of God:

Matthew 5:21&22
Matthew 5:38-42
Matthew 5:43-44
Matthew 6:14&15
Matthew 7:1-5
John 13:13&14
John 13:34&35
Romans 13:7
Romans 14:13
Ephesians 5:19-21
Philippians 2:3&4

I think you will see, as you look up these verses, that we all have a long way to go in at least some of our relationships.

The standard Jesus wants us to meet is not "just enough to get along", is it?

Quite often, it seems impossible to follow Jesus' guidelines for relationships.

How did Jacob's relationship with Laban measure up to the standards Jesus has set for us in the New Testament?

Next week we'll see how Jacob finally learns what he must do to be the person God wants him to be.

What can I do if I would like to be the person Jesus wants me to be, but I just can't find it in myself to do the things He asks me to do?

Genesis 31 - Answers

:1-3

1. What do you see in these verses which is encouraging for Jacob?

Jacob might have been discouraged when he heard the sons of Laban complaining about Jacob - and speaking untruthfully about him. He also might have been discouraged when he realized that Laban didn't like him that much any more, even though Jacob had worked hard for Laban.

What is encouraging in this deteriorating family situation for Jacob? The Lord spoke to him and told him where to go and what to do. If we have direction from the Lord everything falls into place. God was interested in Jacob - watching his life closely - and God had a plan for Jacob's life. I can't think of anything more encouraging.

Sometimes it's so easy to see the next move God would have you make...and then sometimes He seems to be silent. I prefer the times when I know God is showing me what to do next. I am learning to wait through the other times.

For Jacob, after 20 years of working for Laban and growing his not-so-little family, the time has come. God is speaking.

:4-13

2. Why did Jacob's "husbandry" work so well? Would that same technique work today?

Jacob had learned a lot about husbandry in his 20 years of serving Laban. He had become a very accomplished breeder of flocks. But in verse 9 Jacob makes it clear that he knows it is God who has blessed him. He doesn't give praise to his own abilities.

Any technique that the Lord wants to bless will be blessed. In all areas of our lives we must not be so much about knowledge and technique as we are about thankfulness to the Lord God for blessing us with unmerited gifts of love and protection.

:14-16

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3. Are Jacob's wives OK with Jacob's plan? Why?

Yes, they are. It looks like they are just as disillusioned with their father and his treatment of them as Jacob is. Also, they seem to have felt that the wealth which Jacob had accumulated while in Haran was their right. They felt like they deserved to inherit some money from their father anyway, so why not just take all the blessings God had bestowed on them and leave?

4. :17-21

Why is Jacob sneaking away? Why has Rachel stolen her father's household idols?

Jacob sneaks away because he has learned not to trust Laban any farther than he can throw him. ☺ And Rachel...why is Rachel stealing household idols from her father? Maybe she sees them as a part of the wealth she feels she deserves and is also sneaking away because she doesn't trust her father. Or maybe she puts some belief in them. Either way, sneaking away and stealing before you leave are good indications that this 20-year relationship has eroded down to nothing.

:22-24

5. Is God protecting Jacob as he flees? Why?

Yes, again we see God's protection for Jacob - seemingly whether he deserves it or not.

:26 - 32

6. Why is Laban so angry with Jacob? What reason does Jacob give for running away secretly?

Laban accuses Jacob of running away before Laban even had a chance to say goodbye to his daughters and grandchildren. Laban would have treated Jacob violently for this running away, but the Lord Himself had come to Laban in a dream and warned him not to retaliate back at Jacob.

Jacob tries to justify his actions by telling Laban he feared the father would not let his daughters and grandchildren leave.

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:33-35

7. What would have happened to Rachel if she had been caught with her father's household idols?

If she had been caught she possibly could have been killed. Would her father have done that? I don't know. But Jacob, when he made that rash statement, surely had no idea that his beloved Rachel was the idol thief.

:36-42

8. What had caused this relationship to go so bad?

Deceit. Dishonesty. Keeping secrets. Unspoken anger. Jealousy. All the things that make relationships go bad today.

But - all those unspoken hurts and feelings and distrusting are getting voiced right now - Jacob is "telling it like it is" in these verses. Is it too little too late? Can Laban react to the truth and change? Can Jacob change?

Is there always a happy ending in relationships gone bad? No. Just because an honest conversation begins to take place doesn't mean the people involved are going to do the right thing.

:43-50

9. What is going to save this relationship? Is verse :49 a statement of love?

No, this isn't a sweet restoral of friendship. It's a boundary. It's these men's way of saying - "Here's the line...don't step over it." In verse :49 I think they are actually calling on the Lord to keep them apart. Safe from each other.

10. :51-55

What else is going to save this relationship?

Together these friends/enemies build an altar to the One, True God. They worship there together, and then leave the altar there as they go their separate ways. They are establishing a boundary - this land is mine, that land is yours - and also admitting to God and each other that living together will never work again for them.

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Maybe this is not the happy ending sitcoms are made of - but to me it actually seems like a happy ending anyway. It looks like these two men have made a decision before God about how to protect themselves from each other and yet still stay in the will of God.

11. What can we learn from this chapter about relationships?

Sometimes friendships blossom and grow and give great pleasure. But sometimes friendships just can't happen. Sometimes circumstances or personalities or other things just stand in the way. In that case, I think it's OK to be kind, draw some boundaries, and get on with life. You have a responsibility to be loving and kind to other, but you don't have to be friends with everyone.

If you want to study a little more about your relationships, here are some verses which may help you look at your relationships with the eyes of God:

- Matthew 5:21&22
- Matthew 5:38-42
- Matthew 5:43-44
- Matthew 6:14&15
- Matthew 7:1-5
- John 13:13&14
- John 13:34&35
- Romans 13:7
- Romans 14:13
- Ephesians 5:19-21
- Philippians 2:3&4

Next week we'll see how Jacob finally learns what he must do to be the person God wants him to be.

Genesis 32 - Questions

Jacob knew about the One, True God. He had learned all about Him from his family and his growing up years. He even worshipped the One, True God. He had met with the One, True God before. (Genesis 28:10-22 - Jacob's ladder). But before this wrestling match in Chapter 32, and this very dark, frightening night, had Jacob actually known the One, True God? Had he actually ever committed his life to the One, True God?

1. :1&2 What do you think it means when it says: "the angels of God met him."?

We've seen before in Genesis that sometimes the Bible uses the term "Angel of the Lord", or "Angels of God", and we realize it's not talking about just "angels". Sometimes it's talking about "heavenly beings", which sometimes actually means God Himself.

Look up the following passages about "angels of God" or "angels of the Lord" and see if you can tell when it is referring to "angels", and when it is referring the Lord Himself:

(hint: sometimes your Bible will help you with this - check to see if "angel" is capitalized - if it is, then the passage is referring to God Himself.)

- Genesis 22:3-12
- Numbers 22:22-35
- 2nd Kings 6:8-17
- Psalm 34:7
- Hebrews 1:14

2. :2 The word "Mahanaim" means: "Double camp". Why did Jacob name it this?

3. :3-5 Jacob is on his way to reunite with his father, his mother in the land of Canaan, and his brother Esau in the land of Edom. Why is Jacob sending word and animals on ahead before he gets there?

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4. :6-8 What is Jacob's reaction to hearing that Esau was coming to meet him?
5. :9 As Jacob begins his prayer to the LORD, what does he first remind the LORD of?
6. :10 What is the next thing Jacob says as he prays?
7. :11-12 What, now, does he ask for? And how does he end this prayer?
8. Jacob's prayer to the LORD, in verses :9-12, is a good model for us when we have urgent requests of the LORD. What were the simple parts of his prayer?
 - a. :9 -
 - b. :10 -
 - c. :11-12 -
 - d. :12 -
9. :13-23 What does Jacob do now that he as finished praying?
10. Describe how you think Jacob feels this night as he waits to see what will happen when Esau arrives.
11. :24-32 In this famous passage of scripture we see Jacob wrestling with someone. Who is that someone? Why are they wrestling?
12. If this is the LORD, couldn't He have easily stopped the wrestling match any time He wanted to? Why didn't He?
13. What is the lesson for us here? Does starting a relationship with God sometimes feel like "wrestling" with God?
14. What kind of a change do you think we will see in Jacob from this point on?

Genesis 32 - Answers

Jacob knew about the One, True God. He had learned all about Him from his family and his growing up years. He even worshipped the One, True God. He had met with the One, True God before. (Genesis 28:10-22 - Jacob's ladder). But before this wrestling match in Chapter 32, and this very dark, frightening night, had Jacob actually known the One, True God? Had he actually ever committed his life to the One, True God?

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We've seen before in Genesis that sometimes the Bible uses the term "Angel of the Lord", or "Angels of God", and we realize it's not talking about just "angels". Sometimes it's talking about "heavenly beings", which sometimes actually means God Himself.

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- Genesis 22:3-12
- Numbers 22:22-35
- 2nd Kings 6:8-17
- Psalm 34:7
- Hebrews 1:14

2. :2 The word "Mahanaim" means: "Double camp". Why did Jacob name it this?

I think it's because Jacob was camped there with his family, but also he realized God was camped there, too.

3. :3-5 Jacob is on his way to reunite with his father, his mother in the land of Canaan, and his brother Esau in the land of Edom. Why is Jacob sending word and animals on ahead before he gets there?

He's sending them on to Edom where he knows Esau lives. The last time Jacob saw Esau, Esau was promising to retaliate for the sneaky things Jacob had done. I think Jacob is

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trying to smooth the way for his meeting with Esau. And maybe to feel out whether his brother still hates him enough to kill him.

4. :6-8 What is Jacob's reaction to hearing that Esau was coming to meet him?

He is greatly afraid! He instinctively divides his travelling group into two groups - hoping that separating the two groups might mean at least one group will be able to run away and survive if Esau comes with murder in his heart.

5. :9 As Jacob begins his prayer to the LORD, what does he first remind the LORD of?

First, he reminds God that it was His idea for Jacob to come back home. And he reminds God also that He had promised He would bless Jacob for obeying and coming back home. In other words, Jacob falls before God and says - You brought me here, please don't let me die here!

6. :10 What is the next thing Jacob says as he prays?

He reminds himself and God that he is not worthy of any blessings from God.

7. :11-12 What, now, does he ask for? And how does he end this prayer?

He cries out "deliver me!" - and then he reminds God once again of His promise to make a great nation out of the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. There will be no great nation if Esau wipes out the encampment of Jacob!

8. Jacob's prayer to the LORD, in verses :9-12, is a good model for us when we have urgent requests of the LORD. What were the simple parts of his prayer?

- a. :9 - Remember God's promises
- b. :10 - Admit your own unworthiness - you don't deserve what He has promised to do for you.
- c. :11-12 - Ask God to meet your need
- d. :12 - Remember again God's promises

9. :13-23 What does Jacob do now that he has finished praying?

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He makes a plan the best he can. He is depending on God for the outcome, but he still knows he is responsible to do all he can to take care of his traveling household. He sends many, many presents on ahead to Esau.

10. Describe how you think Jacob feels this night as he waits to see what will happen when Esau arrives.

Afraid. Unsure of himself. Paralyzed probably. Emotionally drained. Envisioning the worst. Trying so hard to figure out what it means to trust God.

11. :24-32 In this famous passage of scripture we see Jacob wrestling with someone. Who is that someone? Why are they wrestling?

Here's another case in scripture where the Lord Himself appears - and yet He is not called Lord. In this passage He is not called an Angel...he is just called a Man. (but notice that the M in Man is capitalized).

Why are they wrestling? Because Jacob is struggling greatly with the Lord - Jacob has trusted in himself and himself alone all of his life...and now here he is in a situation where he must decide if trusting in God is enough. He is wrestling with God. Is God actually able to handle Jacob's future? Jacob is finding out. Is God stronger than Jacob? Does God know better?

12. If this is the LORD, couldn't He have easily stopped the wrestling match any time He wanted to? Why didn't He?

Because this was a wrestling match God knew Jacob had to have.

13. What is the lesson for us here? Does starting a relationship with God sometimes feel like "wrestling" with God?

Maybe it doesn't feel like that for everyone...but for some it does. For some, there is a painful, prolonged period of time when there must be a struggle - a wrestling - with what it means to trust God...and whether or not to do it.

14. What kind of a change do you think we will see in Jacob from this point on?

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Jacob knew about the One, True God. He had learned all about Him from his family and his growing up years. He even worshipped the One, True God. He had met with the One, True God before. (Genesis 28:10-22 - Jacob's ladder). But before this wrestling match and this very dark, frightening night, had Jacob actually known the One, True God? Had he actually ever committed his life to the One, True God?

No, he hadn't. Everything in his life up to this point was for the purpose of this night's meeting and wrestling with God. Everything after this point would be different. After this night Jacob would choose to trust God instead of being forced to trust God. After this night Jacob would run lovingly back to God when he strayed, instead of fighting all the way.

You, or someone you love, may be just like Jacob. You may have all the facts about Jesus. You may even pray to Jesus and worship Him in church. You might even have had a time when you felt like you realized He was real and was interested in you. But the important question is: have you ever committed your life to Jesus? Have you ever come to the end of yourself and given your life to Him? If not, you have a really wonderful experience waiting for you.

If this is you, above, I suggest you get alone with God and tell Him you want to "wrestle" with Him. Tell Him all your doubts and fears. Don't hold back. If you wonder that He really exists, or wonder if He really cares about your life, or wonder how He can allow such pain and sin in the world, let Him have it.

I think this story teaches us that the LORD - Jesus - wants our honest feedback and conversation. He wants us to be ourselves and meet with Him. He knows how weak and powerless we are, but He values us enough to want to talk with us and wrestle with us through life's difficulties. He wants us to wrestle with Who He is, and to experience the supreme joy of realizing we have met with the One, True God and lived!!!!

Jacob was injured in the wrestling match that night. He walked with a limp for the rest of his life. The limp reminded him of his own foolishness and weakness. But it also reminded him of His powerful, wonderful LORD - who was willing to wrestle until daylight so that Jacob could finally know Him.

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Genesis 33 - Questions



1. :1 What is the first thing Jacob sees as he looks off into the distance?

2. :2-3 How does Jacob feel as he sees Esau coming and as he gets ready to meet him?

3. Have you ever felt this same way?

4. :2-3 How does Jacob line up his family? What does that tell you?

5. :4 What surprising thing happens? How in the world could this have come to pass?

6. :5-7 Is the family of Jacob treating Uncle Esau with respect? Do you think they are afraid, too?

7. :8-11 What is Esau objecting to?

Why does he eventually accept the presents from Jacob? Who gets the credit for Jacob's prosperity?

8. As far as we know, is Esau a believer in the One, True God? Do you think this show of God's hand in Jacob's life, and this testimony from Jacob that it is God Who blessed him, will begin to change Esau's heart toward God?

9. :12 It's time to move on, now, toward home. What does Esau suggest?

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10. :13-15 Why does Jacob want to go separately from Esau? Does he still not trust Esau...or is there something else Jacob has in mind?
11. :16 Where does Esau go? What is the name of his home? Does he think Jacob will be following him there?
12. :17-20 Where does Jacob go? Is he going to the same place Esau is going? Why not?

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Genesis 33 - Answers



1. :1 What is the first thing Jacob sees as he looks off into the distance?

His brother, Esau, and 400 men with him.

2. :2-3 How does Jacob feel as he sees Esau coming and as he gets ready to meet him?

This is the moment Jacob has been fearing since he started out on the journey ordered by God.

Jacob is afraid and also determined to somehow keep going and survive. He has sent gifts and presents on ahead to Esau. He has planned and schemed. He has wrestled with God alone at night.

And now he organizes his family into, well, the best way to say this is just to say it: he puts his favorite wife and son at the back, the most out of harm's way, and he puts his least favorite concubines

and their children at the front.

He is pretty sure he and his family are staring into the face of annihilation. He has decided to trust the One, True God, Whom he now knows as he never did before....but he is still afraid.

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3. Have you ever felt this same way?

Here's the question: Does having faith in God mean you are not afraid? My experience says: no. Sometimes the fear just won't go away even when I am living and walking by faith. Now, the Bible does say "perfect love casts out fear", but, again, my experience reminds me that often it takes time for God's perfect love to cast out my fear. And while I am waiting for that to happen, I still feel fear.

Here's a verse that helps me during those times: *"But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings like eagles. They shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."* Isaiah 40:31

Why does this help me? During those times when I know I am trusting God and yet still feel fear I have this promise, above: Don't worry about what you feel. Just wait on God. Keep running. Keep walking. You'll make it. Your feelings aren't what counts. It's God Who counts. You can trust Him no matter how you feel.

I wonder if Jacob felt this way at this, the moment he has feared for over 20 years.

4. :2-3 How does Jacob line up his family? What does that tell you?

Like I said, he puts his favorite wife and son in the safest position. I think that tells me Jacob is human. He has favorites. It happens. Was it right...or wrong? I don't know. Someone had to be at the front, and someone had to be at the back.

5. :4 What surprising thing happens? How in the world could this have come to pass?

Esau comes running not to kill him, but to hug him!!!! They both cry. Wow. What a moment. How did this happen? God. The One, True God, Whom Esau doesn't even believe in, made it happen. God is preparing the way for Jacob to live once again in the land He had promised to Jacob's grandfather so many years ago. God is God. He can and will do anything in order to work out His plan for the world.

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6. :5-7 Is the family of Jacob treating Uncle Esau with respect? Do you think they are afraid, too?

I'm very sure they were afraid right along with Jacob. You can't all live together in one, big traveling family and not know what is driving your leader. They all must have known Jacob was mortally afraid, and they all must have felt that fear, too. Now they are bowing before and showing respect to Jacob's long-lost brother. So how are they feeling as they greet him? Relieved? Distrustful? Still afraid?

7. :8-11 What is Esau objecting to? Why does he eventually accept the presents from Jacob? Who gets the credit for Jacob's prosperity?

Esau asks why Jacob sent ahead all that great wealth of animals, and Jacob says he just wanted to show Esau how much he loved and respected him. Esau says, no - I have plenty of animals and wealth of my own. But Jacob insists that he keep the gifts because Jacob is just so grateful that he has the blessing of God in his life, and the forgiveness of his brother whom he cheated so long ago. Esau accepts.

8. As far as we know, is Esau a believer in the One, True God? Do you think this show of God's hand in Jacob's life, and this testimony from Jacob that it is God Who blessed him, will begin to change Esau's heart toward God?

We don't ever see in scripture any proof that Esau came to believe in the One, True God. So I assume that he never did turn his heart to God. Even with all the proofs of God's working in Jacob's life, and even with this great reconciliation of the brothers, engineered by God, still Esau probably didn't repent and become a follower of God. Why not? Because it is a hard, hard thing to admit you need a Savior. Yes, even in Jacob and Esau's time people needed to first admit they were sinners and needed God to save them from their sin. Even in those times people didn't want to do things God's way. Even in those times people could see all the miracles of God and still choose not to trust Him.

9. :12 It's time to move on, now, toward home. What does Esau suggest?

Esau wants he and his 400 men and Jacob and his family, to all travel together to Sier (or Edom), where Esau lived.

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10. :13-15 Why does Jacob want to go separately from Esau? Does he still not trust Esau...or is there something else Jacob has in mind?

Jacob declines the offer of traveling with Esau and his men, citing the impossibility of the big family group going as fast as Esau and his men would want to go. So Esau offers to leave a few of his men with Jacob - probably for safety. But again Jacob declines and suggests they each leave and travel at their own pace - Jacob and his group will arrive much later. Esau agrees.

As we read on in this passage, we see that Jacob ends up not going to Seir at all. He travels west, not south toward Edom. Is that what he had in mind all along? We don't know. I suppose any number of circumstances might have turned Jacob away from the path Esau was taking. But I do wonder if Jacob all along had wanted to make peace with Esau, and then take his family back to the land of his birth instead of to Esau's land.

11. :16 Where does Esau go? What is the name of his home? Does he think Jacob will be following him there?

Esau goes south to Sier (Edom).

12. :17-20 Where does Jacob go? Is he going to the same place Esau is going? Why not?

Jacob goes west and stops first at Succoth, then keeps traveling on to Schechem. He's on his way to the place he had first met God (ch 28). But when he gets to Schechem he makes it more of a permanent stop than he should have....and trouble is coming to his family because of it. Next chapter

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Genesis 34,35,&36 - Questions

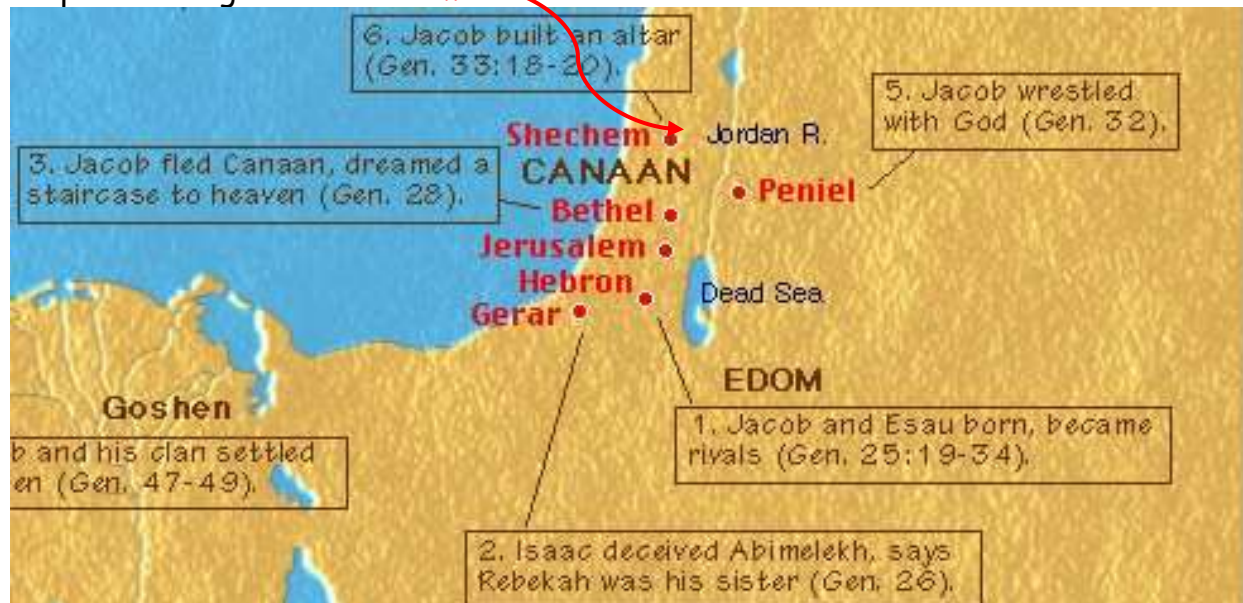
In these chapters we're going to wrap up the story of Jacob - these chapters finish up the Bible's emphasis on Jacob, and from here on out we follow the lives of the 12 sons of Jacob.

There are **shameful things** to be seen in this family history - and **chapter 34** is one of the worst.

In **Chapter 35** Jacob **finally arrives** where God has been telling him to go, and he and his brother, Esau, share the heartache of **burying their father**, Isaac.

Chapter 36 chronicles the family of Esau, who were eventually called the Edomites. At least some from **this family grew up hating the family of Jacob** (the Israelites). In fact, in the story of Esther, we see that wicked Haman is a descendant of Esau through his son, Amalek. (Genesis 36:16, I Samuel 15, Esther 3:1...*Agagites were from the family of Amalek*)

Chapter 34 begins in **Shechem**:



In The Beginning God...."

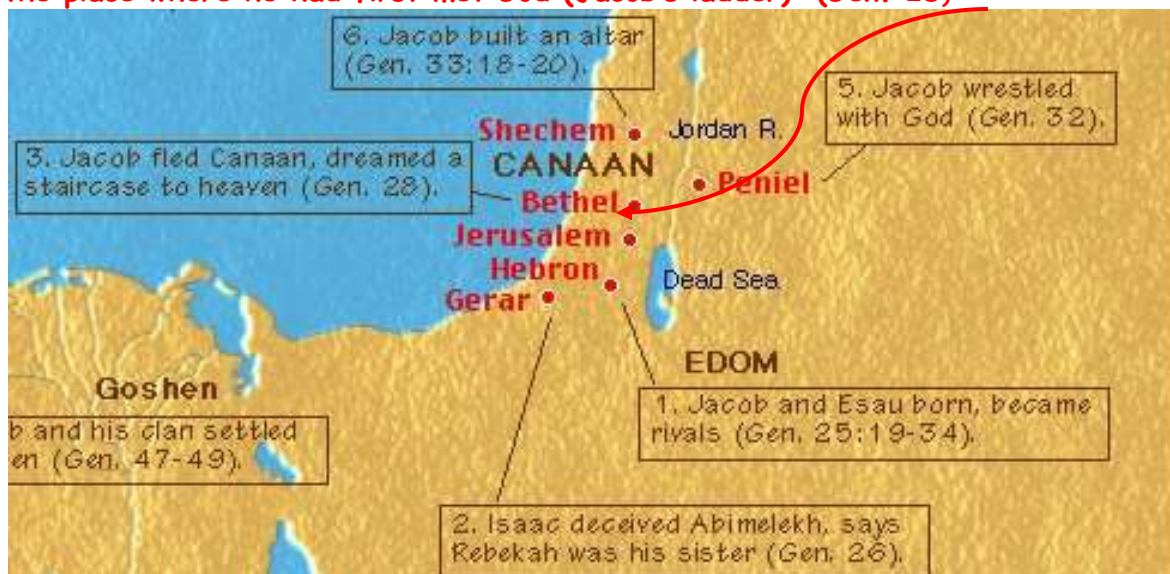
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1. :1 Dinah was a daughter of Jacob by which mother? Were there other daughters of Jacob?
2. :2-4 What happens to Dinah? Was this a violent act? Do you think Shechem was just doing what everyone else in his culture did? So, was it wrong?
3. :5 What is Jacob waiting for?
4. :6&7 How did the 11 sons of Jacob feel about what had happened to Dinah?
5. :8-12 Did Shechem and his father, Hamor seem to be trying to be reasonable?
6. :13-17 What do the 11 brothers suggest, and are they being genuine? Why are they still so angry when Shechem and Hamor are suggesting marriage?
7. What is the truly despicable thing that has happened here? How would we handle such a situation today?
8. :18&19 Did Shechem actually love Dinah?
9. :20-24 Are the men of Shechem actually committing to be believers in the One, True God?
10. :25-29 What did two of the brothers of Dinah do, and was this wrong? Which brothers did this? Do you think they all agreed to it?
11. :30&31 What was Jacob concerned about? What were his sons concerned about? Who was right and who was wrong?

In Chapter 35 Jacob is finally going where God had always wanted him to go - **Bethel, the place where he had first met God (Jacob's ladder) (Gen. 28)**



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12. 35:1 Have you ever been in what seemed like the wrong place and finally made it to what felt like home?
13. :2-4 What had happened in the family of Jacob as they stayed in Shechem?
14. :5-7 How did the inhabitants of the land view the family of Jacob?
15. :9-15 What new thing happens in this latest encounter between Jacob and his God?
16. :16-29 What things happen to the family of Jacob now that they are in the right place? What does that show you about trouble in this life?
17. **Chapter 36 gives us the history of Esau.** Why is he important in God's plan?
18. Where do we see the family of Esau again in Bible history?
Exodus 17:8-16
Esther 3:1

Esau was important to the One, True God, but he was a rebel who (as far as we know) never bowed his knee to Him. He never did acknowledge his failure and need of God. And his family passed on hatred and cruelty as their heritage.

Jacob was important to the One, True God, and though he was a failure and a sinner in many ways, he did bow his knee to the One, True God. He did acknowledge his failure and his need of God. His family also passed on failures and sin....but also love and mercy and faith and hope as their heritage.

There's a pretty obvious conclusion here for us.

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Genesis 34, 35 & 36 - Answers

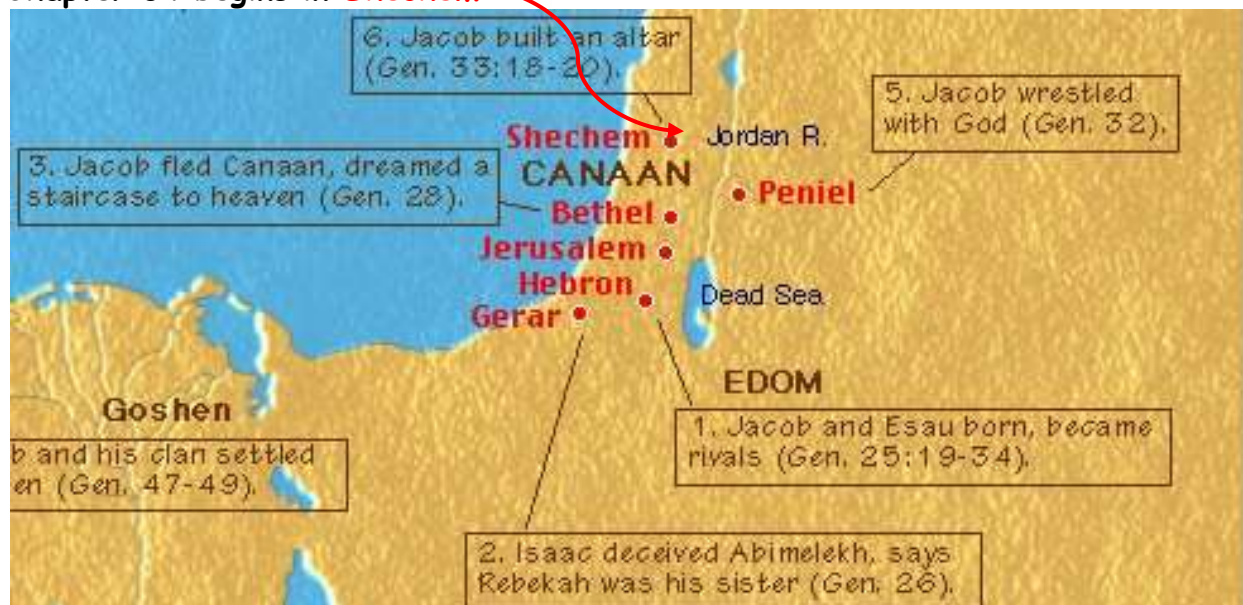
In these chapters we're going to wrap up the story of Jacob - these chapters finish up the Bible's emphasis on Jacob, and from here on out we follow the lives of the 12 sons of Jacob.

There are **shameful things** to be seen in this family history - and **chapter 34** is one of the worst.

In **Chapter 35** Jacob **finally arrives** where God has been telling him to go, and he and his brother, Esau, share the heartache of **burying their father**, Isaac.

Chapter 36 chronicles the family of Esau, who were eventually called the Edomites.

Chapter 34 begins in **Shechem**:



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1. :1 Dinah was a daughter of Jacob by which mother? Were there other daughters of Jacob?

As far as we know, Dinah is the only daughter of Jacob - her mother was Leah.

2. :2-4 What happens to Dinah? Was this a violent act? Do you think Shechem was just doing what everyone else in his culture did? So, was it wrong?

Shechem had pre-marital sex with Dinah. It is not clear from the passage that this was an act of violence. Shechem actually had an attraction to Dinah - a "love" for Dinah - which evidenced itself by the fact that he spoke kindly to her and wanted to marry her. We don't know whether or not Dinah wanted him, too, but there is no doubt that it was sex before a marriage covenant was in place - and Schechem was responsible.

Yes, perhaps Shechem was doing what his culture felt was normal. But this was not normal for Dinah. Whether or not she was attracted to him, she knew beyond the shadow of a doubt that this was wrong, wrong, wrong. She also probably knew how her family would react to Shechem's actions. Scripture doesn't tell us how she felt or what she was thinking.

If Shechem was only doing what was considered normal in his culture, then was it wrong?

Oh, yes, it was wrong. Right and wrong are not determined by our cultures. If they were, then people would simply do whatever they wanted to do, and cultures would be shaped by their decisions, and there would be a fatal, downward spiral of sin. Yes, that's exactly what's happening in our culture today...and it isn't OK.

Right and wrong are determined by a standard higher than culture...something separate from anyone's cultures. Right and wrong are determined solely by Who God is and What He is like. He decides what's right and what's wrong based on His own character. In other words, lying is wrong because God does not lie. Unfaithfulness is wrong because God is always faithful. Sexual impurity is wrong because God is pure. Standards of what's really right or really wrong are never simply a comparison of people's actions. An action is not right because most people do it. A thought is not right because most people think it. According to God's standards, this act of sex before a marriage covenant - or rape (whichever it was) - was wrong. It was wrong even though Schechem didn't believe in the One, True God. It was wrong even though Schechem may not have known any better. God's standards of right and wrong do not change based on whether or not a person knows

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Who He is . God's standards of right and wrong do not change at all, ever....because Who He is does not change at all, ever.

3. :5 What is Jacob waiting for?

He wasn't going to react alone. He wanted the strength of his family behind him.

4. :6&7 How did the 11 sons of Jacob (Benjamin has not been born yet) feel about what had happened to Dinah?

Anger, shame, rage. They had been shamed and humiliated by this ungodly act.

5. :8-12 Did Shechem and his father, Hamor seem to be trying to be reasonable?

Yes, it looks that way, doesn't it? They are willing to do something to make it right.

6. :13-17 What do the 11 brothers suggest, and are they being genuine? Why are they still so angry when Shechem and Hamor are suggesting marriage?

The proposed marriage might seem to make everything smooth over, it might make the two cultures friendly with each other, but it wouldn't make the brothers' rage at being so deeply offended go away. So...the brothers suggest that their "religious" sensitivities have been offended, and that the way to make that right is for the men of Schechem's city to all be circumcised. They say that then the marriage could take place and all would be well between the two peoples.

But they don't mean it. A law of God has been broken...but I don't think that's the point of their rage. They are not concerned about God, but mostly about themselves. This is a group of people filled with hate and moving forward to do something about it.

The brothers here are a good picture of us. We might be offended at what someone else does wrong, especially if it is done to us. But when we strike out in retribution, most of the time we step over the line. We step from being rightfully offended to being wrongfully vengeful. We want to hurt the one who has done this to us, and our indignation is not righteous. It is simply the anger of a man, and that doesn't do anything to bring about the righteousness of God. *"...for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God." James 1:20*

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7. What is the truly despicable thing that has happened here? How would we handle such a situation today?

A young girl has been defiled....she is no longer a virgin. In that day it meant her value as a wife to a Jewish man was gone forever, and, of course, she has also been emotionally or physically damaged as an individual. This was a crime.

Today in America, depending on the circumstances, we might find out if the two young people involved are truly in love, and if they are, then try to help them marry and form a lasting relationship. Or, in the worst-case scenario, a case of rape, we might pursue justice in the courts and counseling for the young girl. Or we might just tell everyone to move on and put the "indiscretion" behind them, so that the people involved can someday pursue their normal lives.

Are we right? Should we be more upset? Should we be as angry as these brothers were 4,000 years ago?

8. :18&19 Did Shechem actually love Dinah?

I say no. I say love means respect. I'll go even further - I think romantic "love" which doesn't also include love and respect for the One, True God is not true romantic love.

9. :20-24 Are the men of Shechem actually committing to be believers in the One, True God?

No - there is no indication that they are. They are just doing the "religious" thing that seems to be required. There doesn't appear to be any heart-change here.

10. :25-29 What did two of the brothers of Dinah do, and was this wrong? Which brothers did this? Do you think they all agreed to it?

Levi and Simeon snuck up on the men of Schechem while they were still in pain from their circumcisions and killed them all. They killed the man who raped their sister. They took all the possessions of the whole town and made them their own. Were all the brothers involved? The passage doesn't make that clear. I think they knew.

11. :30&31 What was Jacob concerned about? What were his sons concerned about? Who was right and who was wrong?

In The Beginning God...."

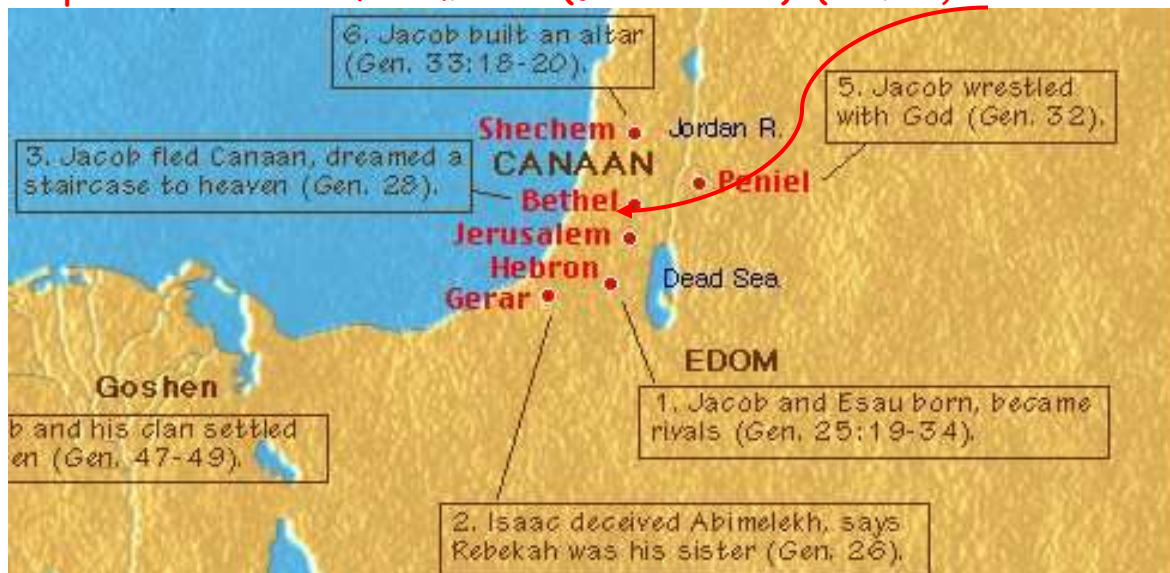
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It seems like the father, Jacob, was mostly concerned about how dangerous the family's life was going to be from this point on. He was afraid that the surrounding people's would have lost respect for him and his sons because of what they did. There doesn't seem to be any pleading for the mercy of God or wisdom from God.

In Chapter 35 Jacob is finally going where God had always wanted him to go - **Bethel**, the place where he had first met God (Jacob's ladder) (Gen. 28)



12. 35:1 Have you ever been in what seemed like the wrong place and finally made it to what felt like home?

That's what happens here. Jacob is finally back where the Lord first met him. The Lord tells him to go to Bethel, the location of "Jacob's Ladder", from chapter 28.

Sometimes it just helps to go back where you started. To keep it simple. To realize it's just all about knowing and loving and trusting your God. To put aside all

you've earned, all you've accumulated, all you've wished you could forget...and just know you have always been in God's hands, and that's enough.

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13. :2-4 What had happened in the family of Jacob as they stayed in Shechem?

Wow. This answers a lot of questions about their awful murdering attack on the family of Shechem, doesn't it? The whole group of these children of Jacob had begun to let idols and idol-worship slip into their lives. They were living far away from the presence of the One, True God. They weren't asking God to direct their lives - they were making their own, disastrous decisions.

14. :5-7 How did the inhabitants of the land view the family of Jacob?

The inhabitants of the surrounding cities were not going to attack after all! - they actually had developed a real fear of the Jews - and that was giving this crazy, dysfunctional family some safety.

15. :9-15 What new thing happens in this latest encounter between Jacob and his God?

The Lord God gives Jacob a new name. From now on he will be called Israel. From now on this whole family will be called the Israelites. And the Lord re-affirms all the promises He had made in the past to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

16. :16-29 What things happen to the family of Jacob now that they are in the right place? What does that show you about trouble in this life?

Life isn't perfect just because the Israelites have gotten their lives back in line with God.

- a. Rachel's nurse dies. She has been with her for many, many years.
- b. Rachel brings forth Jacob's 12th son, Benjamin, but then she dies in childbirth. What a tragedy this must have been for Jacob.
- c. Reuben, Jacob's oldest, sleeps with Jacob's concubine, Bilhah. She was the mother of a few of Reuben's siblings. This must have been a horrible situation for the whole family.

Life is messy. It doesn't get perfect ever in this world. Heaven...perfect life...comes later.

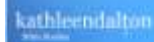
17. **Chapter 36 gives us the history of Esau.** Why is he important in God's plan?
Exodus 17:8-16 and Esther 3:1

At least some from the family of Esau grew up hating the family of Jacob (the Israelites). In fact, in the story of Esther, we see that wicked Haman is a descendant of

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Esau through his son, Amalek. (Genesis 36:16, I Samuel 15, Esther 3:1...*Agagites were from the family of Amalek*)

Esau was important to the One, True God, but he was a rebel who (as far as we know) never bowed his knee to Him. He never did acknowledge his failure and need of God. And his family passed on hatred and cruelty as their heritage.

Jacob was important to the One, True God, and though he was a failure and a sinner in many ways, he did bow his knee to the One, True God. He did acknowledge his failure and his need of God. His family also passed on failures and sin....but also love and mercy and faith and hope as their heritage.

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Genesis Quiz For Chapters 1-36

1. On the first day, God created _____
2. On the fourth day, God created _____
3. What keeps us from re-entering the Garden of Eden today? _____

4. The first two sons of Adam and Eve were: _____
and _____.
5. What man lived the longest in recorded history? _____.
6. It rained for _____ days, and _____ nights.
7. Noah and his family were on the ark for a little over a _____.
8. One of the sons of Noah, _____, was cursed for his lack of discretion in revealing his father's nakedness to his brothers.
9. Mount Ararat is the place where: _____

10. The man with whom God first made His covenant, promising a land, and a blessing to all nations, was _____.
11. That covenant was:
 - a. Conditional
 - b. Unconditional
12. This woman allowed her husband to conceive a son with her maidservant:
 - a. Sarai
 - b. Leah
 - c. Rachel
 - d. All of the above
13. This man devised a brilliant scientific plan of animal husbandry:
 - a. Laban
 - b. Joseph
 - c. Isaac
 - d. Jacob

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14. This man forbade his son to marry from the daughters of Canaan:
 - a. Abraham
 - b. Isaac
 - c. Jacob
 - d. Adam
15. Keturah was the mother of Midian and the second wife of _____.
16. Esau was _____'s favorite son.
17. This woman prepared savory food for her husband as part of a plot to trick him into transferring the birthright to her favorite son:
 - a. Sarah
 - b. Rebekah
 - c. Rachel
 - d. None of the above.
18. Laban tricked Jacob into marrying _____.
19. She stole an idol from her father: _____.
20. Name the daughter of Jacob: _____.
21. This wife of Jacob had 6 sons, but was never loved.
_____.
22. This man was the last son of Jacob _____.
23. The Bible says the LORD is the God of:
_____,
_____, and
_____.
24. _____ was loved of God, but never believed in Him, and because of that, many in his family always hated the descendants of _____, and still do, today.
25. Name one person who was not dysfunctional in the book of Genesis: _____.

Chapter 37 - Questions

These final chapters in the book of *Genesis* describe for us the character and personalities of the 12 sons of Jacob. These 12 sons are the future of the world.

Here they are in the order of their birth:

Reuben	1
Simeon	2
Levi	3
Judah	4
Dan	5
Naphtali	6
Gad	7
Asher	8
Issachar	9
Zebulun	10
Joseph	11
Benjamin	12

Chapter 37:

1. :1-11 Name three reasons the sons of Jacob hated Joseph.
2. Were Joseph's dreams going to come true? What did they show about Joseph? Should he have kept them to himself? Was he persecuted for having a close walk with God....or was he vain?
3. :12-20 How could their hatred of their brother be so intense that they would want to kill him?
4. :21-22 Why did Reuben try to save him from death?
5. :23-28 What other brother spared him from death? Why?

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6. :29-36 Who is harmed the most by this violent act of jealousy? Joseph? Jacob? The brothers?

7. How can a person stop being jealous?

Chapter 37 - Answers

These final chapters in the book of *Genesis* describe for us the character and personalities of the 12 sons of Jacob. These 12 sons are the future of the world.

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Gad	7	
Asher	8	
Issachar	9	
Zebulun	10	
Joseph		11
Benjamin	12	

Chapter 37:

1. :1-4 Name three reasons the sons of Jacob hated Joseph. - I found 5.
 - a. He was the son of the favorite wife, Rachel.
 - b. He was the youngest, and born when his father was already old, therefore the favorite...the spoiled one.
 - c. He was a tattler-tale. He brought a bad report of his brothers to their father.
 - d. He was loved the most by their father. Not a secret.
 - e. He was made a special coat by his father because he was loved the most.

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2. :5-11 Were Joseph's dreams going to come true? What did they show about Joseph? Should he have kept them to himself? Was he persecuted for having a close walk with God....or was he vain?

Joseph had 2 dreams. One of his brother's sheaves of grain bowing down to his sheaves. And then another of the sun, moon and stars bowing down to him. Both of these dreams had the same theme - that Joseph would be the one who was in authority over his brothers and even over his parents. Verse 10 shows that Joseph's father understood the 2nd dream to say that Jacob (the father) was the moon, Rachel (the mother) was the sun, and the brothers the stars.

What did these dreams show about Joseph? Were they proof positive that Joseph was a self-centered boy? Or did they show that Joseph was actually a prophet?

The reason I say that is because the dreams did come true. In the closing chapters of Genesis we see how perfectly they were fulfilled. Joseph did end up being the one in authority over the family...and Joseph, in fact, saved the whole family from extinction.

Joseph was a prophet in 2 ways: One, the family did end up bowing down to him. And two, the description he gave of his family - the sun, moon and stars - is one that is repeated in the book of Revelation. (Revelation 12:1) And Joseph's dream helps us understand what Revelation is referring to. Interesting....the dream of a young boy (probably spoiled) prophet, dreamed about 4,000 years ago, helps us understand today a part of scripture which was written in 100AD. Wow. Do you ever doubt that every word of the Bible was directed by God, and that it is relevant for today? This story in Genesis, alone, should convince you of the truth - God wrote every word of the Bible, and every word is true and relevant, even today.

2nd Peter 1:21 ... for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."

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2nd Timothy 3:16 "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."

Should Joseph have kept these dreams to himself? I don't think so. I think when God gives you a message you have no choice but to speak it, no matter what the consequences.

Did Joseph expect open arms from his brothers after these two anger-producing dreams? I don't know...but I do know he was going to walk through a really rough time because he was willing to speak about the dreams the Lord had given him. The lessons he would learn from his approaching suffering would mold him into the man he needed to be in order to fulfill those dreams.

We're going to see, over and over again in the next few chapters of Genesis, that what looked uncommonly unfair in Joseph's life was actually shockingly valuable...to the family...to Joseph...and to the world.

3. :12-20 How could their hatred of their brother be so intense that they would want to kill him?

Hatred is so strong. So powerful. The only thing more powerful is love.

Hatred usually starts out as envy. Or jealousy. Or pride. Or lust. Or desire. Or greed. Or even "like". Or self-interest.

But when all those "little" sins are nursed and encouraged and fed, they grow and can become hate. And hate is way, way strong. Hate can easily make you want to hurt or kill someone.

The only thing more powerful is love.

That's why Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead.

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He was hated by those who at first were just jealous of Him. He was hated by those who "liked" Him, but didn't want to admit He was God and bow their knee to Him. He was hated by those who were interested in bettering their lives, and He wasn't making things better.

He chose to love those who hated Him, instead of hating them back.

"For God so loved the world He gave His only begotten son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16

Love wins.

4. :21-22 Why did Reuben try to save him from death?

Reuben apparently had a conscience, perhaps not as far gone in hate as some of the other brothers. He had a plan - pretend to go along with the brothers, but not to the point of killing Joseph. Why?

Remember, Reuben was the oldest. It's real possible he felt that "oldest child" pressure to keep the peace in the family. Whatever his reason, he is to be commended that he saved Joseph's life. He suggested that the brothers cast Joseph into a deep pit so he could be dealt with later. Reuben's plan was to go secretly and save Joseph out of the pit and take him back home to their father.

5. :23-28 What other brother spared him from death? Why?

Judah also was part of saving Joseph's life. Did he have compassion on Joseph, or did he just think it would be better for Joseph to die by someone else's hands? We don't know.

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6. :29-36 Who was harmed the most by this violent act of jealousy? Joseph? Jacob? The brothers?

They were all deeply scarred by the violence that came from their hatred. We will see in the chapters to come what great suffering and probably despair Joseph went through. We will also see Joseph's father, Jacob, reeling so much from the shock of hearing of his son's "death" that he never was the same again. And the brothers - even the ones who tried to prevent Joseph's death - their lives began to fall apart immediately.

Hatred never has a good ending.

But love wins.

7. How can a person stop being jealous?

The Bible has lots to say about sin. It has lots to say specifically about jealousy and hatred. I think it can all be summed up this way:

- Romans 6:23 says the end result of sin is death. Irreversible. *"The wages of sin is death."*
- Romans 3:24 says the solution to the guaranteed death sentence is that Someone else has taken the death sentence for us *"...being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus"*
- John 3:36 makes it very clear what we must do - believe that Jesus took the death sentence for us. *"He who believes in the Son has everlasting life: and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."*

So does becoming a believer in Jesus mean you will never struggle with jealousy or hatred again?

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- No - but here is God's help for us after we have believed in Jesus and received the wonderful gift of His love and forgiveness: Fill your life with God's truth, and turn away from the sin you still desire to commit. *"Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you."* Ephesians 4:30&31

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Chapter 38 – Questions Miraculous but Messy

In this chapter we'll find what I think is one of the strangest stories in all of scripture. I'll give you a little background:

From the time of Adam and Eve a promise was given: a descendant would come from Adam and Eve who would save the world from sin. (Genesis 3:16)

Because all of humanity was wrapped up in the progeny of Adam and Eve, you could say that this promised "seed" of Adam traveled from generation to generation - no one knowing exactly when He would be born.

In other words, the seed of the Savior to come was passed to Seth, the 3rd son of Adam and Eve, but not to Cain or Abel. Then Seth passed that promised seed along to his son, and so on, and eventually Noah passed that promised seed along to his son Shem, and so on, then eventually Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob, and now, one of Jacob's 12 sons has that seed.

That son is Judah. But in Chapter 38 there's a problem. Judah had married a Canaanite - an idol worshipper - a woman not a believer in the One, True God. He and his wife had 3 sons, but 2 of them were very evil and died before they could produce a son of their own. We know the remaining son did not carry the promised seed. Hmmmm.....we are sure the Lord would never let the seed die out before the promised Savior came - so...

Chapter 38 is the miraculous but messy story of how the seed in Judah got passed along. It happened because a young woman was determined to survive. She was a believer in the One, True God, and had faith in the ways of God, and demanded her rights...but you may not approve of what she did.

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1. :1-5 Who did Judah marry? What are the names of their three sons? What is wrong with this marriage?
2. :6-10 Who was chosen as the wife of Judah's 1st son, Er? What kind of man was Er? What happened to this marriage? Why would Judah's 2nd son be asked to marry Er's widow? What happened?
3. :11 What has happened to Tamar now that she has no husband? Is she still a part of Judah's family? What promise is she holding on to?
4. :12-14 What is Tamar's plan, and why does she feel that she must do this?
5. :15-18 What does Judah do, and does he realize he is doing it with his own daughter-in-law?
6. :19 What does Tamar do once this act is completed? What do you think she is thinking at this point?
7. :20-23 When Judah sends the agreed-upon payment to the harlot he had slept with, what happens?
8. :24 What is Judah's reaction when he hears that Tamar is pregnant? What does he think has happened?
9. :25&26 Does Judah recognize the signet, cord and staff? What does this immediately tell him? Why does he conclude that he was the one at fault?
10. :27-30 Which child now carries the promised seed? Matthew 1:3. Ruth 4:12,
11. Do you think Tamar realized she was being used of God to keep the promised seed going?

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Chapter 38 – Answers Miraculous but Messy

A couple of questions first:

1. Do you think it's possible for God to take a very bad, immoral situation and change it totally into something beautiful, peaceful, and part of His plan to save the world?

If your answer is yes, then please give an example of this.

(suggestions: Satan kills Jesus on the cross - but God uses this to save the world. Hitler trying to exterminate Jews and instead God uses this to inspire the Jews to establish their homeland in Israel - 1940's)

2. So, if this is possible, then what makes the difference between a very bad, immoral situation which is hopeless and only gets worse...and a very bad, immoral situation which is flipped upside down by God?

Answer: Somebody believes what God has said and exercises faith.

Now...on to our scripture passage today: In this chapter we'll find what I think is one of the strangest stories in all of scripture. I'll give you a little background:

From the time of Adam and Eve a promise was given: a descendant would come from Adam and Eve who would save the world from sin. (Genesis 3:16)

Because all of humanity was wrapped up in the progeny of Adam and Eve, you could say that this promised "seed" of Adam traveled from generation to generation - no one knowing exactly when He would be born.

In other words, the seed of the Savior to come was passed to Seth, the 3rd son of Adam and Eve, but not to Cain or Abel. Then Seth passed that promised seed along to his son, and so on, and eventually Noah passed that promised seed along to

In The Beginning God...."

A Verse-by-Verse Study of the Book of Genesis

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his son Shem, and so on, then eventually Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob, and now, one of Jacob's 12 sons has that seed.

That son is Judah. No one knows this yet - but God knows. But in Chapter 38 there's a problem. Judah had married a Canaanite - an idol worshipper - a woman not a believer in the One, True God. He and his wife had 3 sons, but 2 of them were very evil and died before they could produce a son of their own. Did the remaining son carry the promised seed? Hmmmm.....we are sure the Lord would never let the seed die out before the promised Savior came - so...

Chapter 38 is the miraculous but messy story of how the seed in Judah got passed along . It happened because a young woman was determined to survive. She was a believer in the One, True God, and had faith in the ways of God, and demanded her rights...but you may not approve of what she did.

1. :1-5 Who did Judah marry? What are the names of their three sons?
What is wrong with this marriage?

This passage in the NKJV (that's the version I use the most) is a little confusing. At first glance you might think that Judah married a woman named Shua. But if you read down the passage to verse 12, you realize that you never really hear the wife's name - she is the daughter of a man named Shua.

But the important thing to notice in these 5 verses is that Judah, a son of a father and a grandfather, and a great-grandfather who all had a mighty and powerful faith in the One, True, God, was willing to take a wife from the idol-worshippers who lived around him. She was a Canaanite - a dweller in the land in which Judah lived - but we see no evidence that she was a believer in the One, True God. She was most likely an idol-worshipper

Why was he open to doing this? We are never told his thinking- but we do know that he and his 9 brothers had just committed a horrible crime against their

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brother, Joseph. They had thrown him into a cistern and then sold him as a slave to some travelers going to Egypt.

They hid their act by letting their father believe that their brother, Joseph, had been slain by a wild beast. They broke their father's heart in a way that would never heal.

It's just possible that Judah, who would have said he was a believer in the One, True God, simply was overwhelmed by his sin, and was drug deeper and deeper into other sins because of his unwillingness to admit his wrong. That's the power of sin.

It's also possible that Judah up to this point in his life thought he was a believer in the One, True God because he was, after all, a Jew. But maybe he had never actually come face to face with his own sin and realized his utter helplessness to be the person the One, True God expected him to be. Maybe this story is the time he realized he needed faith in the One, True God, not just a good heritage.

Whatever the reason, Judah married a non-believer. They had three sons: Er, Onan, and Shelah.

Just for curiosity, let's ask ourselves: We know (from Genesis 49:8-12) that Judah is the one who is carrying forward the seed of the Messiah to come. So let's ask ourselves...in which of these three sons of Judah (Er, Onan and Shelah) is this seed hidden? Who is carrying forward the seed of the Messiah to come?

Keep reading.

2. :6-10 Who was chosen as the wife of Judah's 1st son, Er? What kind of man was Er? What happened to this marriage? Why would Judah's 2nd son be asked to marry Er's widow? What happened?

Tamar was the woman chosen for Er. Our passage doesn't tell us for sure whether she is a Canaanite or a Jew. But we do know this: she was a believer in the One, True God. How do we know that? Because as our story progresses we see that

In The Beginning God...."

A Verse-by-Verse Study of the Book of Genesis

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she believes in the promises the One, True God has given...in fact...she is willing to stake her life on those promises.

Er was a wicked man. He lived his life in such a way that the Lord had him killed. We don't know if Judah realized how wicked his son was, but the Lord knew, and he saved Tamar from such a wicked husband.

So...what does that tell us so far about our question? Is Er the carrier of the Messiah who was to come? No. He produces no children, and has no future seed to pass on.

Now here is where we, in our culture, have no concept of why this next thing was done. Judah tells his second son, Onan, to marry Tamar and give her children. Tamar, according to God's laws, actually has the right to expect that one of Er's brothers will give her a future. Without a son Tamar has no future. She would simply be a castaway if she was a woman with no prospect for a future husband and no son to take care of her.

But 2nd son, Onan, also is an evil man. He has no desire to fulfill this obligation. He knows that if he and Tamar have a son that son will technically belong to his dead brother, Er, and Onan will get nothing from that son - Tamar will be the one who deserves and gets whatever that son may someday be able to contribute to the family inheritance.

So Onan spends the night with Tamar, as he was ordered to do by his father, but he only pretends to consummate the marriage. He never actually does what is necessary to produce a child.

My heart hurts for Tamar. Her first husband is wicked. Her second husband humiliates her. But somehow she believes even more in the One, True God after this - because she keeps trusting in His promises to solve her problem.

The Lord kills Onan also.

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So...was Onan the son who was carrying the seed of the future Messiah? No.

3. :11 What has happened to Tamar now that she has no husband? Is she still a part of Judah's family? What promise is she holding on to?

There is one son left - Shelah. Judah knows that he owes it to her to provide his third son as a husband, but he is still too young to marry Tamar. So Judah asks Tamar to live again in her father's house, as a widow, and wait for Shelah to be of age.

Tamar believes what her father-in-law, Judah, tells her, and she goes back to her own father's house to wait.

But the passage tells us that Judah is deceiving Tamar. He is afraid that his third son might die also if he is given in marriage to Tamar. He is stalling.

I find it so ugly that Judah had two wicked sons, both killed by God because they were so evil....but somehow Judah had come to the conclusion that the problem was Tamar - somehow his sons simply died because they were married to her. How ridiculous. How unfair. How short-sighted. And didn't Judah even care that his sons were not God-fearers? Was he so wrapped up in his own self-centeredness that he gave no thought to God?

4. :12-14 What is Tamar's plan, and why does she feel that she must do this?

I do admire Tamar. She is not going to curl up in a corner and let life blow over her. She comes up with a plan. Do I admire her plan? Not sure, really. It was messy - not picture perfect in honesty or in morality - but still, God blessed her for her faith in His promise.

Tamar hears that Judah is helping with sheep-shearing. She knows this is a time when a man just might find a local harlot and have sexual relations with her. She

In The Beginning God...."

A Verse-by-Verse Study of the Book of Genesis

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knows where Judah will be and what time of day he might like to meet a local harlot. She dresses up like a harlot, hides her face, and waits by the side of the road for Judah.

She knows by now that Shelah will never be given to her as a husband. She will never have a child. And she is desperate to have a child who will give her a future. She does not want to die. She wants to live. So her plan is to get pregnant by the man who owes her a husband, a child, and a future.

5. :15-18 What does Judah do, and does he realize he is doing it with his own daughter-in-law?

Judah has sex with a woman he thinks is a local harlot. He has no idea it is Tamar. He thinks she is a local harlot somehow associated with idol-worship.

6. :19 What does Tamar do once this act is completed? What do you think she is thinking at this point?

Tamar asks Judah to pay for this harlotry service. She knows he does not have any money on him. Of course he would not carry money in a land where there were thieves around every corner. She knows that he will have to give her something tangible as a pledge that his payment will be sent later. She wants this something tangible as proof of who the father of this baby is.

7. :20-23 When Judah sends the agreed-upon payment to the harlot he had slept with, what happens?

The harlot cannot be found.

8. :24 What is Judah's reaction when he hears that Tamar is pregnant? What does he think has happened?

Judah is outraged when he hears Tamar, his widowed daughter-in-law, is pregnant. That must mean she has been fooling around with someone - living in sin. He cannot

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A Verse-by-Verse Study of the Book of Genesis

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believe she would commit such a sin. He cannot believe she would bring such shame on his family. He knows that God's law gives him the right to have her burned to death for this shameful thing... (interesting that he feels so righteous to call on God's laws and promises now...)

9. :25&26 Does Judah recognize the signet, cord and staff? What does this immediately tell him? Why does he conclude that he was the one at fault?

I can only imagine how white his face turned. How he gasped for breath as he saw the signet, cord and staff which he remembered he had given that harlot 3 or 4 months ago. He knew immediately that Tamar had believed the promises of the One, True God - that she had believed she had the right to demand from him a husband, a child and a future. She was the one who had played the harlot....but he was the one who had sinned. He had withheld from her the thing God had promised her she could have.

10. :27-30 Which child now carries the promised seed? Matthew 1:3. Ruth 4:12,

Here's the very cool, happy ending. We know the seed of the Messiah to come had not been in Er, nor in Onan. And, apparently, it had not been in Shelah, either.

How do we know that? The twins born to Tamar were the first-born of Judah. He is the father, and they were the first sons born to him. Perez, who was actually going to be the second of the twins born, somehow made it out first, and became the designated inheritor of the fortunes of Judah. But even more important that the first-born idea is that also, later, in the new testament, Jesus' geneology is given, and there we see the name Perez, son of Judah, as the next one in the line of the Messiah.

11. Do you think Tamar realized she was being used of God to keep the promised seed going?

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No. I don't think anyone at that time even realized Judah was the one carrying that seed. The prophecy about him didn't even occur until a few years later - we see it in *Genesis* 48.

But Tamar was a woman of faith. She knew what the Lord God had promised, and she was willing to act on that. Faith doesn't mean perfect. It means "believe what God says and act on it."

Life is messy sometimes. God is miraculous.

Chapter 39, 40 & 41 - Questions

The last 11 chapters of *Genesis* deal with the life of Joseph, after he was sold into slavery by his 10 brothers. Today's chapters show how Joseph was trained by God to be in a position of leadership, and why.

1. 39:1 If something similar happened to you, what would you do to try to survive?
2. 39:2-6 Why did Joseph become successful/prosperous as a slave?
3. How does the life of Joseph in Egypt "foreshadow" the experiences Israel as a nation would have in Egypt?

Joseph in Egypt	Israel in Egypt
1. Initially, because of God's blessing, he obtains a place of honor	
2. Unjustly punished, his crime being his moral integrity	
3. Raised up, eventually, as the one who, because God is with him, holds the future in his hands.	

4. 39:6-20 Why does Joseph have to go through suffering? Why do I?

(the whole book of I Peter will answer this question..especially
1:7, 2:20, 2:21-23, 3:14,15, 3:17. 4:1, 4:12,13, 4:15,16, 4:19, 5:10)

5. 39:21-40:22 What does God do with an impossible situation?
6. 40:23-41:13 Can you think of any verses which tell us why we have to wait?

In The Beginning God...."

A Verse-by-Verse Study of the Book of Genesis

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7. 41:14-57 Can you find a reason why Joseph was sent to Egypt as a slave and then went through so many trials and heartaches?
8. 41:46 How old was Joseph when he became 2nd in command?
9. How long had his "Leadership Training" time been? (37:2)
10. In review, what did God do to train Joseph for leadership?
11. What qualities did God develop in Joseph during this time?
12. Do you want to be a leader? Do you want your children or your grandchildren to be leaders? Do you want them to be people of great faith?

In The Beginning God...."

A Verse-by-Verse Study of the Book of Genesis

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Chapter 39, 40 & 41 - Answers

The last 11 chapters of *Genesis* deal with the life of Joseph, after he was sold into slavery by his 10 brothers.

This is a story of ending up in a place you never wanted to be. It's a story of the innocent party in a situation which can only be described as a "great violence." It's a story of the long, painful process of learning to trust God when it looks like God is not around. And it's a story of flourishing in the land where God has placed you - even though it is absolutely not the place you ever wanted to be, and not the place you even want to be now.

Jeremiah 29:4-14 tells us of the prophet Jeremiah, who, many years after the life of Joseph, encouraged the Israelites who were about to be taken captive to Babylon. God told them through Jeremiah not to fight it. Their job was going to be to be taken captive to Babylon, and then pray for and enjoy the peace of the place where they were taken as captives.

The prophet Daniel was the proof that taking God at His Word (through Jeremiah) was the right choice - even though Daniel was in a place he never wanted to be, and not the place he wanted to stay. Still, he did not fight it, but instead took God at His Word and embraced the land where he was a prisoner and prayed for their prosperity and peace.

1. 39:1 If something similar happened to you, what would you do to try to survive? I think at first I would just try not to lash out at God for allowing this to happen to me. I would try to think positive thoughts.

Then, once I was able to accept my situation as from the Lord, I think I would do well to try to remember all the times in scripture where the Lord took someone through such a trial, and what the results were.

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Now, by this time I would probably be ready to spend a good part of every day just praising God for Who He is, and telling Him how much I trust Him.

I would, if possible, spend great amounts of time reading my Bible - and if I didn't have my Bible, then I would make every effort to remember every memory verse I had ever learned, and soothe my soul by repeating them over and over.

And then I would wait. I would probably have to learn a lot of patience...but I would hope that I would learn to wait and see what God had in mind.

2. 39:2-6 Why did Joseph become successful/prosperous as a slave?
Because God blessed him in that way. God had a plan, and blessing Joseph in slavery and prison was part of it.

3. How does the life of Joseph in Egypt "foreshadow" the experiences Israel as a nation would have in Egypt?

Joseph in Egypt	Israel in Egypt
1. Initially, because of God's blessing, he obtains a place of honor	First, as the family of Jacob dwelt in Egypt, they were favored by the Pharaoh and given the best land and lots of freedom. Because Pharaoh loved and trusted Joseph.
2. Unjustly punished, his crime being his moral integrity	Then, as time went on, the family of Jacob was less and less known to the later Pharaohs of Egypt, and they began to be badly treated, through no fault of their own they became slaves and lived hard and punishing lives.
3. Raised up, eventually, as the one who, because God is with him, holds the future in his hands.	In the end the family of Jacob leaves Egypt and they are greatly blessed by God to make it back home to Canaan and eventually become the greatest power in the world under King David. They were greatly blessed by God.

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Do you see how the life of Joseph seems to mirror the life that the nation of Israel was going to have from the time of Joseph forward?

Maybe one part of God's great plan for Joseph was to have him go first - showing Israel how mighty God's hand can be in delivering from unjust suffering. Maybe Joseph's life was meant to be a comfort for the whole future nation of Israel. Maybe it still is today.

4. 39:6-20 Why does Joseph have to go through suffering? Why do I?

(the whole book of I Peter will answer this question..especially
1:7, 2:20, 2:21-23, 3:14,15, 3:17. 4:1, 4:12,13, 4:15,16, 4:19, 5:10)

I Peter 1:7 "...that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ..."

I Peter 2:20 "For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? When you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God."

I Peter 2:21-23 - "For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: 'Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth.' Who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously..."

In The Beginning God...."

A Verse-by-Verse Study of the Book of Genesis

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I Peter 3:14&15 "But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. ' And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled.' But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear."

I Peter 3:17 "For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil."

I Peter 4:1&2 "Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God."

I Peter 4:12&13 "Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy."

I Peter 4:15&16 "But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters. Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this manner."

I Peter 4:19 "Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful creator."

I Peter 5:1 "The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed."

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5. 39:21-40:22 What does God do with an impossible situation?

He changes it...even when it looks like there is absolutely no hope at all.
It's easy for Him.

6. 40:23-41:13 Can you think of any verses which tell us why we have to wait?

The obvious question is: If it's a piece of cake for God to change an impossible situation, then why doesn't He just do it right away? Why do we have to wait hours, days, months, sometimes years to see what He can do?

The answer is: I don't know. But He does. Proverbs 3:5-8

7. 41:14-57 Can you find a reason why Joseph was sent to Egypt as a slave and then went through so many trials and heartaches?

Well, yes. He was going to rescue his family from starvation. And in doing so he was going to rescue the world...because the world was waiting for a Savior to come from Joseph's family.

8. 41:46 How old was Joseph when he became 2nd in command?

30.

9. How long had his "Leadership Training" time been? (37:2)

Taken captive at 17. Leader of Egypt at 30. It had been 13 years of waiting, growing, learning to trust in the dark.

10. In review, what did God do to train Joseph for leadership?

He tore him away from all he held dear.

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He allowed him to suffer for doing good.
He let him sit in a dark dungeon prison for years.
He blessed him with wisdom and likeability.

11. What qualities did God develop in Joseph during this time?

Joseph was nice to everyone - criminal or leader.
Joseph learned to wait on God.
Joseph learned to trust God's wisdom, not his own

12. Do you want to be a leader? Do you want your children or your grandchildren to be leaders? Do you want them to be people of great faith? You or your loved ones may just go through some very difficult trials in order to be trained by God for the work He has for you to do. If that happens, unless the Lord has made it very clear that you should run from your difficult situation, maybe you should do as Joseph did and as the Israelites taken to Babylon did: Ask the Lord to cause you to prosper right where you are...not just for your own sake...but mostly for the sake of others...maybe even for the sake of those who, with malice in their hearts, put you in your prison, or in your pain.

Here are the results of this kind of obedience:

1. You will flourish in ways you never imagined.
2. You will never again be tempted to be proud of your accomplishments. They were, after all, impossible for you.... it was God who accomplished them, not you.
3. You will know that your blessings are not for you...they are for others...for God's big picture...they are even for the ones who imprisoned you and tortured you and wanted so badly to destroy you.



Chapter 42 & 43 - Questions

Revenge?

1. :1&2 How desperate was the situation for the clan of Jacob?
2. :3&4 How many of the brothers traveled to Egypt to try to find food?
Who didn't go? Why not?
3. :5-9 What dream does Joseph remember as his brothers bow before him,
the 2nd in command in Egypt? How significant is it that this dream
(prophecy) was fulfilled?
4. How do you think Joseph felt when he recognized his brothers? Do you
think he had expected this day? Why didn't his brothers recognize him?
5. :9-13 Why does Joseph accuse them of being spies?
6. :14-20 What test does Joseph have for them? Why do you think he is
putting them through this?
7. :21-24 When the brothers realize how awful their situation is, what is the
first thing they think of? What does this show you? How does Joseph
react as he hears and understands their conversation?
8. Which brother gets left behind?

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9. :25-35 Why do the brothers react in fear when they see money in one of their sacks?
10. :36-38 What is old Jacob's reaction to the demand from the Commander in Egypt that the youngest son, Benjamin, go back to Egypt with the rest of the brothers?
11. What brother even offers the lives of his own sons as proof that he will come back with Benjamin? Does this change Jacob's mind?
12. 43:1-10 What finally changes Jacob's mind?
13. What brother offers to bear the whole fault himself if things don't go well?
14. :11-14 What is Jacob's plan?
15. :15-18 What do the brothers think is happening when they arrive in Egypt and are invited to a personal dinner with the 2nd in Command?
16. :19-34 What good things begin to happen to the brothers as we finish this chapter?
17. They have been full of fear up until now...do you think their fear is beginning to go away?
18. Why is Joseph being so nice? What do you think Joseph is going through?

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19. Do you think Joseph is wanting revenge? Is he struggling with knowing what is right to do? Does Joseph have any good examples from the past, from his family's past, to show him that taking vengeance is not up to him?

20. Why does the Lord tell us not to get revenge? Romans 12:17-21

Chapter 42 & 43 - Answers

These 2 chapters remind me of an old phrase my Dad used to use... "meanwhile, back at the ranch...".

Here's what was going on back "at the ranch" in Canaan, where a still-grieving Jacob and his 11 sons and their families lived.

1. :1&2 How desperate was the situation for the clan of Jacob?

They were so close to out of food that they had to leave their safe home in Canaan and travel over roads loaded with thieves and murderers in order to buy some grain...which they had heard about. Somehow, miraculously, Egypt had been smart enough to store up some grain during those 7 years of abundance, and now they were willing to sell from their storehouses to the surrounding nations.

I'm wondering if, also, this small clan of Jews - descendants of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob - is thinking of how humiliating this is. They, after all, are the only ones who worship the One, True God in a land full of pagans. Why didn't God warn them to load up on extra supplies during those plenteous years? Why would the idol-worshipping Egyptians seem to have the blessing of God on them? Why would they be saving the world? Why not the family of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob? Or...why were they experiencing this awful famine like everyone else? Surely the One, True God could have put a ring around Canaan and kept this area from going through famine. Why was the One, True God not protecting His special people?

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It was 13 years ago that they sold Joseph into slavery....but were the 10 brothers wondering, even all these years, whether their violent act against their brother Joseph was bringing on this calamity and humiliation?

Nevertheless - they must travel to Egypt and purchase food or they will die.

2. :3&4 How many of the brothers traveled to Egypt to try to find food?
Who didn't go? Why not?

Just 10 of the brothers went - the same 10 who cast Joseph into that pit 13 years before. Benjamin was not allowed to go by his father, Jacob. Jacob's grief over Joseph's supposed death was still very painful, and he could not let Benjamin, his other favorite son, born of Rachel, face the dangers of the road.

3. :5-9 What dream does Joseph remember as his brothers bow before him, the 2nd in command in Egypt? How significant is it that this dream (prophecy) was fulfilled?

When the 10 brothers arrive in Egypt they go directly to the house of the 2nd in Command in Egypt (Joseph). Joseph recognizes them, but they have no clue of who he really is.

In order to keep himself disguised from them he talks roughly to them, even accusing them of being spies. And as they bow before him, he remembers those dreams which got him into such trouble 13 years ago.

4. How do you think Joseph felt when he recognized his brothers? Do you think he had expected this day? Why didn't his brothers recognize him?

I think Joseph had expected this day. He knew where his brothers lived. He could very possibly have heard of them from other travelers. He knew they were

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experiencing famine, too, like everyone else. And he knew where they would have to go in order to survive.

So I think Joseph's breath was probably taken away at the sight of them...but he maintained his composure because he had seen this day coming.

Why didn't they recognize him? Probably because he was a grown man now - they had last seen him as a 17-year-old boy. And also because he was dressed in the regalia of an Egyptian ruler and speaking in the Egyptian language, surrounded by servants doing his every bidding - this was definitely not the way they would ever have pictured Joseph, if they thought of him at all. This was not a farmer, a shepherd, a little brother, a country boy.

5. :9-13 Why does Joseph accuse them of being spies?

I think he wanted to get them off-balance so they would tell him everything he wanted to know without realizing who he really was. He wanted to learn whether or not his father was still alive...and whether Benjamin was still alive. And how the whole clan was doing.

6. :14-20 What test does Joseph have for them? Why do you think he is putting them through this?

He is going to force them to bring Benjamin to him. But the question is...why is he making them jump through so many hoops and be so scared when all he would have to say is - "I'm Joseph, your brother!", and then he would learn everything he wanted to learn.

The question I keep asking is - Is Joseph simply wanting to make them suffer as he did? Is he wanting revenge?

7. :21-24 When the brothers realize how awful their situation is, what is the first thing they think of? What does this show you? How does Joseph react as he hears and understands their conversation?

In The Beginning God...."

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Ah. Guess what? The guilt of their crime against Joseph has been with them all these years. It has not faded away with time, has it? The Lord has kept it fresh and painful for all of them for 13 years. They know, each of the 10 brothers, deep within themselves, that what they did was wrong - it was sin - and there is a price to pay for sin. They can only assume that the time has come to pay that price. They still do not realize it is Joseph toying with them - but they have no doubt that God never forgets.

8. Which brother gets left behind?

Joseph weeps as he hears his brothers talking to one another in Aramaic. They don't know he knows their language because he has been speaking to them in Egyptian.

Simeon is taken from amongst the group of 10, bound right in front of them, and the rest are sent on their way back home - and told not to return unless Benjamin is with them. Ostensibly this is so they can prove their story is true and they are not spies. In reality, of course, Joseph wants to see his only full-brother, Benjamin....the only brother who wasn't guilty of selling Joseph into slavery.

Again we might ask: is Joseph taking revenge?

9. :25-35 Why do the brothers react in fear when they see money in one of their sacks?

They had brought the money with them to Egypt to buy grain. They had purchased the grain and it was sent back with them. To see the money in their sacks was a surprise, since they had given it to the Egyptians for the grain. And it was something to be afraid of, because surely someone would assume they had stolen back the money before they left.

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10. :36-38 What is old Jacob's reaction to the demand from the Commander in Egypt that the youngest son, Benjamin, go back to Egypt with the rest of the brothers?

He's pretty callous, if you ask me. He refuses to send Benjamin, even though he knows Simeon is in prison in Egypt. Old Jacob is simply not willing to suffer the loss of one more favorite son.

So he refuses. The 9 sons who are left will not return to Egypt, they will not be taking Benjamin with them. Period.

11. What brother even offers the lives of his own sons as proof that he will come back with Benjamin? Does this change Jacob's mind?

Even though Jacob has assurances from Reuben that his own sons lives could be held as surety if they did not return with both Simeon and Benjamin, he still refuses. Of course Jacob would never take Reuben's sons lives - why would he kill his grandchildren in order to take revenge on a promise not kept?

12. 43:1-10 What finally changes Jacob's mind?

The famine continues. The whole family will die if they do not go back to Egypt.

13. What brother offers to bear the whole fault himself if things don't go well?

Judah. The one who carried the hidden seed of the Messiah. The dysfunctional scoundrel who almost cheated his daughter-in-law out of her rightful protected place in his family. The one who bought the services of a harlot by the roadside. The one who almost killed his daughter-in-law in righteous indignation when he found out she was with child out of wedlock. The one who realized his sin and turned around a ridiculously awful situation and became the father and protector to the twins he had fathered.

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That one.

What has happened to Judah in the last 13 years?

14. :11-14 What is Jacob's plan?

"Go. Take double the amount of money needed to buy grain. And take back the money you found in your sacks. Throw yourselves on the mercy of the Egyptian ruler. And may the One, True God show mercy and let us live! And if He doesn't, then so be it." He says: "If I am bereaved, then I am bereaved".

He's afraid but resigned to the fact that he must bow to the situation. He's grieving but he knows he must trust God. There is no other way.

Does this remind you of any other portion of the Old Testament? It reminds me of the story of Esther. She knew that she was the only one who could save the whole nation of Israel. In order to do that she must approach the King even though he had not sent for her. She knew that the King could easily have her killed for approaching him in that way. But there was no other choice. She must trust God. And "If I perish, I perish". (Esther chapter 4)

15. :15-18 What do the brothers think is happening when they arrive in Egypt and are invited to a personal dinner with the 2nd in Command?

They are afraid. Confused. They think he is going to arrest them all.

16. :19-34 What good things begin to happen to the brothers as we finish this chapter?

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- First, they are assured that the money in their sacks on the first trip is not a problem.
- They are treated well
- Joseph, when he joins them, simply asks about the well-being of their family.
- Joseph meets Benjamin (very emotional time for Joseph) and says "God bless you my son".
- They enjoy a meal together with Joseph and the Egyptians
- The 11 brothers are assigned seats at the table in the order of their birth - strange - since that's a fact they had never shared.
- Benjamin was specially treated - and food was plentiful - and they were well treated.

17. They have been full of fear up until now...do you think their fear is beginning to go away?

Good question. I don't think mine would.

18. Why is Joseph being so nice? What do you think Joseph is going through?

Is Joseph just setting them up for the ultimate revenge?

19. Do you think Joseph is wanting revenge? Is he struggling with knowing what is right to do? Does Joseph have any good examples from the past, from his family's past, to show him that taking vengeance is not up to him?

If Joseph remembers his family history, he might remember that his father Jacob did not take revenge on Uncle Laban even though he cheated him. Or he might remember that his Uncle Esau did not take revenge on his own father, Jacob, for all the cheating and lying he did. Or he might remember the terrible results of he and his brothers taking revenge on the people of Schechem when he defiled their sister, Dinah. Or he might remember the awful stress of a home filled with one sister, Rachel (his mother), exchanging revenge over and over again with another sister, Leah (his aunt).

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If Joseph is struggling with the desire to have revenge, these memories might help him sort out his feelings and ask himself what the One, True God would have him do.

20. Why does the Lord tell us not to get revenge? Romans 12:17-21

Although these next verses were not written until long after the time of Joseph, they are the Words of God, and God does not change. So if Joseph was seeking the face of God in this situation, here's what the One, True God would have told him:

Proverbs 20:22 "Do not say 'I will recompense evil'; wait for the Lord, and He will save you."

Romans 12:17-21 "Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay,' says the Lord. Therefore, 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him. If he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

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Chapters 44&45 - Questions

Joseph's 11 brothers (including Benjamin this time) are in Egypt. 10 of the brothers have brought back their brother, Benjamin, and when they arrived, their brother, Simeon, was released from jail, where he had been held until they returned.

And now they have all been taken to Joseph's house - where a huge feast is waiting for them. The brothers all bow down to Joseph as he arrives...and Joseph is overwhelmed as he sees his brother, Benjamin. Joseph leaves to weep in private, then returns to eat, drink and have fun at a feast with 11 men who have no idea who he is.

Chapter 44

1. :1 Joseph is now sending the 11 brothers back to Egypt. What is he sending with them?
2. :2 What does Joseph secretly also have put in Benjamin's sack?
3. :3-5 After the 11 brothers leave, not knowing all that has been put in their sacks, Who pursues them?
4. :6-9 What are they accused of, and how do they respond?
5. :10-13 What was found in Benjamin's sack?

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6. :14&15 As the brothers return to Joseph's house, Joseph says to them..."didn't you know that I can practice divination?" What did he mean by that?
7. :16 Which brother speaks first? What does he say?
8. :17 But Joseph, what does he insist on?
9. :18-34 What is Judah's story to Joseph, and what does Judah offer in exchange for Benjamin's freedom?
10. Does this pleading of Judah seem to be a picture of something in the future which one of the descendants of Judah will do...for the freedom of the whole world?

Chapter 45

11. :1-2 How loud was Joseph weeping?
12. :3 Do the brothers believe what they are hearing? Why not?
13. :4-8 Who actually was responsible for Joseph being sold into slavery? Why is Joseph OK with that?
14. :9-15 This is the moment of reconciliation. What do you notice? What things are happening here?
15. :16-24 What important person in Egypt is very pleased with what has happened?
16. :25-28 Does Jacob believe the 11 brothers when they arrive back in Canaan and tell him what has happened?
17. :26 The decision is made to move the whole family to Egypt. Is this the happy ending....or is there more to come for our favorite dysfunctional family?

Bonus Questions:

These chapters about Joseph and his brothers is a story of great wrong being done, and also one of reconciliation.

- Would it have been a complete reconciliation if Joseph had simply told his brothers, when he first saw them, that he forgave them for all they had done?

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- What if the brothers had recognized Joseph at the very first and asked for his forgiveness simply because they knew they had to in order to survive?
- What still had to happen in their hearts even after they arrived in Egypt? Is this why Joseph was seemingly so "mean" in setting them up more than once?
- What are the parts which are necessary in reconciliation?
- What if you or I want a reconciliation, but the one who wronged us is not willing to admit wrong and ask for forgiveness? Can we make that reconciliation happen simply by forgiving them?
- How does this help us understand what has to happen for our own reconciliation with God?

Chapters 44&45 - Answers

Joseph's 11 brothers (including Benjamin this time) are in Egypt.

10 of the brothers have brought back their brother, Benjamin, and when they arrived, their brother, Simeon, was released from jail, where he had been held until they returned.

And now they have all been taken to Joseph's house - where a huge feast is waiting for them. The brothers all bow down to Joseph as he arrives...and Joseph is overwhelmed as he sees his brother, Benjamin. Joseph leaves to weep in private, then returns to eat, drink and have fun at a feast with 11 men who still have no idea who he is.

Chapter 44

1. :1 Joseph is now sending the 11 brothers back to Egypt. What is he sending with them?

He's sending them back with the food they had come to purchase. And he's putting their purchase money back in their sacks. (they don't know about the money). Are the brothers relieved that their perilous journey to Egypt has turned out so well? Probably. But I imagine there are at least a couple of them who are wary of what might come next. This head guy in Egypt was a little weird.... And their own

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consciences are still actively reminding them of a brother they had wronged 13 years ago.

2. :2 What does Joseph secretly also have put in Benjamin's sack?

In addition, Joseph makes sure that his own silver cup is placed in Benjamin's sack.

3. :3-5 After the 11 brothers leave, not knowing all that has been put in their sacks, Who pursues them?

Joseph sends his own personal steward after them, and instructs him to accuse the men of stealing the silver cup.

4. :6-9 What are they accused of, and how do they respond?

They are horrified at the accusation, of course, because they know they did not do this thing. They emphatically tell the steward to search all their stuff, and that if the silver cup is found, the man in whose sack it is found should be killed and the rest of them should become slaves of Egypt!

5. :10-13 What was found in Benjamin's sack?

The steward does not accept their extreme offer of potential results if the cup is found...but he does state that if the cup is found the person in whose sack it is found will be his own personal slave forever. The cup is found in Benjamin's sack.

6. :14&15 As the brothers return to Joseph's house, Joseph says to them..."didn't you know that I can practice divination?" What did he mean by that?

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He was scaring them again. He is telling them he is magic. That he can see everything that happens. Of course he's not magic. But he is definitely scaring the wits out of them.

What is he trying to accomplish?

7. :16 Which brother speaks first? What does he say?

Judah speaks. He takes the blame. He says that all of them are to blame. I wonder what he is referring to...he knows that none of them stole this cup. I wonder if he is referring to the blame they all deserve for a crime committed 13 years ago? I wonder if this is Judah's moment of repentance?

8. :17 But Joseph, what does he insist on?

Joseph refuses to accept a guilty plea from all of them. He declares that Benjamin will stay in Egypt as his personal slave, but the rest can go home.

Is he thinking at this point that at least he will have his own full brother with him for the rest of his life....but what about his father? Surely he does not want his father to suffer any more grief?

9. :18-34 What is Judah's story to Joseph, and what does Judah offer in exchange for Benjamin's freedom?

Judah clearly tells the story of the loss of Joseph and the grief of their father. He tells this supreme ruler in Egypt of the damage the loss of Benjamin will do - and that it will probably kill their father. He pleads that he, himself, might remain and Benjamin go home. He is laying his life on the line for Benjamin and for their father.

Judah has reached the point where nothing else matters besides making this thing as right as he can. He has lost all pride, all sense of personally trying to salvage his own reputation, all sense of insisting on his own rights...he is a broken man who is

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throwing himself down in front of certain death in order to straighten out a mess he has made.

He is repenting. Is it enough?

10. Does this pleading of Judah seem to be a picture of something in the future which One of the descendants of Judah will do...for the freedom of the whole world?

To me this is a picture of Jesus, a much future descendant of Judah, who will lay down His life for the redemption of the world. Now, this isn't a completely perfect picture, for Judah had real guilt on his shoulders, and Jesus did not. Jesus took on the guilt of everyone else and then paid the price necessary to free everyone else. But the picture is quite similar in every other respect.

Chapter 45

11. :1-2 How loud was Joseph weeping?

Joseph, the 2nd in Command of Egypt, stood in front of those 11 brothers from Canaan, ordered everyone else out of the room, and wept so loud that Egyptians in the whole palace could hear him.

12. :3 Do the brothers believe what they are hearing? Why not?

They were speechless. The total transformation of this great authority figure of Egypt into the brother they knew they had sold into slavery was just too much. They could not compute.

13. :4-8 Who actually was responsible for Joseph being sold into slavery? Why is Joseph OK with that?

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Joseph has known for quite some time that God Himself was the One who sent him into slavery - with the ultimate goal that Joseph would indeed rule over his whole family (as his dreams had said) and then save their lives.

Was Joseph trying to get revenge all this time? I think probably not. He was trying to keep the relationship moving along so that at some point he could see repentance in the faces of his brothers for the awful deed they had done 13 years ago. I think Joseph knew that without repentance there would be no real reconciliation. And reconciliation is what he wanted, not revenge.

14. :9-15 This is the moment of reconciliation. What do you notice? What things are happening here?

There is weeping and kissing amongst them all. And Joseph has a plan for going forward. He wants them all to come live in Egypt where they will be sure to have food for the remaining years of the famine. Repentance. Love. Forgiveness. Relationship. Future. Those are the parts of reconciliation.

15. :16-24 What important person in Egypt is very pleased with what has happened?

The Pharaoh himself is happy with what has happened, and offers to bankroll the move of Joseph's family to Egypt, and then offers to give them the choicest land once they arrive.

16. :25-28 Does Jacob believe the 11 brothers when they arrive back in Canaan and tell him what has happened?

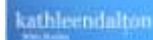
His heart stood still with an inability to take it all in.

17. :26 The decision is made to move the whole family to Egypt. Is this the happy ending....or is there more to come for our favorite dysfunctional family?

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The logo for Kathleen Dalton, featuring the name "kathleendalton" in a lowercase, sans-serif font, with "www.kathleendalton.com" in a smaller font below it, all on a blue rectangular background.

Of course they all end up going to Egypt. And yes, this is a happy ending for now. There is a sweet reunion to come for old Jacob and his son whom he loved so much. But there is more to come, too, for the whole family...they will not see perfect rest and peace in this life....but then none of us do.

Bonus Questions:

These chapters about Joseph and his brothers is a story of great wrong being done, and also one of reconciliation.

- Would it have been a complete reconciliation if Joseph had simply told his brothers, when he first saw them, that he forgave them for all they had done?

No. Repentance had to come first in the hearts of the 10 brothers.

- What if the brothers had recognized Joseph at the very first and asked for his forgiveness simply because they knew they had to in order to survive?

That could have happened, but it wouldn't have made for any kind of future. The future could only be healthy if the sins of the past were completely dealt with.

- What still had to happen in their hearts even after they arrived in Egypt? Is this why Joseph was seemingly so "mean" in setting them up more than once?

When they arrived in Egypt initially, and even after a trip home and trip back to Egypt, they were subdued men, men not so proud any more, even men willing to make sacrifices for their families...they had all grown up. But they were not yet men who had gotten the past right with God...or right with each other...or right with Joseph. They had to go through much fear and horror in order to get to the point they were anxious to repent.

- What are the parts which are necessary in reconciliation?

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Admission of guilt

Repentance

The ask for forgiveness

The giving of forgiveness

The restoral of a relationship

- What if you or I want a reconciliation, but the one who wronged us is not willing to admit wrong and ask for forgiveness? Can we make that reconciliation happen simply by forgiving them?

We can admit our own wrong...and forgive others within ourselves...and then wait for repentance on their part so that the relationship can be reconciled. One person cannot make reconciliation happen. We can only do our part. And then wait for the Lord to bring the other parties to repentance.

- How does this help us understand what has to happen for our own reconciliation with God?

You see, God forgave us on the cross. He rose from the dead as perfect proof that He is able to forgive our sins and keep them forever forgiven. Forgiveness is offered. Love is offered. Reconciliation is offered. Future is offered.

And then it is up to us - will we fall to our knees and admit we have sinned against Him? Will we repent? Will we accept His offer of forgiveness? Will we allow Him to redeem us from our awful condition? Will we be willing to admit we need to be reconciled? And that we were the ones who messed up? Will we joyfully go forward in a relationship with Him, knowing always that we did not save ourselves?

He has done it all...the next step is ours.

Chapters 46&47 - Questions

46:1-7

1. What would Jacob have been concerned about when he decided to go to Egypt?
2. How did the LORD address those concerns?
3. What are you concerned about tonight? Can we have the boldness to ask God to specifically address those concerns?

46:8-26

4. How many people of Jacob's family moved to Egypt?
 - a. How many (not including wives) traveled with Jacob to Egypt?
 - b. How many (not including wives) were already in Egypt?
 - c. What does that add up to?
5. What happened to them there?
6. 400 years later, how many of them were there? (see Exodus 12:37)
7. If the Lord does not return for a long, long time, what future can you envision for your family after you are gone for 400 years?

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8. :28-30 What kind of reunion was there between Joseph and his aged father, Jacob?
9. :31-34 What kind of advice does Joseph give his family as they get ready to meet the Pharaoh of Egypt?
10. Why was it important for the Joseph's family to live far away from the Egyptians?

Chapter 47

11. :1-6 Does Pharaoh seem to be pleased with the arrangement? Why do you think Joseph chose only 5 of his brothers to appear before Pharaoh?
12. :7-10 Who blessed who?
13. :9 How old is Jacob when he arrives in Egypt?
14. How old was Jacob when Joseph disappeared, supposedly killed by a wild animal?
(hint: how old was Joseph when he was sold into slavery? (37:2)
How old was Joseph when he became second in command in Egypt? (41:46) How long was Joseph second in command before his brothers arrived? (45:6)
15. :11-26 When the famine was over, who was much, much richer?
16. :27-31 What promise does Jacob ask of his son, Joseph, as he is near death?

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Chapters 46&47 - Answers

46:1-7

1. What would Jacob have been concerned about when he decided to go to Egypt?

Well, first of all, he was probably concerned about even reaching Egypt. He was old, and the journey would be very hard, and there would be robbers and thieves along the way.

But mostly he would be concerned about leaving the land God had promised to him - to his father Isaac - and to his grandfather Abraham. Bad things had happened to this family in the past when they left the land. Would it be OK with God for him to make this trip to Egypt...and then...would he ever come back?

2. How did the LORD address those concerns?

God made a point to meet with Jacob and tell him it was OK to go to Egypt. It was His plan and His will that Jacob and his family find food and safety in Egypt, at least for a while. And He relieves Jacob's fears about the journey by telling him: "Joseph will put his hand on your eyes". Meaning - "when you close your eyes in death Joseph will be right there with you and will be the one to gently close those eyes for you." In other words, Jacob, you will not die before you see Joseph.

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3. What are you concerned about today? Can you have the boldness to ask God to specifically address those concerns?

Yeah - just that simple. Whatever it is you are concerned about, go to the One, True God in prayer and ask Him to show you what to do, or what not to do, or to comfort you, or kick you in the seat of the pants to get you going. Just ask. In the book of James in the New Testament we are warned, however, that when we ask God for wisdom to know what to do, we must be sure to ask in faith - meaning - let God know that you trust whatever answer He gives you, and you will do whatever He shows you to do...you won't wait to see what He says and then decide whether or not you want to do it! (James 1:5&6)

46:8-26

4. How many people of Jacob's family moved to Egypt?
 - a. How many (not including wives) traveled with Jacob to Egypt?
66
 - b. How many (not including wives) were already in Egypt?
3
 - c. What does that add up to?
70 (don't forget Jacob himself)

5. What happened to them there?

They arrived safely - all 70 of them were together in Egypt.

6. 400 years later, how many of them were there? (see Exodus 12:37)

When they finally left Egypt, 400 years later, led by Moses, this group of 70 men and children had grown to a massive nation of 600,000 men plus children.

7. If the Lord does not return for a long, long time, what future can you envision for your family after you are gone for 400 years?

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Wow. I've never thought that far ahead, have you? Our family right now numbers 31, including men, women, children and grandchildren. We began as just the 2 of us almost 50 years ago. So, if we are as blessed as the Israelites, perhaps in 400 years our 31 right now could be a group of 300,000 or 400,000??? I pray that no matter how large our group of descendants is, they would all be believers in the One, True God - Jesus. And they would all learn to serve Him with every fiber of their being.

8. :28-30 What kind of reunion was there between Joseph and his aged father, Jacob?

The passage in the NKJV says "fell on his neck and wept for a good while". Much, much crying. Sadness and joy mixed together.

9. :31-34 What kind of advice does Joseph give his family as they get ready to meet the Pharaoh of Egypt?

Now this is interesting. Joseph is 2nd in Command in Egypt, so he has great power and great respect amongst the Egyptians. But he also knows something about the Egyptians - they really feel a sense of disdain for any people who are shepherds by trade. So Joseph advises his family to say they are shepherds. ??? Why? Does he want them to be disliked? Well, sort of. He wants the Egyptians to be happy to give them a piece of land sort of far away from them. Joseph wants his family to live in the land of Goshen - and the Egyptians will be happy for them to do that because that will put them a distance away from them.

10. Why was it important for the Joseph's family to live far away from the Egyptians?

Joseph sees this is the best land for his family, and also I think he sees it as a little extra protection for his family - a way to be able to thrive without calling attention to themselves.

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Chapter 47

11. :1-6 Does Pharoah seem to be pleased with the arrangement? Why do you think Joseph chose only 5 of his brothers to appear before Pharoah?

Yes, Pharoah seems pleased. And I think one reason he is is that he doesn't get the full impact of how large this family is. Joseph only has 5 brothers accompany him.

12. :7-10 Who blessed who?

Jacob, the older and wiser, and the one who worships the One, True God, is the one who blesses the most powerful man in Egypt. That tells me that the Egyptians respected age. The Egyptians loved and respected Joseph, the son of Jacob. And the Egyptians did not hate the One, True God...they probably just didn't know Who He was.

13. :9 How old is Jacob when he arrives in Egypt?

130.

14. How old was Jacob when Joseph disappeared, supposedly killed by a wild animal?

115. Joseph had disappeared 15 years ago.

(hint: how old was Joseph when he was sold into slavery? (37:2) How old was Joseph when he became second in command in Egypt? (41:46) How long was Joseph second in command before his brothers arrived? (45:6)

15. :11-26 When the famine was over, who was much, much richer?

The Pharaoh of Egypt.

16. :27-31 What promise does Jacob ask of his son, Joseph, as he is near death?

Jacob makes Joseph promise, in the most intimate promise possible, to not bury him in Egypt, but to take his body back to the promised land and bury him where Abraham, Isaac and their wives were buried. Jacob knew that the future of their people was permanently tied up with that land.

Chapter 48 - Questions

1. :1 Who are the two sons of Joseph? Who is the first-born? Why does Joseph bring his two sons to see Jacob?
2. :2-22 What special thing does Jacob do for both Ephraim & Manasseh?
3. What would happen to the rest of Joseph's offspring?
4. What special thing does Jacob do for Ephraim?
5. Why does Jacob have the right to do this?
6. Did Joseph see this coming?
7. What would have been the result of this?
8. Why would Jacob have done these 2 things which would look so unfair to the rest of his family?
9. What does that tell you about life? What does that tell you about God?

Let's take a look at the part Ephraim and Manasseh will play in the future of Israel from this point on:

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I know there are always many purposes in what God does...but just common sense tells me that at least one of them in this case is that Joseph is rewarded in this way because of what he had to endure in order to save his own family from extinction....and to bring the Messiah into our world.

The List of 12 tribes	In their original birth order (<i>Genesis 29&30 and Genesis 49</i>)	As they gathered around the tabernacle (<i>Numbers 2</i>)	As they settled in the land of Canaan (<i>Joshua 13-20</i>)	the 144,000 – (<i>Revelation 7:5-9</i>)	As they will someday settle in the Millennium (<i>Ezekiel 48</i>)
1. Reuben – in all lists	Reuben	Reuben	Reuben	Reuben	Reuben
2. Simeon – in all lists	Simeon	Simeon	Simeon	Simeon	Simeon
3. Levi - Never included when the list had to do with inheritance of the land	Levi			Levi	
4. Judah – in all lists	Judah	Judah	Judah	Judah	Judah
5. Dan – absent from the 144,000.	Dan	Dan	Dan		Dan
6. Naphtali – in all lists	Naphtali	Naphtali	Naphtali	Naphtali	Naphtali
7. Gad – in all lists	Gad	Gad	Gad	Gad	Gad
8. Asher – in all lists	Asher	Asher	Asher	Asher	Asher
9. Issachar – in all lists	Issachar	Issachar	Issachar	Issachar	Issachar
10. Zebulun – in all lists	Zebulun	Zebulun	Zebulun	Zebulun	Zebulun
11. Joseph – Ephraim and Manasseh split up his place as inheritors of land, but Joseph is included in the	Joseph			Joseph	

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144,000					
12. Benjamin – in all lists	Benjamin	Benjamin	Benjamin	Benjamin	Benjamin
13. Ephraim – inherited Joseph's right to land – but is not included in the 144,000		Ephraim	Ephraim		Ephraim
14. – Manasseh – inherited Joseph's right to land – and is included in the 144,000.		Manasseh	Manasseh	Manasseh	Manasseh

Chapter 48 - Answers

Joseph has married an Egyptian woman, given to her by the Pharaoh of Egypt. This marriage is the natural result of Joseph becoming a part of the cultural life of Egypt – as it's 2nd highest ruler. Most of the time when Jewish men married non-Jewish women, the children of that union were drawn away from the One, True God by the mothers, who were usually idol-worshippers.

Can Joseph be married to an Egyptian, lead the Egyptian nation, be loyal to the Egyptian Pharaoh, have Egyptian friends, and still remain so connected to the One, True God that his own children also love and follow the ways of the One, True God? That question is answered in this chapter.

1. :1 Who are the two sons of Joseph? Who is the first-born? Why does Joseph bring his two sons to see Jacob?

We saw in chapter 41:50-52 that Joseph and his Egyptian wife, Asenath, had 2 sons: Manasseh (which means "making forgetful" – Manasseh brought Joseph such joy that he forgot all his trials) and Ephraim (which means "fruitfulness" – Ephraim was a sign to Joseph that God was making him fruitful in the land of his affliction).

Manasseh is the first-born, meaning that he has all the rights associated with the first-born. Rights of blessing and inheritance.

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Joseph brought his 2 sons to see Jacob in chapter 38 because Jacob was sick and dying - and Joseph wanted Jacob to pass on a blessing to these 2 sons. Joseph did not want his sons blessed by the prosperity of Egypt - he wanted them blessed by the One, True God, Whom his father served and believed in all his life.

I'm thinking that Joseph's 13 years in prison taught him more than just trust God and learn awesome character traits of leadership. It also gave him such a love and relationship with the One, True God that he communicated it with his sons, and desired nothing less than that his sons love God and inherit all the blessings of God.

How did he do this? How did he communicate this to his children who would have been so inundated by idol-worship and prosperity-worship and self-worship in the culture around them?

The story is told of Susannah Wesley, who, in the 1700's, was the mother of 19 children. Nine of her children died in infancy. She homeschooled her remaining children successfully through many trials, including persecution, a marital separation, her husband's imprisonment, sickness, and poverty.

Two of her children were John and Charles Wesley, founders of the Methodist movement. Both men were hugely and positively influential in the spiritual life of England and beyond. John preached more than 40,000 sermons, encouraging everyday people to experience a personal relationship with God. He spoke against slavery and reached out to the orphaned, sick, and poor. Charles' main influence consisted in his more than 6,000 hymns, many of which are still sung in churches today.

Susanna is reputed to have recognized her daily dependence on God, and prioritized her relationship with him. When she needed time with him, she simply pulled her apron over her head to pray. That was the children's signal to leave her alone!

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Maybe Joseph, like Susannah, did whatever it took to walk with God amidst responsibilities and pressures of life and leadership - and maybe his sons not only received his personal instruction about God, but also saw his close walk with the One, True God. We won't know for sure what Joseph did with and for his sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, until someday we can ask him ourselves, but we do know they grew up to be Jewish men who served the One, True God for the rest of their lives.

2. :2-22 What special thing does Jacob do for both Ephraim & Manasseh?

Jacob sets Manasseh and Ephraim aside as grandsons who would also be considered sons. They would inherit the blessings and prosperity as sons - as if they were each one of the 12 (now 14) sons of Jacob...instead of just one of the many grandchildren of Jacob.

3. What would happen to the rest of Joseph's offspring?

If Joseph had any more children they would belong to Joseph as sons, but from this point on Manasseh and Ephraim would belong to Jacob as sons.

4. What special thing does Jacob do for Ephraim?

Jacob moves his right hand purposely to Ephraim's head as he gives the blessing to the two boys. That signified that Ephraim was getting the blessing and the benefits of the first-born. When Joseph objected, thinking his father, who couldn't see well, had made a mistake, Jacob told Joseph that, no, he had not made a mistake. He knew very well what he was doing. It seems the Lord Himself had shown Jacob which son would be the stronger and would prosper the most, and Jacob simply guided his hands to follow what the Lord had already determined.

5. Why does Jacob have the right to do this?

Jacob is the oldest, wisest one - and he was led by the One, True God. All Jacob's authority came not from himself, or even from his age and experience, but instead

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it came from the direction of the One, True God. Jacob was the spokesman for the One, True God.

6. Did Joseph see this coming?

No. Joseph was shocked.

7. What would have been the result of this?

As the 2 sons of Joseph took their place amongst the shuffling and wrestling and power-grabbing of the 12 sons of Jacob, they had the authority of God behind them, and they knew that God had made the 2 of them equally able to stand for the One, True God in the affairs of men. Was it going to make their lives easier? Probably not. They were going to endure the same jealousy and maybe even evil intents that their father did. But God put them in these positions of leadership. His will was more important than a calm and easy life.

8. Why would Jacob have done these 2 things which would look so unfair to the rest of his family?

First of all, God told him to. After that, I'm sure there are many more reasons we won't know until eternity. I know there are always many purposes in what God does...but just common sense tells me that at least one of them in this case is that Joseph is rewarded in this way because of what he had to endure in order to save his own family from extinction....and to bring the Messiah into our world.

9. What does that tell you about life? What does that tell you about God?

Here's what it tells me:

- God doesn't always make life fair or comfortable or easy.
- You might often find yourself hated simply because you have been blessed by God.

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- If so, you just have to do your job. Be kind. But do your job.
- Sometimes there are rewards.

I'd like to give you an armchair tour of history and the future: of the part Ephraim and Manasseh have played and will play in the world:

Take a look at the chart on the following page:

The List of 12 tribes	In their original birth order (<i>Genesis 29&30 and Genesis 49</i>)	As they gathered around the tabernacle (<i>Numbers 2</i>)	As they settled in the land of Canaan (<i>Joshua 13-20</i>)	the 144,000 – (<i>Revelation 7:5-9</i>)	As they will someday settle in the Millennium (<i>Ezekiel 48</i>)
1. Reuben – in all lists	Reuben	Reuben	Reuben	Reuben	Reuben
2. Simeon – in all lists	Simeon	Simeon	Simeon	Simeon	Simeon
3. Levi - Never included when the list had to do with inheritance of the land	Levi			Levi	
4. Judah – in all lists	Judah	Judah	Judah	Judah	Judah
5. Dan – absent from the 144,000.	Dan	Dan	Dan		Dan
6. Naphtali – in all lists	Naphtali	Naphtali	Naphtali	Naphtali	Naphtali
7. Gad – in all lists	Gad	Gad	Gad	Gad	Gad
8. Asher – in all lists	Asher	Asher	Asher	Asher	Asher
9. Issachar – in all lists	Issachar	Issachar	Issachar	Issachar	Issachar
10. Zebulun – in all lists	Zebulun	Zebulun	Zebulun	Zebulun	Zebulun
11. Joseph – Ephraim and Manasseh split	Joseph			Joseph	

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up his place as inheritors of land, but Joseph is included in the 144,000					
12. Benjamin – in all lists	Benjamin	Benjamin	Benjamin	Benjamin	Benjamin
13. Ephraim – inherited Joseph's right to land – but is not included in the 144,000		Ephraim	Ephraim		Ephraim
14. – Manasseh – inherited Joseph's right to land – and is included in the 144,000.		Manasseh	Manasseh	Manasseh	Manasseh

Look at the chart above:

- **(column 2)** There are 12 sons born to Jacob
- 2 more sons are added to that 12 with the addition of Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh
- **(Column 3)** Later, when those 12 sons create 12 tribes and they all are following Moses through the wilderness, one of the original 12 tribes (Levi) is set apart to be priests, and the other 11 tribes have proscribed places to settle around the tabernacle. Ephraim and Manasseh are added to that 11, which would have made 13 tribes around the tabernacle, but in order to keep it at 12, Joseph is not included in the 12 tribes around the tabernacle. All of his descendants are in either Ephraim's tribe or Manasseh's tribe.
- **(Column 4)** Later, when the 12 tribes finally conquer and live in the land of Israel in the time of Joshua, the tribe of Levi is still set apart to be priests, and as such will never inherit any of the land of Israel, so the land of Israel is split up amongst the 12 tribes (Ephraim and Manasseh included, but not Joseph, same as above)
- **(Column 5)** The next time we see the 12 tribes is in the book of Revelation when they each have 12,000 men as a part of the 144,000 witnesses. These witnesses are Jewish men alive at the time of the Revelation who are believers in Jesus. So...out of the potential 14 tribes, which ones make up

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the 12 of the 144,000? Levi is in the list this time (because this doesn't have anything to do with land), but the tribe of Dan is out of the list (why?), and the tribe of Ephraim is out (why?). I have my ideas about why on each of those - check out my Bible study on the book of Revelation to see what I think on those (Revelation 7 notes)

- **(Column 6)** And then, after the Lord Jesus has returned and is reigning as King of Kings during the 1,000-year millennium, the 12 tribes again take possession of their land in Israel, repeating what had happened when they took possession of that land during the time of Joshua - Levi is left out and Joseph is left out.

Now, there's one more place the 12 tribes of Israel appear in the Bible. At the very end, in the book of Revelation, when the New Heaven and the New Earth are brought down from heaven by God, we are told that this awesome city has 12 gates. They are magnificent, tall, and each made out of one giant pearl. And on each of those 12 gates is written a name of one of the 12 tribes of Israel. (Revelation 21:9-21)

Here's a mystery we will have to solve when we take our first tour of this city which will be our home forever: What 12 names are on those gates? Is Joseph's name there... or are Ephraim and Manasseh there?

Wait and see!

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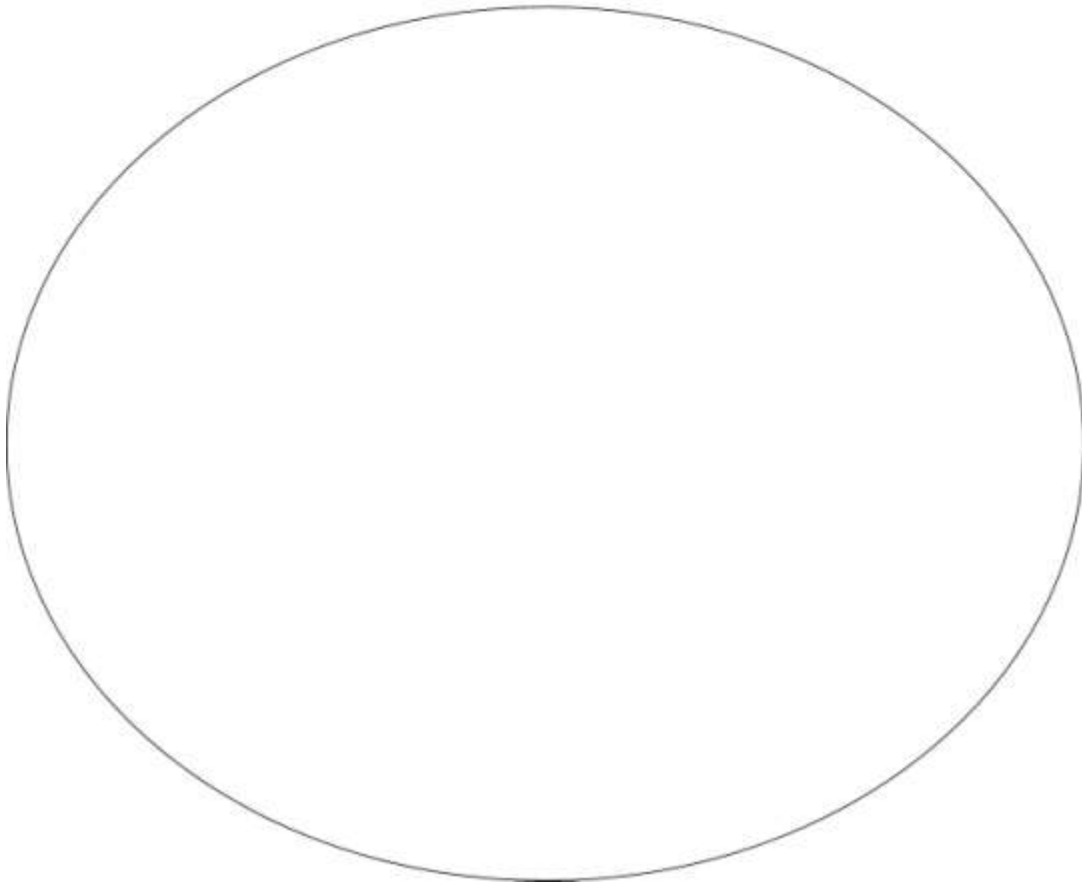


Chapter 49 - Questions

Blessings

1. :1&2 Picture Jacob and his 12 sons sitting around a table. Who is sitting there? Can you name them?

Jacob



2. :3-28 In these verses Jacob gives a different blessing to each of his 12 sons. Can you figure out what each of these blessings mean?
- a. :3&4 Reuben
 - b. :5-7 Simeon and Levi
 - c. :8-12 Judah

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- d. :13 Zebulun
 - e. :14&15 Issachar
 - f. :16-18 Dan
 - g. :19 Gad
 - h. :20 Asher
 - i. :21 Naphtali
 - j. :22-26 Joseph
 - k. :27 Benjamin
3. Which sons inherit the great promises of God made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob?
4. :29-33 Where is Jacob buried? Of all the patriarchs and their wives, who is not buried there?
5. :33 Verse 33 says Jacob died and was "gathered to his people". What does that mean? What people is this talking about? What does this tell you about death and after death?

APPLICATION:

6. Should we give a "blessing" to our children? If so, what would that look like? What blessing would you give to each of your children?

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7. Did your parents ever give a blessing to you?
8. If you wish your parents had given you a blessing, but they did not, what blessing do you wish they had given you?



Chapter 49 – Answers

Blessings

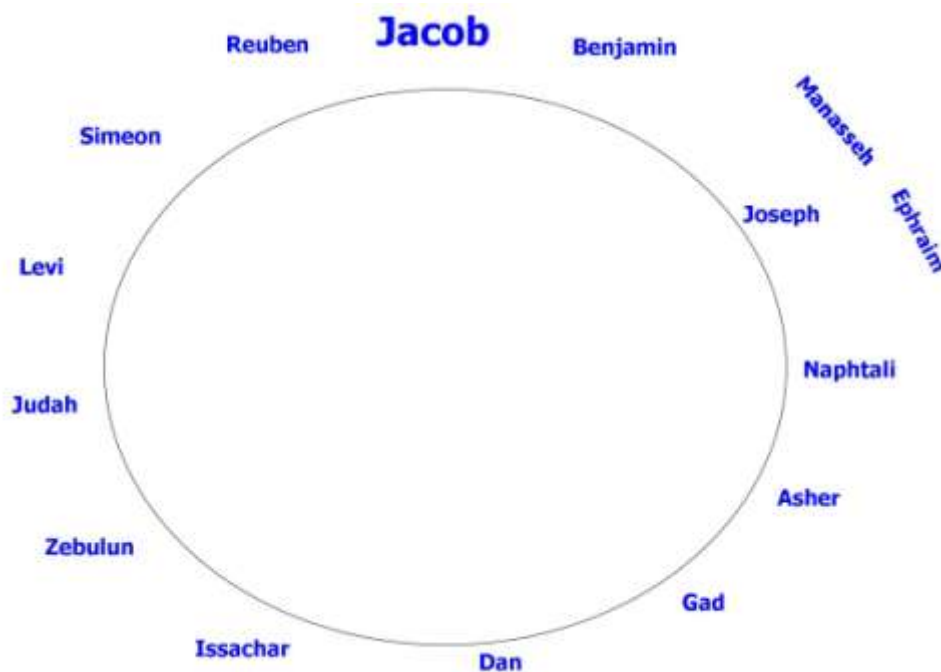
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1. :1&2 Picture Jacob and his 12 sons sitting around a table. Who is sitting there? Can you name them?



The blessings Jacob gives to each of his 12 sons at this table are not mere good wishes and hopes for the future. They are actually a heavenly mixture of wisdom (speaking what each man was truly like in his character) and prophecy (special knowledge directly from God about what the future held for each man and his descendants). God spoke to Jacob....and Jacob spoke to his 12 sons. These "blessings" all came true in the future lives of the 12 tribes of Israel.

2. :3-28 In these verses Jacob gives a different blessing to each of his 12 sons. Can you figure out what each of these blessings mean?

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a. :3&4 Reuben



Reuben was Jacob's first-born. Because of that, Reuben would of course expect to receive 2 things:

- 1. A double portion of whatever prosperity Jacob would be bestowing on all his sons. In other words, since Jacob has 12 sons, he would split up his wealth into 13 portions, every son would receive one equal portion, but the first-born would receive 2 of those portions.
- 2. Leadership of the whole tribe would be his.

That was what Reuben probably expected at this almost holy moment - when his father was going to pass from this life and leave all his worldly possessions, authority, promises from God, hopes and dreams to his 12 sons.

But....that is not what happened.

Here's why: In Genesis 35:22 we read "And it happened, when Israel (Jacob) dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine; and Israel (Jacob) heard about it."

Many years before this day of Jacob's death, Reuben had committed an atrocious and sickening sin. The record of this horrible act is only one verse - very easy to just read over and not realize the magnitude of what Reuben did. He had sexual relations with his father's concubine - Bilhah - who had been Rachel's handmaiden and was also the mother of 2 of Reuben's half-brothers, Dan and Naphtali.

What Reuben did was unspeakably dishonoring to his father, Jacob, and was also a threat and a direct challenge to the authority of his father. It was also a challenge to the authority of God.

The one verse which reveals this deed to us tells us Jacob found out about it, but doesn't tell us any more. What did Jacob do about it? Did any of the other brothers know? Did Reuben ever repent? We know nothing else of this incident

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until we get to today's chapter - Genesis 49 - and then we see that old Jacob certainly had not forgotten what Reuben did. And God had not forgotten either.

Even though Reuben had been one of the brothers who tried to save Joseph from death (Genesis 37:22), and even though he had offered his own sons' lives as surety so that the brothers could go back to Egypt and get Simeon out of his bonds (Genesis 42:37), still this horrible sin Reuben committed years before brought immeasurable damage to him and all of his future descendants.

Jacob brings down the hammer. Reuben is unstable. He will not be the future leader of the tribe. Reuben will not excel. He will not receive the double portion.

The future Reubenites survived through the Old Testament - but did not thrive. They were few and feeble. (Deuteronomy 33:6). The picture on the banner of Reuben is water - his tribe is forever known as being unstable as water.

The birthright (the double portion) was given instead to the 2 sons of Joseph - Ephraim and Manasseh. (I Chronicles 5:1&2).

The leadership was given to Judah (I Chronicles 5:1&2)

What is the lesson to be learned from Reuben? Some things bear scars for the rest of your natural life...even though you may be forgiven. And some things pass those scars on to your children, grandchildren and on and on.

b. :5-7 Simeon and Levi



Two brothers who also committed an atrocious act. But the outcome is a little different than that of Reuben.

You remember the story. In Genesis 34 an idol-worshipper named Schechem falls in love with, and sleeps with, Jacob's

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only daughter, Dinah. Dinah was also the full-sister of Simeon and Levi. When Simeon and Levi hear of what Schechem has done, they take cruel vengeance on him and on his whole clan. They kill them mercilessly. (Genesis 34:25)

Their "blessing" from their dying father? They will be scattered in the Promised Land. They will not have land of their own.



Levi's tribe becomes the caretakers of the temple and the tribe of priests who minister to the Lord on behalf of the people. As such, they never inherit land like the rest of the tribes. (Joshua 13:13)

Simeon did receive a plot of land for his tribe, but because he was so weak, he was given his land in the middle of the land of Judah (Joshua 19:9) - and eventually the tribe of Simeon simply never controlled their own land at all.

The picture on Simeon's banner is one of two crossed swords - a man of war and cruelty.

The picture on Levi's banner is of the 12 jewels representing the 12 tribes - whom he carried on his heart as he ministered to the Lord in the temple.

So...why does Reuben's tribe have to be "unstable as water" for the rest of their history....and the tribe of Simeon simply fade into seeming nothingness, forever labeled as a cruel people....but the tribe of Levi get to be the priests of Israel?

I'm pretty sure it has to do with the grace of God and faith. It looks like future generations don't have to remain the losers their parents were. It's a faith choice...and that choice can turn the curses of sin around. They can reach out to God in faith and ask to be changed from the people they are to the people God always wanted them to be.

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c. :8-12 Judah



Judah protected Joseph as much as he could.(Genesis 37:26 and 44:18). But he also nearly killed his daughter-in-law in righteous indignation when the sin was actually his. (Genesis 38:26) He was a leader for the 12 sons of Jacob, but he was not a perfect man by any means.

So what was his blessing from his father Jacob? He was the one in whom the seed of the Messiah was safely protected, and he would pass on that seed to his son and his son would pass it on to his son, etc....until someday King David would be born in his tribe, and eventually, the Messiah would be born, inheriting the right to be the King of Israel...and King of the world.

Obviously this blessing was not based on the goodness of Judah. It was purely the choice of God. God let Jacob know the seed of the Messiah was already in Judah - and he let Jacob know that that seed would keep passing on safely until it reached the day when it was time for the Messiah to appear.

Judah is given the leadership of the 12 tribes, forfeited by Reuben. And he is given the blessing of a large a prosperous tribe. And he is given the blessing of future kings coming only from his tribe. And he is told the Savior of the World will come from his family.

The symbol on Judah's banner is that of a lion - the king of animals. Judah didn't deserve the honor of having the Messiah/King come from him - there is no way any sinful man could ever deserve this honor. If there ever was a picture of the grace of God, Judah is it. (Ephesians 2:8&9)

d. :13 Zebulun

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We know very little about several of the 12 brothers - Zebulun is one of those.

He was the 6th son of Leah. He seems to have gone along with selling Joseph into slavery, but wasn't a ring-leader. And he seems to have been part of the cruel slaying of the men of Schechem, but, again, was not a ring-leader.

His father blesses him with a prophecy of what he would do for the rest of his life...and what careers his family would pursue. They were to be men of the sea. A place where ships could dock, load and unload. Probably that would assume he would have a mind for trade and foreign affairs and business, too.

Later on in Old Testament history Zebulun's tribe will act honorably by racing forth to protect and defend some of the other tribes. (Judges 5:18)

Jesus lived mostly in the area of Nazareth and Capernaum in the land of Israel - and both of these cities were in the same general area of the land which was inherited by the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali. (Matthew 4:13) The people living in that area were privileged to see the most miracles done by Jesus while on earth, because they were the most accepting of Him.

Zebulun's descendants don't pop up in Old Testament history with great achievements or failings. They are just there.

What do we learn from Zebulun? Can a plain, unimpressive person like Zebulun please the Lord? I think so. God is not a respecter of persons. He does not show partiality. He makes plain, live-in-the-background people the same as he makes up-front, type-A people.

In the end times, the tribe of Zebulun (although they probably don't know who they are until this happens) will be one of the 12 tribes who contribute 12,000 people

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each to make up the 144,000 who will be courageous Jewish Christian witnesses for Jesus Christ in the last half of the 7 last years.

Zebulun's banner carries a picture of a ship on the sea. In the millennium, the tribe of Zebulun will inherit land in Israel to populate and prosper. It will border on the sea.

Most of us are Zebuluns. Not the greatest. Not the leaders. Not the worst. Just living and doing our jobs and worshipping the One, True God the best we can, depending on His grace to see us through to the end.



e. :14&15 Issachar

Issachar is another son of Jacob about whom we know little. He is the 5th son of Leah, born just before Zebulun.

From Jacob's blessing in this chapter, it looks like Issachar is a hard worker who is destined to buckle down and get things done. He's not a leader - in fact, Jewish tradition shows Issachar as a perpetual student...always learning.

The comparison to donkeys is not a derogatory comment. It is a compliment that he can carry burdens and get work done. It looks like he knew how to work hard, at whatever he was doing, and then also had a healthy view of enjoying rest when he could. The tribe joined in when war was necessary, not shirking their duty. (Judges 5:15)

The picture on Issachar's banner was a donkey. A sturdy bearer of burdens. Issachar was not lazy, but not an A-type personality, either. Actually, the tribe seems to be reliable and healthy.

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If your daughter married a son of Issachar, you could rest easy, knowing she would always be taken care of, and would probably not have to suffer the ups and downs of life with an emotional roller coaster of a husband.

f. :16-18 Dan



The name Dan means "judgment". His mother was Bilhah, the handmaiden of Rachel. Bilhah bore Dan with the purpose of giving Rachel the son she couldn't have herself. Bilhah was, in effect, a surrogate womb for Rachel, even though Bilhah went on to raise Dan and was his mother all his life.

Rachel, at Dan's birth, was joyful, saying that God had finally "judged" her situation and rewarded her with a child. The word "judge" meant "correctly perceived what the problem was" ... or...."listened to my requests and decided they had valor".

Dan was blessed by Jacob as one who could "judge", or "rightly perceive what was really happening." One of the tribe of Dan, in Exodus 38:23, is said to be "an engraver and designer, a weaver of blue, purple, and scarlet *thread*, and of fine linen." In other words, he was creative and especially able to "see" beauty.

But Jacob also prophesied that Dan would be like a snake - one to be wary of. The tribe of Dan went speedily down the wrong path - the path of idolatry and satan worship. (Judges 18:30)

The one who had been given the ability to perceive the truth and real beauty turned away from it and embraced ugly and lying idolatry. The picture on Dan's banner is that of a snake. How sad.

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But the very last sentence of Dan's blessing gives him, and us, hope. Once the Lord Jesus arrived, bringing salvation, Dan could be saved from his hopeless backsliding into idolatry.

The tribe of Dan is not found in the 144,000 Jewish Christians who serve Jesus during the last 7 years - the tribe is simply not represented at all in this group of missionaries to the world. Why not? I think it's because there just aren't going to be enough of them who are alive at that time and believing in Jesus to qualify for the 144,000. Each qualifying tribe will be represented by 12,000 Jews who wholeheartedly believed in Jesus. I think there just will not be 12,000 believing Danites at the time the 144,000 are gathered together for their job in the last 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ years.

But there will be enough believing Danites at the end of the last 7 years to inherit the land Ezekiel says they will receive. In my mind that means during that last 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ years many Danites come to faith in the Messiah of Israel, and go alive into the Millennium reign of Christ, serving Him from that point on for eternity. Dan will once again be able to joyfully use his gift of "perceiving that which is right and true".

"I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord" (Genesis 49:18)

g. :19 Gad



Gad was born to Zilpah, but Leah named him. When Leah named Gad, she said "A troop comes!" (Genesis 30:11) Leah was exulting that yet another boy baby had come into the world.

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When Jacob blessed Gad in this chapter he acknowledges that Gad in his lifetime might have many enemies, in fact, a troop of them! But he would triumph over them. He would be a fighter and a winner of wars. When Moses, in Deuteronomy 33, blesses the tribe of Gad he says they are as a lion, "who tears the arm and the crown of the head". (Deuteronomy 33:20). When King David was running from King Saul, some men from Gad joined him there and fought with him. They could handle the shield and spear, and their faces were like lions and they were swift as gazelles on the mountains. (I Chronicles 12:8) Wow! Gad was fearsome!

The picture on his banner is one of tents gathered in a circle - ready to protect themselves or attack - whatever happened they were ready - no fear.

h. :20 Asher



Asher was also born to Zilpah - he was Gad's little brother. His name means "happy". And his blessing from Jacob years later sounds the same. He will be a maker of bread and yummys. He will provide.

When Moses blessed the tribes in Deuteronomy 33, he said of Asher: "Let him dip his foot in oil". ☺ (Deuteronomy 33:24) Sounds goofy to us, but back then it was a picture of someone who lived with his needs all met, or even more than met. He was prosperous in the satisfying things of life.

But Asher was a lover, not a fighter. The tribe of Asher was not well-known for jumping in and helping out in a battle. (Judges 5:17)

The Bible tells us of a well-known, lovely and happy little woman who was from the tribe of Asher. Anna was the little lady who had been a widow for many, many years, and had served faithfully and peacefully in the temple in Jerusalem. When Mary and Joseph brought the baby Jesus to the temple in order to dedicate Him, Anna saw them and pronounced a blessing on the baby Jesus. (Luke 2:36)

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There's a place for a lover, not a fighter.

i. :21 Naphtali



Naphtali is my favorite son of Jacob. Why? The blessing he received from his father Jacob is a blessing I would like, too. "He giveth beautiful words."

Was he going to be a writer? A speaker? An engraver? Was his tribe going to be known for their swiftness? Jacob said he was a "hind (deer) let loose"...in other words he moves swiftly and effortlessly through loose rocks, mountaintops, and river bottoms.

He is one of the 4 sons born to the handmaidens. His mother was Bilhah, the handmaiden of Rachel.

And here's my very favorite thing about Naphtali. The area where Jesus spent most of his ministry was Galilee - otherwise known as the land of Zebulun and Naphtali. Perhaps Naphtali is a reminder of the privilege I have

had to meet and know Jesus - and the challenge to swiftly take His Words to a world of people living in darkness. Naphtali's picture on his banner is that of a deer - swift and ready to run.

"The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan. The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death Light has dawned." Matthew 4:15&16

j. :22-26 Joseph

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Joseph and Benjamin were the most beloved sons of Jacob. They were the 2 sons of the love of Jacob's life: Rachel. I am not proud of Jacob for how biased he was towards only 2 of his sons and only 1 of his wives...but that is the way it was. (Genesis 37:3)

Maybe all that love would have spoiled Joseph and made him a bratty rich kid with a tribe full of mean, domineering descendants....but his 13 years in an Egyptian prison changed that possibility. Joseph no doubt learned in those dark years to know and love the One, True God more than anything in the world, and when he emerges from that prison at the age of 30 he has many characteristics of his heavenly father - the

One he had spent so much time with in his young adult years.

Joseph's blessing from his father is the longest of them all. Jacob bestows on Joseph the birthright, the double blessing, that Reuben had lost.

(I Chronicles 5:1&2) Joseph, through his 2 sons Ephraim and Manasseh, receives the right to have 2 tribes within the 12.

Joseph, as 2nd in command in Egypt, saved his family from certain death through famine and starvation. He is a picture for us of the salvation our brother, Jesus, offers us, even though we callously have sinned against Him and tossed Him aside.

When Jacob died he asked that his bones be buried in Canaan. And when Joseph died he asked that his bones be taken back some day to Canaan. Even in Joseph's death he was looking after his family, getting them back to the promises and the land God had given so long ago to father Abraham. (Hebrews 11:21&22)

Joseph's picture on his banner is that of fruitful boughs. He brought fruitfulness and new life to his family.

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k. :27 Benjamin



Rachel knew she was dying as she delivered Benjamin. She wanted to call him "son of my sorrow". But Jacob changed his name. He named him Benjamin, "Son of my right hand". (Genesis 35:18)

Being the youngest and one of the 2 favorites didn't turn out all that well for Benjamin. He was protected and spoiled by his father, especially for those 13 years when Jacob thought Joseph was dead.

When Jacob blesses Benjamin he knows this son has not turned out as well as Joseph. He (perhaps sadly) admits that Benjamin is like a wolf - ravenous. He will no doubt raise a whole tribe of cutthroat, passionate, people - ready to cut you down if you don't do things their way.

In fact, at some point in the Old Testament, all the tribes of Israel came up against the people of Benjamin because Benjamin was so ruthless. The Israelites nearly annihilated the tribe of Benjamin, leaving only 600 men! (Judges 20&21) Afterward the other tribes were very concerned about Benjamin, even though they had just slaughtered most of them, because they did not want one of the tribes of Israel to just die out. But none of the tribes wanted any of their own daughters to marry Benjamites, so they worked out a plan to steal a few girls from the idol-worshippers around them to be wives for the Benjamites! Now that's a crazy story! Judges 20&21.

Benjamin's picture on his banner is a wolf. A ravenous, passionate wolf. Jeremiah the prophet was a Benjamite. Saul, the first king of Israel, was a Benjamite. And Paul, the writer of most of the New Testament, was a Benjamite. Passionate men, all of them!

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3. Which of these 12 sons will inherit the great promises of God made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob - promises of land and blessing and hugeness?

Answer: All of them. Even Simeon, who ended up having no land at all, will someday prosper and work his land in the Millennium.

4. :29-33 Where is Jacob buried? Of all the patriarchs and their wives, who is not buried there?

Jacob is buried in the same cave where Abraham buried Sarah so many years ago. Isaac and Rebekah are buried there, too, and also Leah, the unloved wife of Jacob. The only wife not buried there is Rachel.

5. :33 Verse 33 says Jacob died and was "gathered to his people". What does that mean? What people is this talking about? What does this tell you about death and after death?

After death, or afterlife, was an Old Testament concept, too. They knew that when they died they would be with the people who had gone before who had had faith in the One, True God.

APPLICATION:

6. Should we give a "blessing" to our children? If so, what would that look like? What blessing would you give to each of your children?
7. Did your parents ever give a blessing to you?
8. If you wish your parents had given you a blessing, but they did not, what blessing do you wish they had given you?

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It seems to me that blessings are only valuable if the person giving them is genuine and has the right to give them (because they are intimately involved with that person). Of course the One best qualified to give us blessings is God. What blessings would you want God to give you? Or...has He already given them?

Chapter 50 - Questions

1. :1-3 How long did the whole nation mourn for Jacob? Why would they have mourned so long for someone who was a "newcomer" to Egypt? (he had only lived there 17 years 47:28)
2. :4-6 Where did Joseph want to bury his father? Why was Pharoah willing to let him go?
3. :7-11 Who was included in the group which traveled to bury Jacob? Why did so many Egyptians go, too?

In The Beginning God...."

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4. :12-14 Why did they all return to Egypt after burying Jacob? Wasn't the famine over?
5. :15-21 It looks like Joseph is now the head of the family. What are the other brothers suddenly afraid of? How does Joseph reassure them?
6. :22 How long did Joseph live?
7. :23 Would you say Joseph lived a good, fulfilling life?
8. :24-26 From these verses, what do you think Joseph still wanted out of life, but never got?

Chapter 50 - Answers

1. :1-3 How long did the whole nation mourn for Jacob? Why would they have mourned so long for someone who was a "newcomer" to Egypt? (he had only lived there 17 years 47:28)

Everyone - the Egyptians included - mourned for Jacob 70 days. Only 40 days were required, but the mourning went on for another month after the typical mourning time in Egypt. Why? I think this is a testimony to the great respect and awe the people of Egypt had for Joseph, Jacob's son. This tells us that even 17 years after the famine Joseph still had a position of great power in Egypt.

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2. :4-6 Where did Joseph want to bury his father? Why was Pharoah willing to let him go?

Joseph wanted to travel back to the land of Canaan in order to bury his father Jacob in the place he had wanted to be buried - the cave Abraham purchased to bury Sarah in. This was the family burial plot.

Pharoah would have been willing to let him go because he totally honored and trusted Joseph. We might note here that years later when the people of Israel - Joseph's family - wanted to leave Egypt, the Pharoah of that time would not let them go.

3. :7-11 Who was included in the group which traveled to bury Jacob? Why did so many Egyptians go, too?

Joseph, his brothers, and a great entourage of Egyptian officials. This was a funeral for a prince and a king. Great honor is being shown by the Egyptians to the father of their beloved Joseph.

4. :12-14 Why did they all return to Egypt after burying Jacob? Wasn't the famine over?

So I can't help asking: should Joseph have taken all his family back to Canaan at this time, buried Jacob, and then stayed in the promised land? The famine was over. They could find a way to live there again.

The answer: it wasn't God time. Remember back in Genesis 15, when the Lord made that uni-lateral covenant with Abraham, involving animals cut in two, and a burning torch? The Lord told Abraham then: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them 400 years." (Genesis 15:13)

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The Lord knew, even back in the day of Abraham, that the family of Jacob and Joseph would live in Egypt for 400 years.

So, in Genesis 50, when Joseph traveled to bury his father, Jacob, back in Canaan, it simply wasn't time for Israel to leave Egypt.

Joseph and all his family went back to Egypt after burying Jacob, and lived there the rest of their lives - and for 400 years.

5. :15-21 It looks like Joseph is now the head of the family. What are the other brothers suddenly afraid of? How does Joseph reassure them?

The brothers are wondering if the good will Joseph has shown to them was all about their father, Jacob. And now that he was gone they are afraid - perhaps now Joseph will take his revenge. That's exactly what anyone in their culture would have done. And they are probably men who, themselves, would have thought about taking revenge right now if they were in Joseph's shoes.

They still don't understand God's way of thinking. They still don't realize that Joseph was fundamentally changed while in prison 13 years. They don't

get it that Joseph no longer thinks like the culture around him. He has spent so much time with God that he is beginning to think like God.

So what does Joseph tell them? "...as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive."

You see, brothers? I know evil was in your hearts. But I am convinced of something more important than your evil. I am convinced that God wanted to save all of our lives and He orchestrated all of this.

He made me the favored son of Rachel, knowing you would be jealous. He gave me those dreams at just that time knowing your jealousy would turn to rage. He had

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my father send me out to find you knowing you would act on your rage that day. He kept you from killing me. He brought along that Egyptian caravan at just the right moment, and gave you the idea to sell me to them, despite my terror-filled pleas. He blessed me even in Potiphar's house and then in a dungeon. He gave me the ability to interpret dreams while in that dungeon. He came to me and taught me and soothed my spirit in that dungeon....He taught me all about Himself and His ways. He gave the troubling dreams to Pharoah. He reminded the butler of my ability to interpret dreams - at just the right time. He changed the heart of Pharoah to trust a prisoner with the fortunes of his entire country.

You see, brothers? I am looking at this from God's perspective now. You've admitted your sin to God, you've repented, and He has forgiven you, and I have forgiven you. So, do not be afraid.

6. :22 How long did Joseph live?

Joseph was 110 when he died.

- He was 13 when sold into slavery
- He was 30 when he became 2nd in command in Egypt
- He was about 40 when he moved his family to Egypt
- He was about 57 when Jacob died.

7. :23 Would you say Joseph lived a good, fulfilling life?

Yes, I would say that. He had a wonderful walk with God, a wife, 2 healthy sons, a huge extended family, a job with much responsibility and honor, a fantastic palace in which to live.

8. :24-26 From these verses, what do you think Joseph still wanted out of life, but never got?

But what Joseph always wanted was to go back home. He never got to go back home while he was alive. Home was the land God had given to their family. Home

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was where the future lay for the whole clan...Joseph knew it...but he just couldn't get his family back there in his lifetime.

But he knew God would get them back. God would be sure the promises He had made would be fulfilled. So, trusting that God would make this happen, he made his family promise that when the time came that God would get them back to Canaan, they would take his bones with them and properly bury them in the cave of the Patriarchs.

The next chapter to read in order to follow the history of the family of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob - is Exodus Chapter 1. It's the story of how the family got back to Canaan. It has its ups and downs, but they get back.

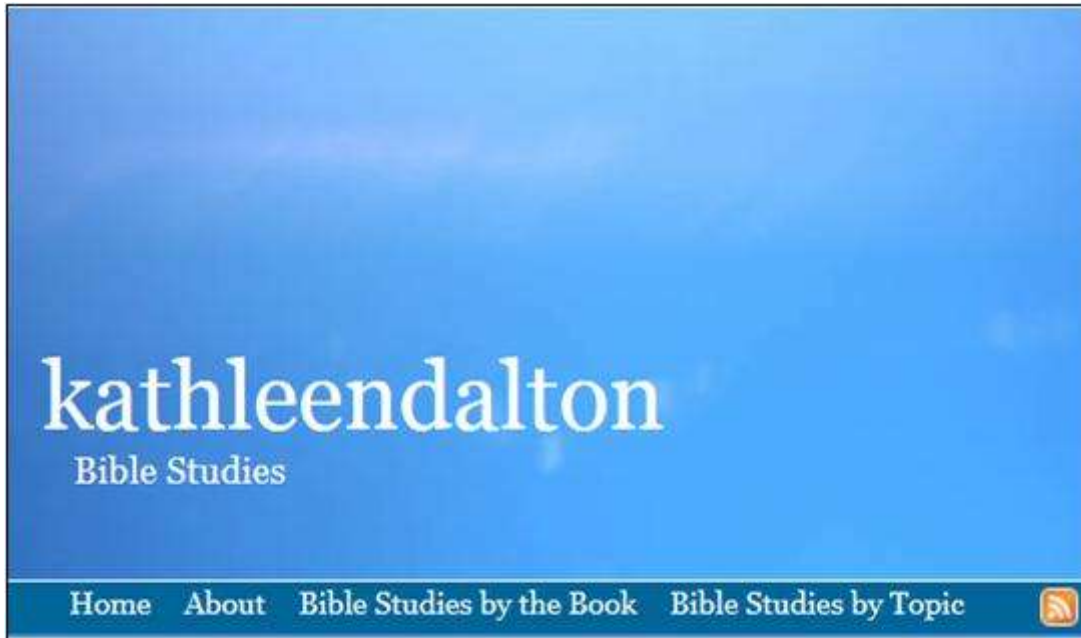
Exodus 1 takes place about 400 years after the family of Jacob moves to Egypt. They came to Egypt as highly valued people - the beloved family of the great man of Egypt- Joseph. But 400 years later.....

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