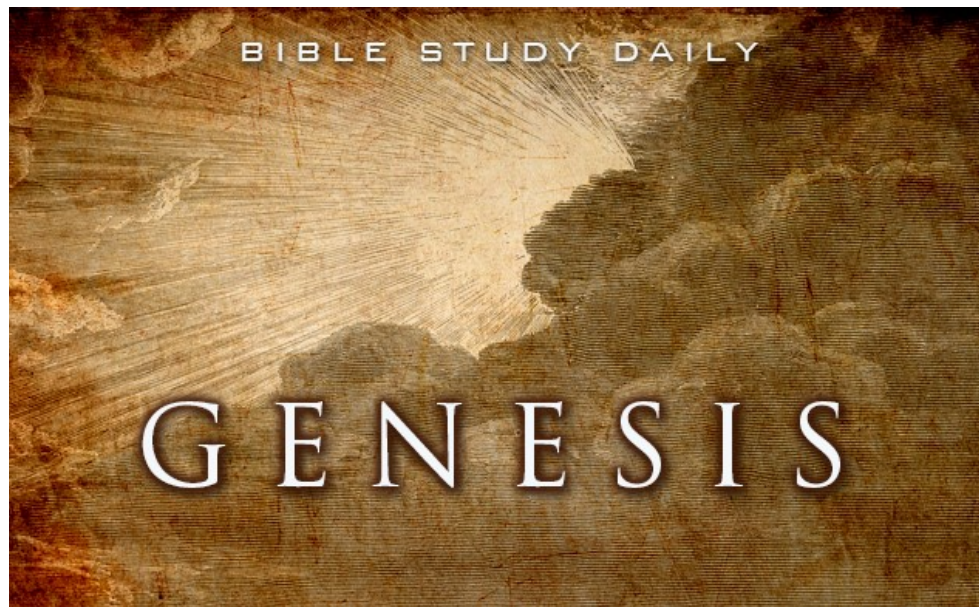




BIBLE STUDY DAILY



This document contains the introduction to the book of Genesis as well as my study notes for the book.

Name

The Hebrew title of the book is the first phrase *berēšt* translated “in the beginning.” The English title of “Genesis” comes from the Hebrew word *tôledôt*, which means “these are the generations of” and is translated *geneseōs* in Greek.

Author

The book of Genesis does not explicitly say that Moses is the author. However scholars have traditionally held that Moses is the author of Genesis and the other four books of the Pentateuch.

Exodus is incomplete without the background provided in Genesis. The first word in the Hebrew of Exodus is “and” indicating it is connected to what came before, and that is Genesis.

The earliest writings of the Jews, the Talmud, ascribes authorship of Genesis to Moses. The entire Torah (the Pentateuch), which was originally only one long book, was always considered by the Jews to have been written by Moses.

Genre

Law

Literary Form

Prose Narrative

Time Frame

Most scholars assign a date to the writing of Genesis to somewhere between 1450 and 1406 B.C.

Moses wrote Genesis at some time when he was close to the Israelites and had access to their records. Therefore Moses wrote Genesis either while he was still living in Pharaoh’s court or during the wilderness journey.

If it was written while he was in Pharaoh’s court it would be before 1487 B.C. If it was written during the wilderness wanderings it would be between 1447-1407 B.C.

Emphasis

The emphasis of the book of Genesis is on God; His creation of the world, His creation of man, man’s fall, and God’s grace.

Note: The Hebrew word *tôledôt*, which means “these are the generations of” introduces the individual generational record sections of the book. Some translations read, “These are the family records of.”

Outline

Many of the outlines of Genesis simply follow the flow of the generations of

families. I like the outline developed by J. Vernon McGee that combines major themes of Genesis along with the generational structure:*

Entrance of Sin on Earth, Chapters 1-11

- Creation, Genesis 1-2
 - Heaven & Earth
 - Earth Became Waste and Void
 - Re-creation


- Fall, Genesis 3-4
 - Roof of sin
 - Fruit of sin


- Flood (Deluge), Genesis 5-9
 - Book of Generations of Adam — Through Seth
 - Antediluvian Civilization — Cause of Flood and Construction of Ark
 - Judgment of Flood
 - Postdiluvian Civilization — After the Flood
 - Postdiluvian Life — New Beginning

- Tower of Babel and Confusion of Tongues
 - Ethnology — Sons of Noah
 - Tower of Babel

Preparation for the Coming of the Redeemer of All Mankind, Chapters 12-50

- Abraham (Faith)
- Development of faith by seven appearances of God
 - God's Call and Promise to Abram
 - Abram Returns to Land from Egypt
 - The First War

- 
- God Reveals Himself More Completely to Abram —
 - Unbelief of Sarai and Abram —
 - God Makes Covenant with Abraham (Abram Becomes Abraham)
 - God Reveals Coming Destruction of Sodom to Abraham
 - God Destroys Cities of the Plain
 - Abraham Repeats Sin at Gerar
 - Birth of Isaac
 - God Commands Abraham to Offer Isaac
 - Death of Sarah
-
- Isaac (the Beloved Son)
 - Abraham Sends Servant for Bride for Isaac
 - Death of Abraham
 - God Confirms Covenant to Isaac
-
- Jacob
 - Jacob and Rebekah Connive
 - Jacob Leaves Home
 - Jacob Arrives in Haran
 - Birth of Sons to Jacob
 - Jacob Flees from Haran
 - Crisis in Life of Jacob: At Peniel a Man Wrestles with Him
 - Jacob Meets Esau
 - Scandal in Jacob's Family: Dinah Defiled
 - Jacob Returns to Bethel
 - Family of Esau Which Becomes Nation of Edom
-
- Joseph (Suffering and Glory)
 - Jacob Dwells in Canaan
 - Sin and Shame of Judah
 - Humiliation in Egypt

- 
- Exaltation in Egypt,
 - Death and Burial of Jacob and Joseph

* Adapted from Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

What I Noticed Today (Genesis 1-3)

Genesis 1

In verse 1 are seven foundational truths upon which the balance of Scripture is based:

- God exists.
- God existed before the rest of the universe.
- God is the central character of the entire Scripture.
- God's creation is uniquely His.
- God is mysterious.

Note: In Hebrew the word for *God* is plural, yet the verb *created* is singular.

- God created heaven and earth *ex nihilo* (out of nothing).
- God is not dependent on the universe, but the universe is dependent on God because He created it.

In verses 2-31 the creation of the universe is described:

- The earth was formless and void. Darkness covered the watery depths.
- The Spirit of God hovered over the waters and said,
 - **Day 1.** Let there be light, and there was light. God saw the light was good, and separated the light from the darkness. He called the light "day," and the darkness "night." Evening came, then morning, the first day.
 - **Day 2.** Let there be an expanse between the waters, so God separated the water below the expanse from the water above the expanse. God called the expanse "sky." Evening came, then morning, the second day.
 - **Day 3.** Let the water under the sky be gathered, and let dry land appear. God called the dry land "earth," and the waters "seas." God saw that it was good. Then God said let the earth produce vegetation of every kind. God saw that it was good. Evening came, then morning, the third day.
 - **Day 4.** Let there be lights in the sky to separate the day from the night. God made two lights, the greater light to have dominion over the day and the smaller light to have dominion over the night. God saw that it was good. Evening came, then morning,

the fourth day.

- **Day 5.** Let the water swarm with living creatures and let birds fly across the sky. God saw that it was good. So God blessed them and told them to multiply. Evening came, then morning, the fifth day.
- **Day 6.** Let the earth produce living creatures. God made wildlife according to their kinds. God saw that it was good. Then God said let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness.

Note: In verse 26 the use of plural “Us” and “Our” indicates more than one entity is present. The fact that “image” and “likeness” are singular indicates they have the same essence.

- So God created man in His image, male and female He created them. God blessed them and told them to be fruitful and multiply. Man is to rule the sea, the sky, and the earth. Every plant and creature is given to man as food. God saw all that He had made, and it was **very** good. Evening came, then morning, the sixth day.

Genesis 2

In verses 1-3 the creation account continues:

- **Day 7.** So the heavens and earth and everything in them were completed God rested on the seventh day from all the work he had done. God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy.

In verses 4-25 the creation of man and woman is described:

Note: In verse 4, the Hebrew word *tôledôt*, translated as *records* (also translated *accounts* or *generations*) occurs 11 times in Genesis marking a new section.

- No shrub or plant had grown on the land for God had not made it rain and there was no man to work the ground.
- Then the Lord formed man out of the dust of the ground and breathed life into him.
- The Lord planted a garden in Eden, and placed the man there.
- The Lord caused trees good for food to grow in the garden, including the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
- A river went out from Eden to water the garden.
- From there the river divided into four rivers:
 - Pishon in the land of Havilah where there is gold, bdellium, and onyx.
 - Gihon in the land of Cush.
 - Tigris in the land of Assyria.

- Euphrates.
 - The Lord put the man in the garden and commanded him to work it.
- Note:** The Hebrew word translated *work* in verse 15 is *'abad* which means “to serve.” His work in the garden is to serve God.
- The man was told he could eat of anything in the garden except the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If he eats from this tree he will die.
 - God decided it was not good for man to be alone so He decided to make a helper to compliment the man.
 - God formed all the animals out of the ground and brought them to the man to be named.

Note: God did not breathe life into the animals, nor were they made in his image.

- God caused the man to enter a deep sleep and took one of the man’s ribs and from the rib made the woman.
- The man described the woman as bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh, therefore she will be called “woman.”

Note: The Hebrew word for man *'ish* and the word for woman is the feminine form *'ishshah*. Woman was made, not to be subservient to man, but a compliment to man because man was not complete without woman.

- This is why a man leaves his mother and father and bonds with his wife and they become one flesh.
- They were naked but were not ashamed.

Genesis 3

In verses 1-7 the temptation and fall of man is described:

- The serpent was the most cunning of all the animals that God had made.
- The serpent spoke to Eve questioning what God had told her. Eve correctly repeated God’s instruction not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil or they would die. But she went beyond God’s instruction when she said God said not to even touch the tree.
- The serpent caused Eve to question God’s command, tempting her. Eve took the fruit and ate, and she gave some to her husband **who was there**, and he ate.

Note: Often overlooked is the fact that Adam was there when the serpent was tempting Eve. Adam didn’t correct her when she added to God’s word, and he didn’t stop her as she was being tempted.

- Then both of them had their eyes opened, and they knew they were naked, so they sewed fig leaves together to make loincloths for



themselves.

In verses 8-24 the consequences of Adam and Eve's sin is revealed:

- Adam and Eve heard God walking in the garden and they hid from Him.
- So God called out to them.
- Adam said he had heard God and hid because he was afraid, because he was naked.
- God asked who told you, you were naked, and did you eat from the tree I commanded you not to eat from?
- Adam then blamed God for giving him the woman who gave him the fruit.
- God turned to Eve and asked her what she had done.
- Eve then blamed the serpent for deceiving her.
- God turned to the serpent and cursed him. He was condemned to crawling on his belly all his days.
- God cursed the serpent further saying there would be hostility between her seed and your seed.
- God cursed Eve saying she would bear children in anguish. You desire will be for your husband and he will rule over you.
- God turned to Adam and cursed him because he had listened to Eve, ignoring His command, to a life of hard labor to produce the food they needed to eat.
- Finally, God informed them they would indeed die and return to the dust from which they came.
- Adam named his wife Eve because she was the mother of all the living.
- God made clothing for Adam and Eve out of animal skins.


Note: Adam and Eve had attempted to cover their sin with fig leaves. God made skins for them, which required the death and shed blood of animals. It was a foreshadowing of the animal sacrifices required by God for sin.

- Then the Lord God said, "Since man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil, he must not reach out and also eat from the tree of life, eat, and live forever."

Note: The word in verse 22 translated *God* is in the plural form which is why the plural particle "Us" is used.

- So the Lord God sent him away from the garden to work the land.
- God stationed cherubim and the flaming sword at the entrance of the garden to guard the way to the tree of life.

Some thoughts for further consideration:

- 
- *Adam and Eve were supposed to dominate all the animals of the garden, yet they allowed the serpent to dominate and trick them into committing sin.*
 - *In Genesis 3:7-8 Adam and Eve realize they have sinned, they cover up, and they hide from God.*
 - *Mankind hasn't changed much. We tend to do the same thing today when we sin!*

What I Noticed Today (Genesis 4-6)

Genesis 4

In verses 1-16 Adam and Eve begin their family:

- Eve conceived and gave birth to Cain, “with the Lord’s help.”
- Then she gave birth to Abel.
- Abel became a shepherd, while Cain worked the ground.
- In the course of time Cain presented an offering of his crops to the Lord.

Note: “In the course of time” suggests that quite some time may have passed. The Law of Moses provided for both grain and animal offerings to God.

- Abel presented his offering to the Lord from the firstborn of his flock.
- The Lord approved of Abel’s offering, but not of Cain’s and this made Cain angry and despondent.
- The Lord spoke to Cain saying if he did right he would be accepted, but if you do not do right, sin is crouching at your door, and you must rule over it (sin).

Note: God is telling Cain he needs to repent and do right. It seems the issue here is Cain’s jealousy of Abel with Abel’s offering being accepted, while his was rejected.

- Cain invited Abel into the field and attacked and killed him there.
- The Lord questioned Cain about Abel’s whereabouts, but Cain lied to the Lord.
- The Lord then confronted Cain directly saying Abel’s blood cries out to Him from the ground.
- The Lord then cursed Cain saying he the ground would never be productive for him again, that he would be a restless wanderer the rest of his life.
- Cain pleaded with God saying the punishment was too harsh that anyone who found him would surely kill him.
- The Lord protected Cain by placing a mark on his forehead warning anyone that might kill Cain they would suffer seven times the vengeance.
- Then Cain left the Lord’s presence and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

In verses 17-26 the line of Cain is described:

- Cain's wife conceived and gave birth to Enoch. Cain built a city and named it after his son.

Note: God had commanded Cain to be a wanderer, so building and living in a city was another act of disobedience to God.

- Enoch fathered Irad who fathered Mehujael, who fathered Methushael, who fathered Lamech.
- Lamech had two wives; one named Adah, and the other named Zillah.
- Adah bore Jabal who became the father of nomadic herdsman. His brother, Jubal, was the father of all who played musical instruments.
- Zillah bore Tubal-Cain who became a metal worker.
- Lamech told his wives he had killed a man in self-defense for wounding him and a young man for striking him. He claimed since God avenged Cain 7 times, God would avenge him 77 times.
- Adam was intimate with Eve and she gave birth to Seth, who she said, was a replacement from God for Abel whom Cain killed.
- Seth fathered Enosh.
- At this time people starting calling on the name of Yahweh.

Note: "Yahweh" is God's personal name (Exodus 3:15).

Genesis 5

In verses 1-32 the line of Adam's descendants from Seth through Shem, Ham, and Japheth are described:

- Adam fathered a son in his likeness and named him Seth, and he fathered other sons and daughters. Then he died.
- Seth fathered Enosh, and other sons and daughter. Then he died.
- Enosh fathered Kenan, and other sons and daughters. Then he died.
- Kenan father Mahalalel, and other sons and daughters. Then he died.
- Mahalalel fathered Jared, and other sons and daughters. Then he died.
- Jared fathered Enoch, and other sons and daughters. Then he died.
- Enoch fathered Methuselah and fathered other sons and daughters. Enoch walked with God, then he was not there because God took him.

Note: The lifespans of each succeeding generation decreased steadily from Adam through Enoch.

- Methuselah fathered Lamech, and had other sons and daughters. Then he died.

Note: This is not the same Enoch who was the son of Cain mentioned in Genesis 4:17, or the same Lamech mentioned in 4:18.

- Lamech fathered Noah, and had others sons and daughters. Lamech hoped Noah would bring relief from the curse of God on the ground. Then he died.
- Noah fathered Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

Note: The repetition of the phrase, “then he died” is a reminder of God’s curse (Genesis 3:19) upon mankind: the wages of sin is death.

Genesis 6

Verses 1-4 serve as a transition from chapter 5’s description of the lines of Adam’s descendants to God’s first great judgement up the earth.

- Mankind multiplied on the earth, and daughters were born to them.
- The “sons of God” saw they were beautiful and took any they chose as wives.
- The Lord cursed them, saying His spirit would not remain with man forever, because they are corrupt. Therefore, their days will be 120 years.

Note: There is great controversy among scholars over the correct interpretation of these verses, and in particular what is meant by the phrase “sons of God.” There are three positions as to the meaning:

- They are heavenly beings.
- They are kings or men of high social standing.
- They are men from the Godly line of Seth.

Note: Among conservative evangelical scholars the consensus is the “sons of God” were descendants of the Godly line of Seth, and the “daughters of mankind” were the daughters of the line of Cain. The union between these lines resulted in the total corruption of mankind (2 Corinthians 6:14).

- Nephilim were on the earth when the sons of God took the daughters of mankind who bore them children.

Note: Verse 4 is another confusing verse to interpret. The question is who are the Nephilim and what is their interaction with the sons of God and the daughters of mankind? The word “Nephilim” is translated “fallen ones” and could mean either spiritually/morally fallen, or angels fallen from heaven.

In verses 5-8 God passes judgement on mankind:

- When the Lord saw that mankind’s wickedness had spread, and his mind was on evil all the time, the Lord regretted that He had made man and was grieved in His heart.

Note: If your translation says “God repented” it does not mean God changed His mind, it means He was sorrowful or regretful.

- Noah found favor in the sight of the Lord.

Genesis 6:9-8:22

This section contains the account of Noah building the ark, the great flood that God sent as judgement upon the earth, and Noah’s worship after the flood.

In verses 9-22 God commissions Noah to build the ark:

- Noah was a righteous man who walked with God. He was blameless among his contemporaries.
- Noah fathered three sons; Shen, Ham, and Japheth.
- God saw how corrupt the earth was.
- God told Noah He would destroy every creature because the earth is full of wickedness.
- God told Noah to build an ark and gave him specific instructions for its size and form.
- God told Noah He would bring a flood on the earth that would kill every creature.
- But, said God, I will make a covenant with you, your family, and their families that along with the animals in the ark you will be saved.
- God told Noah to gather all the food they would need for themselves and for the animals.
- And Noah did exactly as God had instructed him.

Note: The term “covenant” that God made with Noah is like a treaty or a contract. The Noahic covenant is God’s third covenant with mankind. The first was God’s covenant made with man in the garden of Eden (Genesis 1-28-30). The second was the Adamic covenant made with Adam after the fall of man (Genesis 3:14-19).

Some thoughts for further consideration:

- *There are some who believe that man is born good, and learns evil. But the account of Adam and Eve, Cain, and the subsequent generations who became so evil that God determined to wipe them out speaks to the fallen, sinful nature of man.*
- *Noah was the only righteous man on earth who walked with God. He was the one man who had a pure heart amidst so many filled with evil intentions. What an incredible testimony!*

What I Noticed Today (Genesis 7-9)

Genesis 7

In verses 1-10 God commands Noah and his family to enter the ark in anticipation of the flood:

- God tells Noah and his family to enter the ark because they alone are righteous in this generation.
- Noah is to take seven pairs of all the clean animals, and two pair of all the unclean animals into the ark with him.
- God says, in seven days He will make it rain 40 days and 40 nights upon the earth, and wipe out every living thing He had made.
- Noah did everything God commanded him.
- Noah was 600 years old when he and his family entered the ark.
- The rain started seven days later.

Note: The ark and the floodwaters are a picture of God's salvation through Christ and His judgement against sin.

In verses 11-24 the flood of judgement came:

- Noah was 600 years old when the flood came on the seventeenth day of the second month.
- The water came from two directions: the watery depths burst open, and rain fell from the sky for 40 days and 40 nights.

Note: It had not rained on earth prior to this.

- Noah and his wife along with Shem, Ham, and Japheth with their wives were in the ark along with all the animals, just as God had commanded them.
- Then the Lord shut them in the ark.
- The water continued for 40 days and the ark floated on the surface of the water.
- The water surged even higher until even the mountain tops were covered by more than 20 feet.
- Just as God said, every creature on dry land perished; mankind, livestock, creatures that crawl, and birds.
- Only Noah and those with him in the ark were saved.
- The water surged on the earth 150 days (40 days of rain plus 110 more

days).

Genesis 8

In verses 1-14 the flood waters recede:

- God remembered Noah and caused a wind to blow over the earth causing the floodwaters to recede.
- The rain and the water from the watery depths ceased.
- After 150 days the ark came to rest on the seventeenth day of the seventh month on Mount Ararat.
- The water continued to recede until in the tenth month the tops of the mountains became visible.
- After 40 days Noah opened a window in the ark and sent out a raven. It flew back and forth until the waters had dried up.
- Then Noah sent out a dove, but it returned because it could find no place to rest.
- Noah waited seven days and sent the dove out again. This time when the dove returned in the evening it had an olive leaf in her beak.
- Noah waited another seven days and sent the dove out again, but this time the dove did not return.
- In the 601st year, in the first month, on the first day of the month, the water had receded from the earth.
- Noah removed the cover from the ark and saw the ground was drying.
- By the 27th day of the second month the ground was dry.

In verses 15-22 Noah leaves the ark:

- Then God told Noah to come out of the ark with his family and all the animals.
- God commanded them to spread over the earth, be fruitful, and multiply.
- So Noah and his family and all the animals came out of the ark in groups.
- Then Noah built an altar to God and took some of every clean animal and bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.
- When the Lord smelled the pleasing aroma of the burnt offerings, He promised never again to curse the ground because of man's sinful nature, and to never again strike down every living creature.

Note: The reference to God smelling the pleasing aroma means He accepted their sacrifice. Elsewhere, God did not smell the aroma and rejected the sacrifice (Leviticus 26:31).

Genesis 9

In verses 1-17 God established a covenant with Noah:

- God blessed Noah and his sons and told them to be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth.
- Every living thing is under your authority.
- Every living creature along with green plants will be your food, except you must not eat meat with its lifeblood.
- Every animal and every man that shed the blood of another man was to die. Whoever shed man's blood, his blood will be shed by man, for man is made in the image of God (v. 6).

Note: God established the superiority of man over animals. A man's life is held in high regard because he is made in the image of God. Therefore, there must be a penalty for the man who sheds another man's blood.

- Then God said he was confirming His covenant with Noah, his family, and his descendants, and all the animals that came out of the ark. Never again, said God, will I destroy every creature with a flood.
- The sign of the covenant will be the rainbow in the sky. Whenever I (God) form the clouds and the rainbow appears, I will remember the everlasting covenant between God and all the living creatures.

Note: The Hebrew word for rainbow *qešet* is the same word used for a battle bow. Elsewhere in the Old Testament, God brought judgement using military terms like bow and arrow.

In verses 18-29 Noah prophecies about his family:

- Noah's sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth who came out of the ark populated the whole earth.
- Noah, a man of the soil, planted a vineyard.
- He drank some of the wine, got drunk, and fell asleep uncovered in his tent.
- Ham, the father of Canaan, saw his father naked and told his brothers.

Note: It seems Ham came upon his father by accident, so the issue was not in seeing his father naked, but in his motive for telling his brothers about what happened.

- Shem and Japheth took a cloak, and turning away so they couldn't see him, they covered their father.
- When Noah awoke and learned what his sons had done he said:
 - Canaan will be cursed. He will be the lowest of slaves to his brothers.

- Praise the Lord the God of Shem. Canaan will be his slave.
- God will extend Japheth, he will dwell in the tents of Shem, and Canaan will be his slave.

Note: Canaan is not being punished for the actions of his father, Ham. God is bringing a prophetic revelation regarding each of Noah's sons. Thus, the curse of Noah against Canaan is a prophetic statement from God as to the future of the Canaanite tribe.

Note: The phrase “Japheth will dwell in the tents of Shem” means they will dwell together, not that Japheth will take away the tents of Shem.

- Noah lived 350 years after the flood, and was the third oldest man in the scripture living 950 years, and then he died.

Some thoughts for further consideration:

- *Noah was saved because God judged him to be one righteous man that lived upon the earth. Yet after the flood, Noah got drunk like the pagans God had wiped out.*
- *The sin nature of man continued despite God's judgement upon the earth.*

What I Noticed Today

(Genesis 10-12)

Genesis 10

Chapter 10 is known as the table of nations, tracing the 70 descendants of Noah through his sons Japheth (14), Shem (26), and Ham (30).

Note: The table of nations is not what we commonly call a vertical genealogy tracing one descendent to the next. Rather, it is a horizontal genealogy tracing tribes who were aligned in specific territories.

In verses 2-5 the fourteen sons of Japheth are listed. They were coastland people (meaning they were close to a seacoast). They also had their own languages.

Note: Tarshish (v. 4) is Spain, Kittim (v. 4) is Cyprus.

Note: The fact that they had their own languages suggests this description took place after the Tower of Babel (chapter 11). These tribes were all gathered in northern territories.

In verses 6-20 the thirty descendants of Ham are listed.

Note: The tribes of Ham's descendants lived in the eastern and southern territory of Mesopotamia (northern Africa).

Note: Cush (v. 6) is Ethiopia, Mizraim (v. 6) is Egypt, Put (v. 6) is Libya, Canaan (v. 6) is Palestine, Asshur (v. 11) is Assyria.

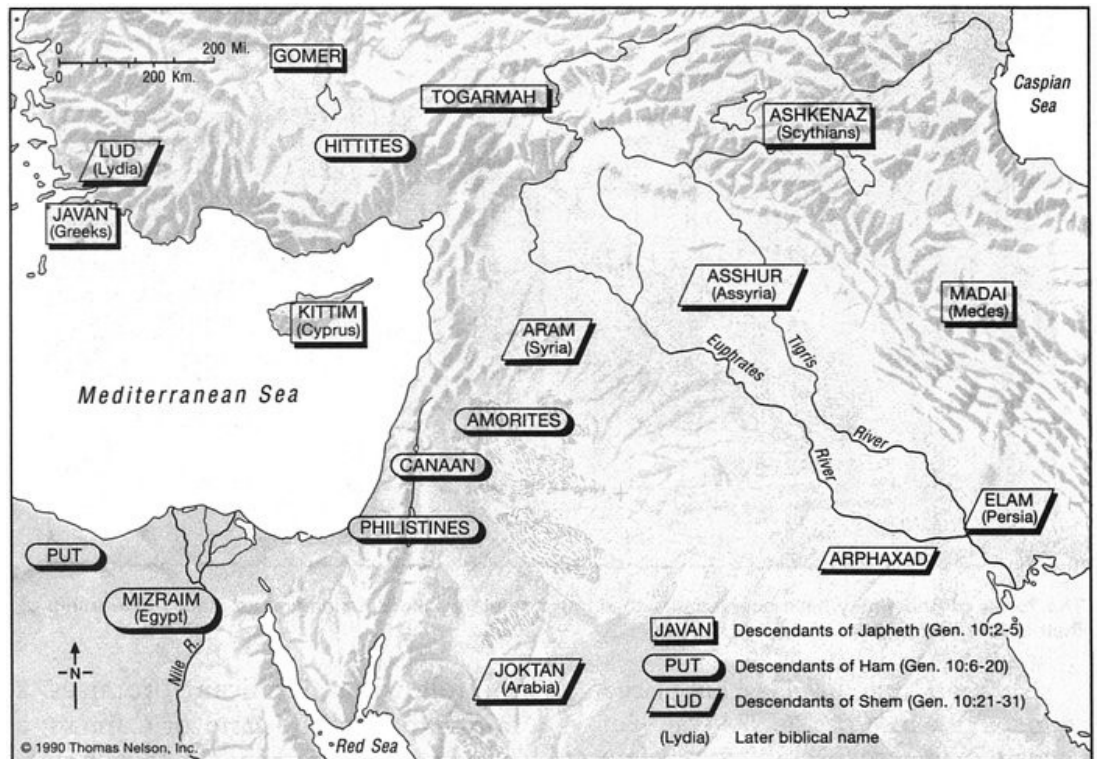
Note: Verse 8 inserts the story of Nimrod, a powerful hunter who founded Babylon, Nineveh, and Assyria. The language also changes from "these are the sons of" to "fathered."

Note: Verses 13-14 describe Mizraim (also translated Egypt). They lived in territories from north Africa to Crete.

Note: Verses 15-20 describe the Canaanite tribes who lived in the Promised Land.

In verses 21-31 the 26 descendants of Shem are listed.

Note: The tribes of Shem's descendants lived in the eastern hill country and desert (modern day Arabian Peninsula). Aram (v. 22) is Syria and Mesopotamia.



Genesis 11

In verses 1-9 the nations are dispersed at Babel:

Note: The dispersion described in the Table of Nations in chapter 10 is likely a result of the account recorded in Genesis 11:1-9).

- The people of the world all spoke one language.
- People migrated to the valley of Shinar from the east.
- They planned to use oven-fired bricks and asphalt for mortar to build a city and a tower, to make a name for themselves, lest they be scattered over the earth.

Note: This plan not to disperse was in direct opposition to God’s command to “fill the whole earth” (Genesis 9:1).

- God came down and looked to see what they were doing.
- God viewed their unity as the source of their disobedience.
- So the LORD said, “Come, let US confuse their language.”

Note: The word translated “LORD” is Jehovah, the proper name of God, and the “Us” is first person plural. In some translations when Jehovah, the proper name of the LORD is used, it is placed in all capital letters.

- The Lord scattered the people over the whole earth and they stopped building the city.
- It is called Babylon, because it is there the Lord confused their language,

and scattered them over the earth.

In verses 10-26 the family records of the descendants of Shem through to Abram are recorded.

Note: This is a vertical genealogy establishing the link between Noah, who was blessed God, through Shem, and on down to Abram who was also blessed by God.

In verses 27-32 the family records of Terah, who was the son of Nahor, are recorded:

- Terah had three sons: Abram, Nahor, and Haran, and Haran fathered Lot.
- Terah took Abram, his grandson Lot, and Abraham's wife, Sarai, and journeyed toward Canaan, but they stopped and settled in Haran.

Note: We know from Joshua 24:2 that Terah was an idolater who worshipped other gods.

Genesis 12

In verses 1-9 God calls Abram:

- The Lord called out to Abram and told him to go with your relatives and leave your father's land.
- Go to the land I will show you and I will make you a great nation, and bless you.
- I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you.
- So Abram went as the Lord commanded.
- At 75 years old Abram took his wife Sarai and his nephew Lot and all their possessions and set out for Canaan.
- Abram arrived at Shechem, by the oak of Moreh.
- God appeared to Abram and said He would give this land to Abram's offspring.
- Abram built an altar to the Lord.

Note: In verses 1-3 God's blessing is dependent on Abram's obedience. God gives Abram two imperative commands (leave, and go), then you will be blessed. Abram didn't know where he was to go. He simply obeyed in faith.

Note: Shechem is north central Israel by Mount Ebal.

Note: Verse 7a is the first of three times God appeared to Abram (see also Genesis 17:1, and 18:1).

Note: Verse 7b is the first of four altars Abram built to the Lord (see also Genesis 12:8, 13:8, and 22:9).

- From Shechem, Abram travelled to the hill country east of Bethel, and built another altar to the Lord, and called out to the Lord there.
- Then Abram journeyed in stages to the Negev (a desert south of Canaan).

Note: Verse 8 this is the first of three times Abram is recorded as calling out to the Lord (see also Genesis 13:4, and 21:3).

In verses 10-20 Abram journeys to Egypt:

- There was famine in the land (of Canaan) because of little rain so Abram took his family and went to Egypt.
- When they were about to enter Egypt he told Sarai, because she was beautiful, if the people in Egypt thought they were married they would kill him, to have her.
- Therefore, he asked her to say they were brother and sister.
- When they entered Egypt the Egyptians did see that Sarai was beautiful and Pharaoh took her to be in his household (harem).
- Pharaoh treated Abram well because of Sarai, and he became very rich because of her.
- But the Lord struck Pharaoh and his house with severe plagues because of Sarai.
- Pharaoh confronted Abram with the truth; that Sarai was in fact Abram's wife.
- Then Pharaoh sent Abram and Sarai away with all their possessions.

Note: Sarai was Abram's half-sister (see Genesis 20:12). In that culture, someone who wanted to marry Sarai would have to negotiate with her living male relative (Abram) to secure permission to marry her.

Some thoughts for additional consideration:

- *In Genesis 12 God called Abram out of an idolatrous family (Abram's father Terah did not follow God, see Joshua 24:2). Abram responded to God's call in faith, and he obeyed God's instructions. He received the promised blessing. Right afterward his faith was tested during the famine when he went to Egypt.*
- *The same sequence often occurs in our lives today. 1) We are called from sin, and we follow God in faith. 2) We obey God and we receive promised blessings. 3) Our faith is tested.*

What I Noticed Today

(Genesis 13-15)

Genesis 13

In verses 1-18 Abram leaves Egypt and separates from his nephew Lot:

- Having been ordered by Pharaoh to leave Egypt, Abram took his wife, Sarai, and his nephew, Lot, and all their possessions and journeyed in stages back to the Negev in the Promised Land, to the place where he had built the altar to the Lord.
- Abram called on the name of the Lord there.

Note: Although richer in terms of material wealth, Abram had returned to the exact spot where he had worshipped God before going to Egypt.

- Lot also had tents, herds, and flocks.
- The land could not support them both because they had so much.
- There was quarreling between Abram's herdsmen and Lot's herdsmen.
- At this time Canaanites and Perizzites lived in the land.

Note: Since the Canaanites and Perizzites had already settled in the land, Abram and Lot struggled to find food and water to support their herds.

Abram did not want quarreling among them since they were relatives.

Note: The Hebrew word for quarreling is *merbâh*. Quarreling occurred again with Moses and the Israelites when they complained about the lack of water in *Meribah* (Exodus 17:1-7).

- Abram suggest they separate and find new lands to live in.
- Abram magnanimously offered for Lot to choose first.

Note: As the older leader, Abram had the right to choose first, but he yielded to his nephew Lot, trusting in God's promise.

- Lot looked toward the Jordan Valley as far as Zoar and saw it had plenty of water like the Lord's garden and Egypt.
- This was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.
- So Lot chose the entire Jordan Valley for himself.
- Lot journeyed east and set up his tents near Sodom.
- The men of Sodom were evil, sinning greatly against the Lord.

Note: We'll learn more about the sin of the people of Sodom in chapter 19.

- After Lot left, the Lord told Abram to look in every direction (north, south, east, and west), and promised to give this land to him and his offspring forever.
- The Lord also promised to make Abram's offspring as numerous as the dust of the earth.
- Then the Lord told Abram to get up and go walk around the entire land.
- So Abram moved his family and went to live at the oaks of Mamre at Hebron, and he built an altar to the Lord there.

Note: The conflict between Abram and Lot demonstrates Lot choosing by sight, by man's standards, while Abram, in faith, trusted God to fulfill His promise to him.

Note: The oaks of Mamre are about two miles from Hebron, and Hebron is about 22 miles south of Jerusalem.

Genesis 14

In verses 1-16 Abram had to rescue his nephew Lot:

- In those day four kings from the north (Amraphel, Arioch, Chedorlaomer, Tidal) waged war against the kings of the Jordan Valley: Bera, king of Sodom; Birsha, king of Gomorrah; Shinab, king of Zeboiim; and the king of Bela (also known as Zoar).
- The kings of the Jordan Valley were defeated and paid tribute to Chedorlaomer (king of Persia) for 12 years, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled.
- In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings with him came and defeated Rephaim, the Zumin, the Emim, and the Horites in the mountains of Seir as far as the wilderness of Elparan.
- Then they came back and invaded Kadesh and defeated the Amalekites, and the Amorites.
- Then the kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Zoar came out to do battle against king Chedorlaomer, Tidal, Amraphel, and Arioch in the Valley of Siddom.
- The Valley of Siddom was full of asphalt pits.
- The four kings of the north defeated the five kings of the south and as they ran some of the men fell into the asphalt pits, and others retreated to the mountains.
- The four kings of the north plundered the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. And they took Lot and his possessions.
- One of the survivors of the battle came and told Abram about his nephew

Lot being captured.

Note: Verse 13 Abram the Hebrew. This is the first reference to Hebrew in the Scripture.

- Abram assembled a force of 318 trained men, born in his household, and pursued the four kings of the north as far as Dan.
- He attacked them at night and pursued them as far north as Hobah north of Damascus (in Syria).
- Abram was victorious and brought back all the goods and his nephew Lot, the family and the other captives.

In verses 17-24 Abram is blessed by Melchizedek:

- After Abram returned from defeating Chedorlaomer and the kings of the north the king of Sodom went out to meet him in the Valley of Shaveh (probably east of Jerusalem).
- Melchizedek, the king of Salem (another name for Jerusalem), also came out to meet them with bread and wine. He was a priest to the Most High God.
- Melchizedek blessed Abram saying God had handed over his enemies to him.

Note: Melchizedek means *king of righteousness* and Salem means *peace*.

- Abram gave him a tenth of everything (a tithe).
- The king of Sodom (Bera) told Abram to give him the people, but keep the possessions for himself.
- Abram swore before God that he would take nothing from Sodom so that no one could say they had made Abram rich, but the men could take their share.

Note: The priesthood of Melchizedek was a higher order than the priesthood of Levi, because Abram paid tithes to Melchizedek (Hebrews 7:4-10), and Levi descended from him.


Genesis 15

In verses 1-21 God makes a covenant with Abraham:

- The word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, telling him not to be afraid, his reward would be very great.

Note: The word of the Lord came to people either in dreams or in visions. This vision demonstrates Abram's role as a prophet of God.

- Abram responded what can you give me since I am childless, and my heir is Eliezer of Damascus, a slave born in his house.

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- The Lord promised Abram he would have his own children, and his offspring would be as numerous as the stars.
 - Abram believed the Lord and the Lord credited it to him as righteousness.

Note: God recognized Abram as righteous *because* of his faith in God's promise.

- The Lord said I am Yahweh who brought you out from the Ur of Chaldeans to possess this land.
- Abram asked how will I know that I will possess it?
- The Lord told Abram to get a 3-year old cow, a 3-year old goat, a 3-year old ram, a turtledove, and a pigeon.
- Abram brought them to the Lord and Abram split the cow, the goat, and the ram down the middle and laid the pieces opposite each other.
- As the sun was setting a deep sleep came over Abram, and suddenly a great darkness and terror came upon him.
- **Note:** The “deep sleep” is the same term used for the “deep sleep” that came over Adam when God took his rib to make woman.
- Then the Lord told Abram your offspring will be foreigners in a land for 400 years. During that time, they will be enslaved and oppressed.
- However, I (the Lord) will judge that nation and your people will go out with many possessions. But you will live in peace and be buried at a ripe old age.
- In the fourth generation (after the 400 years) they will return here for the iniquity of the Amorites has not reached its full measure.

Note: Apparently each generation was approximately 100 years: 4 generations covers 400 years.


- When the sun had set and it was dark a smoking firepot and flaming torch appeared and passed between the divided animals.
- On that day the Lord made the covenant with Abram promising to give the land from the brook of Egypt to the Euphrates river to his descendants.

Note: In making this covenant God was the only party making a promise so its promise was assured.

Note: The Israelites have never possessed this land in its entirety, but they will when Christ returns.

Some thoughts for further consideration:

- *Lot gave in to the temptation of worldly desires when he chose to leave Abram and live in the Jordan Valley near Sodom. Even after being*



captured, led away, and eventually being rescued, he went right back to living in Sodom.

- *Abram's faith developed over time. He lacked faith when he left the Promised Land because of the famine. He lacked faith when he had Sarai lie about who she was to protect him. But in faith he trusted God to fulfill His promise for the land. In faith he trusted God to give him children to possess the land and as a result. he was judged righteous by God. His faith in God saved him.*

What I Noticed Today

(Genesis 16-18)

Genesis 16-22:19

Through a series of events Abram's patience and faith are tested while he waits for God's promises to be fulfilled.

Genesis 16

In verses 1-16 Hagar, the Egyptian slave, gives birth to Ishmael:

- After living in the land of Canaan for 10 years without having children, Sarai decides to build a family by giving her slave Hagar to Abram as his wife.

Note: Hagar was probably acquired while Abram and Sarai were in Egypt (Genesis 12:16).

- Abram agreed to Sarai's plan, took Hagar as a wife, impregnated her, and she became pregnant.
- When she found out she was pregnant she treated Sarai with contempt.

Note: Abram was 85 and Sarai was 75 years old when this happened. Hagar was probably much younger, perhaps a teenager.

- Sarai blamed Abram for the problem with Hagar, because Abram had done nothing about the way Hagar treated Sarai.
- Abram said the slave is yours, do what you want with her.
- Sarai mistreated Hagar so much that Hagar ran away.
- An angel of the Lord found her by the spring on the way to Shur.

Note: By reaching Shur, Hagar may have hoped to connect with a caravan travelling back to Egypt.

- The angel asked her where she was from and where was she going.
- Hagar was only able to reply she had run away from her mistress Sarai.
- The angel commanded Hagar to return to her mistress and submit to her mistreatment. In return, the angel promised God would bless her by multiplying her offspring.
- The angel said she would have a boy, who she would name Ishmael (which means "God hears") because God has heard her affliction. He will be wild with his hand against everyone and everyone's hand will be against him. He will live at odds with all his brothers.
- **Note:** Ishmael became father of the Arab nations, and the

prophecy of the angel of the Lord is true. It was Joseph, Sarai's great-grandson, who was taken into Egypt by Ishmaelite's (Genesis 37:28).

- Hagar called the Lord who spoke to her, "The God who sees" or "The God who sees me." She named the place Beer Lahai Roi ("well of the living One who sees me" Genesis 24:62).
- So Hagar gave birth, and Abram named the boy Ishmael. Abram was 86 years old when Ishmael was born.

Genesis 17

Chapter 17 describes God's covenant with Abram, and the sign of the covenant; circumcision.

In verses 1-8 God establishes His covenant with Abram:

- Abram was 99 years old and God appeared to him. God said He was God Almighty (El Shaddai), and Abram should live in His presence and be blameless. He will establish His covenant with Abram and multiply him greatly.

Note: This is thirteen years after Ishmael's birth.

- Abram fell facedown as God spoke to him.
- Describing the covenant, God said:
 - My covenant is with you.
 - You will become the father of many nations.
 - Your name will no longer be Abram ("Exalted Father"), but will now be Abraham ("Father of a multitude").
 - I will make you extremely fruitful.
 - Many nations and kings will come from you.
 - My covenant is between Me and you, and your offspring.
 - It is an everlasting covenant to be your God, and the God of your offspring.
 - I will give you the land of Canaan as an eternal possession.

In verses 9-14 the sign of the covenant is circumcision:

- God also told Abraham the sign of the covenant with Abraham and his offspring with God is circumcision of every male 8-days old or older.
- This covenant was to include every slave born in their household, and any foreigner purchased with money.
- Any male not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin will be cut-off from the people, because he has broken the covenant with God.

In verses 15-22 God renames Sarai and promises to bless her:

- Continuing, God told Abraham, Sarai's name was now Sarah (both names are variations of "princess").
- God promised to bless her and give her a son by Abraham, and she will produce nations; kings of people will come from her.
- Abraham fell facedown laughing to himself at the thought of Sarah giving birth since she was 90-years old. (Abraham had assumed his descendants would come through Ishmael.)
- God reassured Abraham saying, no Sarah will give you a son and you will name him Isaac.
- And My everlasting covenant will be with Isaac.
- As for Ishmael, God said He would certainly bless him, make him fruitful and multiply him greatly.
- Ishmael will father twelve tribal leaders and He will make him into a great nation.
- But, said God, I will confirm My covenant with Sarah who will bear Isaac this time next year.
- Then God withdrew from Abraham.

Note: God made promises to bless Ishmael, but made no covenant regarding him.

In verses 23-26 Abraham obeyed God's commands regarding circumcision:

- Then Abraham took Ishmael, and all the male slaves either born in his house or purchased by him, and circumcised them that day.
- Abraham was 99 years old that day, and Ishmael was 13 years old.

Genesis 18

In verses 1-15 the promise of God's covenant is confirmed to Abraham:

- The Lord appears to Abraham at the oaks of Mamre in the heat of the day.


Note: This is the Lord's third appearance to Abraham (12:7, 17:1, and 18:1).

- Abraham looked up and three men were standing before him.

Note: The three men would be the Lord and two angels (Genesis 19:1).

- He ran up to meet them and bowing to the ground asked them to stay and refresh themselves, and eat.

Note: When Abraham spoke to them he said "My Lord" using the plural form of the Hebrew word *'adonai*, which can also mean God.

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- They agreed and Abraham rushed to tell Sarah to make bread with three measures of flour, while he ran to the herd and got a young calf and had it prepared.


Note: Three measures of flour is 21 quarts, enough for several very large loaves of bread.

- Then Abraham took the curds, and milk, and the calf that had been prepared, and served them while they ate under a tree.
- The Lord said I will come back to you in about a year's time, and Sarah will have a son.
- Sarah had been listening to them at the entrance to their tent, and laughed to herself thinking she had past the age of bearing children.
- The Lord asked why did Sarah laugh? Is anything impossible for God.
- Sarah denied laughing, but the Lord replied you did laugh.

In verses 16-33 Abraham intercedes with the Lord on behalf of the people in Sodom:

- The men got up and were leaving when the Lord said to the angels, should I hide what I am about to do from Abraham?
- The Lord said He had chosen Abraham so 1) all nations would be blessed through Abraham, and 2) he would command his children to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is just and right.
- The outcry of the people against the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah had come up to the Lord so He will see if the outcry is true.
- The men turned from there and went toward Sodom, and Abraham remained standing before the Lord.
- Abraham asked if the Lord would sweep away the city if there were 50 righteous? Would you kill the righteous with the wicked? The Lord replied He would spare the city if there were 50 who were righteous.
- Abraham petitioned the Lord again, what if there are 45 righteous?
- What if there are 40 righteous?
- What if there are 30 righteous?
- What if there are 20 righteous?
- What if there are 10 righteous?
- When the Lord finished speaking with Abraham He departed and Abraham went to his place.

Note: Verses 22-33 are an example of petitionary prayer in which Abraham petitions the Lord six times to spare the righteous in the city of Sodom.



Some thoughts for further consideration:

- *We tend to be like Sarai and Abram still today. We believe God, but our faith is weak so we come up with a plan to help God out. We fail to lead in our households. When our plans don't work out as we had hoped, we tend to blame others (including God) rather than taking responsibility for our poor choices!*
- *God was gracious in His dealing with Abraham and Sarah, just as He was merciful in His judgement of the sin of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah.*

What I Noticed Today

(Genesis 19-21)

Genesis 19

In verses 1-29 God's judgement is poured out on Sodom and Gomorrah:


- The two angels entered Sodom in the evening and came across Lot sitting at the city gate.

Note: Lot sitting at the city gate means he was a judge who oversaw business transactions, settled disputes, and gave advice to the people of the city.

- When Lot saw the angels he got up, met them, bowed down to them, and invited them to refresh themselves, eat, and spend the night at his house.
- At first the angels declined Lot's invitation, but he insisted so they joined him.
- He prepared a feast for them and they ate.
- Before they went to bed, the men of the city surrounded the house and demanded Lot send the men out so they could have sex with them.
- Lot met the men outside the house and urged them not to do this because the men were under his protection, and this was evil.
- Instead, Lot offered the men his two virgin daughters.
- The men of the city were angered by Lot's refusal, and attempted to push their way inside the house.
- The angels of the Lord, pulled Lot back into the house and shut the door. Then they blinded the men outside.
- The angels told Lot to gather all his family members and leave because the Lord had sent them to destroy the city.
- So Lot went and spoke to his sons-in-law who were to marry his daughters to leave the city, but they thought he was joking about the Lord's judgement.

Note: Lot's virgin daughters were engaged. In Asian culture betrothal or engagement was like being married except no sexual intercourse was allowed until after the wedding.

- At daybreak the angels urged Lot to leave, but he hesitated so the angels grabbed them by the hands and led them out of the city.
- Once outside the city the angels told them to run for their lives and not look back, because they could not destroy the city until Lot was safe.

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- The angels agreed to let Lot run to a nearby city (Zoar). The sun had come up by the time they reached Zoar.
 - The Lord rained out burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah, demolishing the cities and the plains around them.
 - But Lot's wife looked back and became a pillar of salt.
 - Early in the morning Abraham was at the place where he had met the Lord and saw the smoke coming from Sodom and Gomorrah.
 - God had remembered Abraham's request (Genesis 18:23-32) and saved the righteous (Lot and his family) out of the city.

Note: There are some parallels between Noah and Lot. Both men were considered righteous. God miraculously saved both of their families from a sinful world. Both Noah and Lot got drunk on wine which led to further difficulties.

In verses 30-38 is a description of the origin of the tribe of Moab and Ammon:

- Lot departed from Zoar with his two daughters and went to live in a mountain cave.
- Lot's daughters believed there were no men left they could marry because of the destruction in the valley.
- The older daughter conspired with her younger sister to get pregnant by their father and thus maintain the family line.
- So they got their father drunk on wine and the older sister slept with him one night. They got him drunk again the second night and the younger sister slept with him.
- Both daughters became pregnant by their father. The first had a son and named him Moab, who became the father of the Moabites. The second also had a son and named him Ben-ammi who became the father of the Ammonites.

Note: The Moabites and the Ammonites became enemies of Israel.

Genesis 20

Genesis 20 tells the story of Abraham and Sarah in Gerar, and how God rescued Sarah from Abimelech.

In verses 1-7 Abraham journeys to Gerar, lies about Sarah, and God rescues her again.

- Abraham travelled to the Negev and settled between Kadesh and Shur in the city of Gerar.

Note: Gerar was a Philistine city west of the Dead Sea.

- Abraham lied about his wife Sarah to king Abimelech saying she was his sister.
- So Abimelech had Sarah brought to him.

Note: This happened less than three months after God had promised that Sarah would bear him a child the next year. Remember also, Abraham was 99 -years old at this point and Sarah was in her 80's!

- But God warned Abimelech in a dream he was about to die because Sarah was a married woman.
- Abimelech said, "Lord would you destroy a nation even though it is innocent?" Lot had said she is my sister, and she herself said he is my brother. I have a clear conscience.
- God confirmed he knew this, and that Abimelech was innocent, and that God had kept him from sinning. God instructed Abimelech to return Sarah to Abraham for he is a prophet. He will pray for you and you will live. But if you do not return her you and your family will die.

Note: This is the first time the word "prophet" is used.

- Abimelech got up the next morning, gathered his household and told them what had happened.
- Then he had Abraham brought in and accused him, asking why he would do such a thing?
- Abraham said he thought there was no fear of God in this city, so he thought they would kill him in order to take Sarah. So together Abraham and Sarah had agreed to tell this story of being brother and sister.
- Then Abimelech took sheep and cattle and slaves and gave them to Abraham. And he took Sarah and returned her to Abraham.
- He told Abraham he could settle anywhere he wanted in the land.
- Then Abimelech turned to Sarah and said he was giving Abraham 1,000 pieces of silver as proof of her honor.
- Then Abraham prayed to God. God healed Abimelech's household so his wife and female slaves could bear children, because God had closed all their wombs because of Sarah.

Genesis 21

Genesis 21 covers the birth of Isaac and Abraham's covenant with Abimelech.

In verses 1-21 the birth of Isaac is described:

- The Lord came to Sarah, just as He had promised, and Sarah became pregnant, and bore a son.
- Abraham named the boy Isaac, and circumcised him when he was 8-days old.

- Abraham was 100-years old when Isaac was born.
- Abraham threw a great feast on the day Isaac was weaned.

Note: Isaac was probably 2-3 years old at this point.

- But Ishmael mocked Isaac, so Sarah told Abraham to drive Hagar and Ishmael away because she did not want Ishmael to be a co-heir with Isaac.
- Abraham did not want to send Hagar and Ishmael away, but God assured him that his line would be traced through Isaac, and God would make Ishmael into a nation also because he was Abraham's son.
- Early the next morning Abraham got provisions together and sent Hagar and Ishmael away.
- Hagar wandered in the wilderness of Beer-sheba and when the water was gone she left the boy under a bush and went a short distance away to weep because she could not stand to watch the boy die.

Note: Ishmael was probably 14-years old when Isaac was born, so now he is 16-17-years old.

- God heard Hagar's cries. He reassured her and told her to go back to the boy. He opened Hagar's eyes and she saw a well of water where they drank and filled their waterskin.
- God was with the boy as he grew.
- Ishmael became an archer.
- They settled in the wilderness of Paran.
- Hagar got Ishmael a wife from the land of Egypt.

Note: Paran is in the northeast corner of the Sinai Peninsula.

In verses 22-34 Abraham makes a covenant with King Abimelech:

- Abimelech came with his army commander (Phicol) to speak to Abraham.
- Abimelech acknowledged that God was with Abraham. He asked Abraham to swear loyalty to him, just as he (Abimelech) had been loyal to Abraham.
- Abraham swore an oath in agreement to Abimelech.
- But at the same time he complained to Abimelech that Abimelech's servants had taken a water well away from Abraham's servants.
- Nonetheless, Abraham took sheep and cattle and gave them to Abimelech and made a covenant.
- Abraham separated out seven ewe lambs for Abimelech as a sign that Abraham had legal rights to the water in the well.
- After they made the covenant at Beer-sheba, Abimelech, and Phicol

returned to the land of the Philistines.

Note: The name “Beer-sheba” is a word play that means both “Well of Oath” and “Well of Seven.”

- Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beer-sheba and called on the name of Yahweh, the Everlasting God.
- And Abraham lived in the land of the Philistines.

Note: It seems Abimelech sought out this covenant with Abraham because he didn't trust him. Abimelech realized God had blessed Abraham, and was perhaps concerned that Abraham would turn against him because of his previous deception. Creating the covenant established a treaty agreement of loyalty between the two men.

Some additional thoughts for consideration:

- *After the whole Sodom and Gomorrah fiasco, Abraham and Sarah hit the road again and travel to Gerar. Once again, he tells Sarah to lie about who she is, claiming to be his sister rather than his wife.*
- *In this case instead of speaking to Abraham, God chooses to speak to the pagan king. The pagan king recognizes God and pleads his innocence. The pagan king reprimands Abraham for his deceit. Abraham offers up excuses for his deception.*
- *Do we do that today? Do we lie and make excuses to non-believers because we think its expedient rather than holding strong to our faith? When non-believers are more honest than believers we are indeed a poor witness to our faith!*

What I Noticed Today

(Genesis 22-24)

Genesis 22

Genesis 22 describes God's test of Abraham when God asks Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac.

In verses 1-19 Abraham's faith is tested when God asks Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac:

- God tells Abraham to take his son that he loves and sacrifice him as a burnt offering.

Note: This is the first use of the word "love" in the Bible.

- So the next morning Abraham got up, saddled the donkeys, and took with him two young men and Isaac.
- He split wood for the offering, gave it to Isaac to carry, and set out for the place God told him about.

Note: The Bible does not tell us exactly how old Isaac was when this event unfolded. However, since he was able to carry the wood, it is likely Isaac was a teenager, if not a young man.

- Abraham travels 3 days to get to the site where he is to sacrifice Isaac.

Note: The site is Mount Moriah. It is about 50 miles from Beer-sheba. It is also the future site of the temple mount (2 Chronicles 3:1).

- He tells his servants, I and the boy will be back.

Note: Abraham's confidence and faith in God, saying to the men "we'll come back." He believed God could raise Isaac back from the dead to fulfill His promise that his line would be through Isaac.

- When Isaac asked where is the lamb for the sacrifice, Abraham told him the Lord will provide the sacrifice.
- Abraham prepared the altar, the wood, and Isaac, and is just ready to sacrifice him, when the Angel of the Lord called to him and told him not to harm the boy.
- Just then Abraham looked up and saw a ram caught in a thicket for the sacrifice.
- Abraham got the ram and offered it on the altar in place of his son.
- Abraham named that place, "The Lord Will Provide."
- Then the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time and said because he had done this, the Lord will indeed bless you and make your

offspring as numerous as the stars, your offspring will possess the gates of their enemies, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed by your offspring because you have obeyed my commands.

Note: The angel conveys the message of the Lord in first person, as though it was the Lord himself speaking.

- Abraham went back to his men and they returned to Beer-sheba where Abraham settled.

In verses 20-24 Abraham receives a report regarding his brother, Nahor's, family:

- Abraham received a report from the east that his brother (see Genesis 11:27-29) Nahor's family had grown. Several sons were born to Milcah. Bethuel one of Nahor's sons, had fathered a daughter named Rebekah. Four other children were born to Nahor by his concubine, Reumah.

Note: The insertion of this short passage about Nahor's family almost seems out of place at the end of the account of Abraham offering Isaac as a sacrifice. But it makes sense once we get to chapter 23 and 24, because this Rebekah is the Rebekah who becomes Isaac's wife.

Genesis 23

Chapter 23 records Sarah's death and burial:

- Sarah died at the age of 127 years old in Kiriath-arba (Hebron) in the land of Canaan.

Note: Sarah is the only woman in the Bible whose age at her death is recorded. Isaac was 37 years old at the time of her death (Genesis 17:17).

- Abraham mourned for Sarah, and then went to the Hittites where he lived and asked for a piece of land in which he could bury Sarah.
- The Hittites recognized that Abraham was God's chosen so they offered him any site he chose.
- With that, Abraham asked them to ask Ephron son of Zohar to sell him the cave at Machpelah which is at the end of his field.
- Abraham offered to pay full price for the property.
- Ephron offered to give Abraham not only the cave but also the field that went with it.
- Abraham offered again to pay for the field and Ephron finally said it was all worth 400 shekels of silver.
- Abraham weighed out 400 shekels of silver in front of the witnesses, and the field and cave at Machpelah became Abraham's.
- After this Abraham buried his wife Sarah in the cave.

Genesis 24

Genesis 24 describes the search for a wife for Isaac.

In verses 1-9 Abraham commissions his chief servant to find a wife for Isaac:

- Abraham calls his chief servant (Eliezer, Genesis 15:2) and makes him swear an oath that he will not take a wife for Isaac from the Canaanites, but travel to the land of his family and get a wife for him there.
- Abraham warned the servant not to take Isaac back to the family land from which he came because the Lord had promised to give him this land.
- Abraham said an angel of the Lord will guide you to where you will find a wife for Isaac.
- If the woman refuses, then you are free of the oath, but do not let my son go back there.

Note: Abraham is 140-years old at this point, and his son, Isaac, is 40 years old.

In verses 10-27 the chief servant sets off on his journey to find a wife for Isaac:

- The chief servant took 10 camels loaded with all kinds of goods and set out for Aram-naharaim, where Abraham's brother, Nahor, lived.

Note: The distance from the Negev to Aram-naharaim is about 500 miles and would take about two weeks by camel.

- When he arrived he had the camels kneel down beside a water well in the evening when women came out to get water.
- The chief servant prayed to the Lord to give him success in finding a wife for Isaac, and that He would receive a sign when the right woman appeared.
- Before he had finished praying, Rebekah, daughter of Bethuel, son of Milcah (Nahor's wife) came with a jug for water.
- The chief servant ran to meet her after she had filled her jug with water and asked for a drink.
- She quickly gave him a drink and then offered to draw water for the camels as well.

Note: 10 camels could drink a lot of water after a long journey so this was a very gracious offer by Rebekah, and a lot of work!

In verses 28-60 The chief servant negotiates a marriage contract with Laban for Rebekah:

- After she finished giving water to the camels the chief servant gave her a gold ring and two bracelets, and asked if there was room in her father's house for him to stay.


- She answered she was Rebekah, daughter of Bethuel, son of Milcah. There was plenty of straw and room to spend the night.
- The chief servant bowed down and worshipped the Lord.
- Rebekah ran home to tell her mother's household. Her brother, Laban, went out to meet the man at the spring.
- Laban greeted the servant brought him to the house, took care of the camels, and brought water to wash their feet.
- As they sat down to eat the servant explained why he was there, giving the history of Abraham and Sarah and the oath he swore to find a wife for Isaac from among his people.

Note: This speech by the chief servant in verses 34-49 is the longest speech of a servant recorded in the Old Testament.

- He explained that he had prayed to the Lord for a sign and Rebekah had appeared even before he finished praying.
- When he finished explaining how Rebekah had given him water and then given water to the camels, the servant asked if they would consider his request from the Lord, and if not he would move on.
- Laban answered, this is from the Lord. Take Rebekah and go, and let her be a wife for your master's son, just as the Lord had spoken.

Note: In this society a brother, in this case Laban, was responsible for negotiating a marriage contract for a sister.

- When the chief servant heard this he bowed down before the Lord, and brought out gifts and gave them to Rebekah and her family.
- The next morning the chief servant wanted to start back, but Laban wanted to have Rebekah stay 10 days, and then go. The servant asked not to be delayed. They asked Rebekah, and she was willing to go.
- So they sent her away with a blessing that she be the mother of thousands and tens of thousands, and her offspring possess the gates of their enemies.
- In verses 61-67 Rebekah journeys to the land of Abraham to become Isaac's wife:
- Rebekah and her servants left and followed the chief servant back to the Negev region where Abraham lived.
- In the evening Isaac was in the field and saw camels coming, and Rebekah saw Isaac in the distance. She covered herself with a veil.
- Abraham explain to Isaac everything he had done.
- Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent and Rebekah became Isaac's wife, and he loved her very much.



Note: Sarah had died about three years earlier, when Isaac was 37-years old.

Some additional thoughts for consideration:

- *In this short passage of chapter 22 we see Abraham's love for his son, his faith in God's promise, and his trust in God to provide.*
- *What an incredible parallel to when God gave us his one and only son, Jesus whom he loved, as a sacrifice to fulfill a promise of eternal life if we just have faith in Him!*
- *How often do we make promises to God and then not do what Gods asks of us? We disobey and wonder why things don't work out the way we had hoped. Perhaps if we obeyed more, and prayed more, our prayers would be answered according to God's promises!*
- *The choice of a bride for Isaac was God's. The sign at the spring confirmed it. Laban recognized this was from God. Rebekah complied with God's plan.*

What I Noticed Today

(Genesis 25-27)

Genesis 25

In verses 1-6 Abraham took another wife after Sarah's death named Keturah.

- Keturah bore him six sons.
- Abraham gave everything he owned to his son Isaac.
- Abraham gave gifts to the sons of his concubines (including Keturah).
- Abraham sent Keturah and her sons away to the east (the Arabian Peninsula).

Note: Keturah was a concubine, so she and her sons had a lower status than Sarah, his wife, and their son Isaac. Abraham was over 140 years old when these sons were born to Keturah.

In verses 7-11 Abraham's death is recorded:

- Abraham died when he was 175 years old.
- His sons Isaac (now 75) and Ishmael (now 89) buried him in the cave of Machpelah near Mamre in the field of Ephron the Hittite that Abraham had purchased as a burial site for Sarah.
- After Abraham's death, God blessed Isaac who lived near Beer-lahai-roi.

In verses 12-18 the records of Ishmael's family:

- Ishmael had 12 sons, each of whom became tribal leaders.
- They lived from Havilah (north central Arabia) west to Shur (opposite the modern day Suez Canal from Egypt).
- Ishmael lived 137 years, in opposition to all his brothers (Genesis 16:12).

Genesis 25:19-35:29

These 10-1/2 chapters cover the life of Isaac and his children, Jacob and Esau.

In verses 19-26 Isaac prayed for his wife Rebekah because she was childless:

- Isaac was 40 years old when Rebekah became his wife.
- He prayed to the Lord for her because she was childless.
- The Lord answered his prayers and Rebekah conceived twins, but they struggled within her.
- Rebekah asked the Lord about this and the Lord told her she had two

nations struggling in her womb; one will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger.

- When it was time to give birth the first boy came out red and hairy, and they named him Esau. The second boy came out grasping his brother's heel so they named him Jacob.
- Isaac was 60 years old when they were born.

In verses 27-34 Esau sells his birthright:

- As they grew up Esau became a hunter, but Jacob stayed at home.
- Isaac loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob.
- One day when Jacob was cooking stew, his brother Esau came in from the field exhausted, asking Jacob for some of his "red stuff."
- Jacob said first sell me your birthright, and Esau swore an oath giving Jacob his birthright as the first-born son. In that way Esau had despised his birthright.

Note: Esau asked for some "red stuff." "Red" in Hebrew is the word *Edom* (□ēdōwm), which is why Esau was also known as Edom.

Genesis 26

In verses 1-6 God confirms His promise to Isaac:


- There was another famine in the land.
- The Lord appeared to Isaac and told him not to go to Egypt, but to stay in the land of Gerar as a foreigner.
- God promised to bless him there, and confirmed the oath that He made with Abraham to make Isaac's offspring as numerous as the stars, and to give him all this land, because Abraham had listened and kept My mandates, My commands, My statutes, and My instructions.

Note: The Abimelech of Genesis 26:1 is probably not the same Abimelech as in Genesis 20 since the events were about 90 years apart.

In verses 7-11 Isaac deceives Abimelech about Rebekah:

- When men in the land asked about Rebekah, Isaac said she was his sister because he was afraid the men would kill him, so they could take her.
- Abimelech looked out his window one day and saw Isaac caressing Rebekah, so he sent for Isaac and accused him of the deception.
- Isaac answered he believed he would be killed on account of her.
- Abimelech scolded Isaac for the deception, and warned all the people under penalty of death, no one was to harm this man or his wife.

Note: Isaac used the same defense for his deception as his father Abraham had used (Genesis 12:13).



In verses 12-22 Isaac's prosperity causes strife among the Philistines:

- Because the Lord blessed him Isaac enjoyed enormous yields on his crops.
- He became richer and richer with flocks of sheep, herds of cattle, and many slaves. And the Philistines were envious of him.
- The Philistines filled up the wells with dirt his father Abraham had dug, and Abimelech told him to leave because Isaac was too powerful for them.
- So Isaac moved to the Valley of Gerar, and reopened wells the Philistines had stopped up after Abraham had died.
- The herdsmen of Gerar claimed the wells, so Isaac named the well Esek ("Quarrel"). He dug another well and they claimed that as well so he named it Sitnah ("Hostility").
- Isaac moved even further away and the Philistines did not quarrel over that well so he named it Rehoboth ("Open Spaces").

Note: Isaac refused to fight over the wells, but kept moving until he ended up in a place where the Philistines left him alone and the Lord would bless him there.

In verses 23-25 The Lord appears to Isaac:

- Isaac moved from there to Beer-sheba.
- The Lord appeared to him that night and assured him that He would bless him and multiply his offspring because of Abraham.
- Isaac called on the name of the Lord, Yahweh, built an altar, pitched his tents, and his slaves dug a well there.

Note: Beer-sheba was about 25 miles southwest of where Abraham had once lived (Genesis 21:31).

In verses 26-33 Isaac makes a covenant with Abimelech:

- Abimelech came from Gerar with Ahuzzath, his advisor, and Phicol, the commander of his army to meet with Isaac.
- Isaac asked what they wanted since they hated him and had sent him away.
- Abimelech recognized how the Lord had blessed Isaac and wanted to make a covenant with him (a treaty), that one would not harm the other.
- So Isaac prepared a banquet, and the next morning they swore an oath to each other, and Abimelech and his men returned home.
- That same day Isaac's slaves came and told him they had dug a well and found water, and Isaac named the well "Sheba" (which means "oath").
- **Note:** This is similar to the treaty Abimelech made with

Abraham (Genesis 21:22) in which he recognized Abraham was blessed by God.

In verses 34-35 Esau marries Hittite women:

- When Esau was 40 years old he married Judith a Hittite, and Basemath, also a Hittite. They made life bitter for Isaac and Rebekah.

Note: Esau married pagan women, a demonstration of his nature, and why he was not deserving of God's blessing.

Genesis 27

Chapter 27 reads like a modern day soap opera with Jacob deceiving his father Isaac to attain the blessing of the first-born.

In verses 1-29 Jacob steals Esau's blessing:

- Isaac was old and his eyes were weak, so that he could not see. He called his son Esau to him and told him to prepare a meal of wild game so that he could bless him.

Note: Isaac was at least 100 years old at this point. He was 60 years old when the boys were born (Genesis 25:26), and Esau was 40 years old when he married the Hittite women (Genesis 26:34). Isaac died at 180 (Genesis 35:28), so this event occurred sometime in that 80-year span.

- Rebekah was listening when Isaac gave the instructions to Esau, so she instructed Jacob to kill two goats and she would prepare them, so Jacob could take it to Abraham and secure his blessing.
- Jacob was concerned about deceiving his father and being discovered, which would then be a curse, but Rebekah assured him the curse would be on her.
- So Jacob went out and got the goats and Rebekah prepared them. Then she had Jacob dress in Esau's cloths and covered Jacobs arms with goat skins to simulate Esau's hairy arms.
- Jacob took the stew and the bread into his father, and lied to his father saying he was Esau and was there to get the blessing as promised.
- Jacob lied again saying the Lord had provided the game.
- He lied a third time when Isaac asked him again if he was Esau.
- Isaac said the voice was Jacob's voice, but the hairy hands were Esau's.
- Jacob lied a fourth time when Isaac asked him again if he really was his son Esau.
- Isaac ate and drank and then called Esau to him. He smelled the clothes and the clothes smelled like Esau.
- So Isaac blessed Jacob, thinking it was Esau, saying he would have the richness of the land, abundance of grain and wine, people would serve

and nations bow down to him, he would be master over his brother, and those who curse you will be cursed and those who bless you will be blessed.

In verses 30-46 Esau discovers Jacob's treachery:

- As soon as Isaac finished blessing Jacob in came Esau saying he had prepared food for his father to eat and then bless him.
- Isaac trembled realizing he had been deceived and that he had blessed the wrong son, but the blessing must stand, it cannot be reversed.
- Angry, Esau insisted Isaac bless him as well, but Isaac replied he could not because his brother had deceitfully taken his blessing.
- Esau had given up in rights as the firstborn to Jacob, and now Jacob had taken his blessing as well.
- Finally, Isaac blessed Esau saying his dwelling place would be away from the rich land, he would live by the sword, he would serve his brother, but someday he would break Jacob's yoke from his neck.
- Esau held a grudge against Jacob and swore to himself that after his father died he would kill Jacob.
- When Rebekah found out about Esau's plan, she sent Jacob away to her brother Laban's house in Haran to stay with him until Esau's anger subsided.
- Rebekah said to Isaac she was sick of the Hittite women (that Esau had married) and she didn't want Jacob to marry one.

Note: The distance from Beer-sheba to Haran was about 517 miles.

Note: This is the second time Rebekah interceded with deception to secure Jacob's future.

Some thoughts for additional consideration:

- *Going against God's will almost always sets up situations that go from bad to worse. Deceit, lies, and cover-ups are used to get our way. Life is so much easier and pleasant if we just follow God's plan and TRUST Him!*
- *Jacob's main concern with his mother's plan in attaining Esau's blessing is not the lies to his father, or incurring the wrath of God, but that he might get caught in his deception, and thus receive a curse instead of a blessing.*

What I Noticed Today

(Genesis 28-30)

Genesis 28

In verses 1-9 Isaac blesses Jacob and sends him to Paddan-Aram to find a wife:

- Isaac brought Jacob in and told him not to find a wife among the Canaanite women, but to go to Paddan-Aram to the house of Laban, your mother's brother and marry one of his daughters.
- Isaac blessed Jacob praying that God would bless him, multiply him into an assembly of people, and extend the blessing of Abraham upon him.
- Jacob went to Paddan-Aram to Laban, the brother of his mother, Rebekah.
- Esau saw how Isaac had blessed his brother Jacob and sent him to Paddan-Aram to marry because he disapproved of the Canaanite women.
- So Esau went to Ishmael and married Mahalath, daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son. (Mahalath is Esau's cousin)

Note: Mahalath is also known as Basemath (Genesis 36:3). Her brother, Nabaioth was Ishmael's first son (1 Chronicles 1:29).

In verses 10-22 Jacob leaves Beer-sheba and has a vision from God:

- Jacob left Beer-sheba and headed for Haran.
- He travelled until the sun set, then set up camp.
- In his sleep he saw a vision of a stairway reaching up to heaven and the angels were going up and down on the stairs.
- Yahweh was standing beside him saying he was the God of Abraham and Isaac and would give him the land he was sleeping on, your offspring will be like the dust of the earth, your people will spread out in all directions, and all the people of the earth will be blessed by your offspring. I am with you and will watch over you, and will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done all I have promised.
- Jacob woke up he was afraid and in awe, thinking this place was the house of God and the gate to heaven.
- Early in the morning Jacob set up a stone marker and poured oil on it and named the place Bethel (House of God). Previously the place was known as Luz.
- Then Jacob made a vow that if the Lord would be with him and watch over him, provide food and clothing, and return him to his father's house

in safety, then the Lord would be his God. This stone was a marker of God's house and he would give God a tenth (tithe) of all that He gave him.

Note: Jacob's response to the vision from God was: fear and awe of God, he set up a memorial stone and consecrated it with oil, he named the place Bethel, he made a vow, and promised to tithe all he had.

Genesis 29

Chapter 29 describes Jacob meeting Rachel, Laban's deceit, and Jacob's sons:

Note: Jacob was 27 years old when he left Beer-sheba to journey to Haran.

In verses 1-12 Jacob gets to Haran and meets Rachel:

- Jacob continued his journey and arrived at a well outside of Haran. Jacob asked the men at the well if they knew Laban. At that moment, Rachel, Laban's daughter was coming with his sheep.
- As soon as Jacob saw Rachel coming with the sheep, he rolled the stone away from the mouth of the well and watered the sheep.
- Jacob kissed Rachel and wept as he told her he was her father's relative, Rebekah's son.

Note: This is the first kiss recorded in the Bible, such affection was not normally displayed in public.

Note: Rachel is the first shepherdess described in the Bible. Herding sheep was normally a role for men.

Note: There are many parallels between Jacob and Rachel, and Isaac and Rebekah: God's perfect timing of the meeting, a well was involved with both, both near Haran, both involved Laban, and Rebekah watered the servant's camels, Jacob watered Laban's sheep for Rachel.

In verses 13-30 Laban deceives Jacob over Rachel:

- Laban recognized Jacob as family and invited him to stay.
- Since Jacob was family and not a servant it was appropriate to negotiate paying him a wage.
- When Laban asked what wages did Jacob want, Jacob said he would work seven years for Rachel because he loved her.
- Laban agreed and Jacob worked for Laban seven years.
- When the seven years was up, he wanted to marry Rachel.
- Laban invited all the men together for a feast, but that evening he gave Rachel's older sister Leah to Jacob, and he slept with her.

Note: Jacob is almost 50-years old when he finally marries.

- In the morning Jacob realized the deception and confronted Laban.
- Laban's excuse was he did this because according to their tradition the older daughter must marry first. Then Laban told Jacob if he agreed to work for him another seven years, he could have Rachel as well.
- Jacob loved Rachel more than her sister Leah, and worked for Laban another seven years.

Note: Jacob deceived his father and older brother, now his uncle Laban deceived him with Leah the older sister.

Genesis 29:31-30-24

This section contains the records of the children born to Jacob by Leah and Rachel.

In verses 31-35 records the sons born to Jacob by Leah:

- God saw Leah was unloved, and He opened her womb.

Note: The word translated "unloved" literally means *hated*.

- Leah gave birth to a son named Reuben, saying the Lord had seen her affliction.
- Leah gave birth to a son named Simeon, saying the Lord heard she was unloved.
- Leah gave birth to a son named Levi, saying at last my husband will be attached to me.
- Leah gave birth to a son named Judah, saying this time I will praise the Lord.
- Then she stopped having children.

Genesis 30

In verses 1-8 records sons born to Billah, Rachel's servant:

- When Rachel saw that Leah was bearing children and she was not, she was angry. She gave Billah, her servant, to Jacob to bear children for her.
- Billah conceived and bore a son named Dan, and Rachel said God had vindicated her.
- Billah conceived again and bore a son named Naphtali, and Rachel said I have wrestled with my sister and won.

In verses 9-24 the rest of Jacobs sons are born to him:

- When Leah realized she had stopped having children she gave her servant, Zilpah to Jacob.
- Zilpah conceived and bore a son named Gad, and Leah said what good fortune.

- Zilpah conceived again and bore a son named Asher, and Leah said I am happy that women call me happy.
- Rachel wanted some mandrakes so she allowed Leah to sleep with Jacob in exchange for some mandrakes.

Note: Mandrakes were thought to be aphrodisiacs.


- When Jacob came in from the field that day Leah met him and said she had “hired” him with her sons’ mandrakes. So Jacob slept with Leah and Leah conceived again.
- Leah bore a fifth son to Jacob and named him Issachar, saying God rewarded her for giving her servant to Jacob.
- Leah conceived again and bore Jacob a sixth son and named him Zebulun, saying, this time my husband will honor me.
- Leah conceived again and bore a daughter named Dinah.
- God remembered Rachel, opened her womb, and she conceived and bore a son named Joseph, saying God had taken away her shame.

Note: Many of the rivalries seen between Leah and Rachel, and Billah and Zilpah in having children will be seen in future tribal rivalries.

In verses 25-43 the Lord blesses Jacob’s flocks at the expense of Laban’s:

- After Rachel gave birth to Joseph, Jacob went to Laban saying he wanted to return to his homeland.
- Laban, realizing (through divination) that it was God who had blessed Jacob, asked him to stay and name his wages.
- Jacob said he had increased Laban’s wealth but now it was time for him to work for his own family.
- Jacob finally agreed to stay if Laban would allow him to go through all the flocks and take out all the spotted sheep, and dark-colored goats as his wages.
- Laban agreed and separated out all the spotted and colored sheep and goats from the flocks, and had his sons drive them three days’ journey away.
- Jacob then tended Laban’s flocks. He did everything he could to produce spotted and speckled sheep and goats that became his at the expense of Laban. Additionally, his animals were stronger, and Laban’s were weaker.
- Jacob became very rich with many flocks, slaves, camels, and donkeys.

Note: Jacob admitted later (Genesis 31:7-12) that God had intervened on his behalf increasing his herds and flocks at the expense of Laban’s. This went on during the last six years of Jacob’s service to Laban.



Some thoughts for additional consideration:

- *I am reminded of the quote from the poem Marmion, “Oh what a tangled web we weave, when at first we practice to deceive.” Laban deceived the deceiver Jacob. Then in building their family wives became envious of each other giving servants as child bearers. All to increase their status and perceived value to their husband.*
- *Jacob’s family grew and he became very rich over time fulfilling God’s promise. But in both cases man manipulated events trying to bring God’s promises to fruition. Lies and deception were the result. God fulfilled His promises, but He did it in spite of their interference.*

What I Noticed Today

(Genesis 31-33)

Genesis 31

In verses 1-21 Jacob leaves Laban to return to Canaan:

- Great resentment formed between Laban and his sons against Jacob because Jacob continued to gain wealth at Laban's expense.
- The Lord told Jacob to return home and promised to be with him.
- Jacob gathered Leah and Rachel and explained to them how their father's attitude toward him had changed, how his father had changed his wages several times, but that the Lord had always protected and blessed them.
- The Jacob explained to Leah and Rachel about the dream from God and His instruction to return home to his native land.
- Leah and Rachel both answered they felt like outsiders in their father's house so do whatever God has told you.
- Jacob then gathered all his possessions, the flocks and herds, and set out with his family to go to the land of his father Isaac in Canaan.
- Before they left Rachel snuck into her father's house and stole his idols.

Note: The household idols Rachel stole were figurines of deities, indicating a pagan influence in Laban's household. Traditionally, these household idols were thought to provide protection to the household.

- Jacob left without telling Laban that he was leaving. He fled away from Paddan-Aram crossed the Euphrates River (in modern day Syria) and headed for the hill country of Gilead.

In verses 22-35 Laban chases after Jacob and confronts him:

- After three days Laban was told Jacob had fled, so he gathered his relatives and pursued Jacob for seven days until he caught up with him at Mt. Gilead.
- God came to Laban at night in a dream and warned him not to say anything to Jacob, good or bad.

Note: God's warning to Laban about Jacob is another example of God fulfilling His promise to protect Jacob. It is also an indication that Laban may have been angry enough about his missing idols to do harm to Jacob.

- When Laban and his brothers caught up to Jacob they pitched their tents in the hill country, and Laban confronted Jacob about leaving without saying goodbye. He claimed he would have thrown a feast of celebration for them. Laban accused Jacob of acting foolishly.

- Laban admitted that he had planned to harm Jacob, but God had warned him in a dream not to say anything good or bad. But, Laban asked, why did you steal my household idols?
- Jacob answered he left in secret because he was afraid Laban would have taken Leah and Rachel away from him by force. He also told Laban he knew nothing of the stolen idols. Search the camp. Anyone with your idols will die.
- So Laban searched the camp starting with Jacob's tent, then Leah's, and finally Rachel's. Rachel had hidden the idols in a camel's saddlebag that she sat on as he searched. She claimed she could not get up because she was on her period.

In verses 36-55 Jacob makes a covenant with Laban:

- After Laban searched and found nothing, Jacob let loose a tirade of complaints at Laban about how he had taken care of Laban's property for 20 years (14 for the daughters, and 6 for the flocks). Laban had changed his wages 10 times, but God had blessed him. Otherwise, Jacob said, Laban would have sent him away with nothing.

Note: Jacob refers to God three ways: as the "God of my father," the "God of Abraham," and the "Fear of Isaac." The name "Fear of Isaac" for God appears only in this chapter.

- Laban claims the daughters, sons, and flocks are all his, but he can do nothing for his daughters now, so he suggests he and Jacob make a covenant.
- So Jacob and his relatives gathered stones and made a mound.
- Laban named the mound Jegar-sahadutha (Aramaic for "Mound of Witness"), but Jacob named it Galeed (Hebrew for "Mound of Witness").
- Laban said the mound was a witness between them. The Lord would watch between you and me when we are out of each other's sight.
- Laban warned Jacob not to mistreat his daughters, because God was a witness.
- Laban also said the mound was a marker that he would not pass by it to do Jacob harm, and Jacob would not pass by it to do Laban harm.
- Laban swore by the God of Abraham, the gods of Nahor, and the God of their father (Terah) who would be judges over the covenant.

Note: "Mizpah" means watchtower.

- Jacob swore by the "Fear of his father Isaac."
- Then Jacob offered a sacrifice and invited everyone to eat a meal to commemorate the covenant.
- Laban got up early the next morning, kissed his daughters and

grandchildren, blessed them, and returned home.

Genesis 32

Chapter 32 recounts Jacob's journey back to his native land, and his preparations for reuniting with his brother Esau.

In verses 1-23 Jacob prepares to be reunited with his brother Esau:

- Angels appear to Jacob a second time (Genesis 28:12). He called the place God's camp, and named it Mahanaim (meaning "Two Camps").
- Jacob sent messengers ahead of him to the land of Seir where his brother Esau lived with a message that he was returning with many flocks, herds, and servants hoping to secure the favor of Esau.
- Messengers returned to Jacob saying Esau was on his way to meet them with 400 men.
- Jacob was afraid and distressed so he divided his group into two, thinking if Esau attacks one group (or camp), the other group (or camp) can escape.
- Then Jacob prayed to the God of Abraham, and God of my father Isaac who told him to return to his land and promised to prosper him. He referred to himself as God's servant, not worthy of God's kindness and faithfulness, and asked God to rescue him from the hand of Esau.
- The next morning Jacob separated out a large herd of animals for his brother Esau and instructed his servants to take them ahead of him and present them to Esau as a gift. He divided them into three groups one in front of the other each to present their animals as a gift with the message from Jacob.

Note: Jacob tells the servants to refer to Esau as lord, and himself as Esau's servant.

- Jacob felt after receiving these gifts Esau might be willing to forgive him.
- That night as the gift was sent ahead Jacob gathered his wives and family and sent them across the ford at Jabbok.

Note: The Jabbok was a small tributary that led to the Jordan River north of the Dead Sea. Jacob may have thought this offered his family another layer of protection from Esau.

In verses 24-32 Jacob wrestles with a Man at Peniel:

- Jacob was alone and a man came and wrestled (fought) with him until morning. When the man saw he could not defeat Jacob he touched Jacob's hip and dislocated it. Then he told Jacob to let him go.
- Jacob refused to let the Man go until He blessed him.
- The Man told Jacob his name was no longer Jacob, but "Israel" because

he had struggled with God and men and prevailed.

- Jacob asked the Man His name. The man refused, but blessed Israel.
- Jacob named the place “Peniel” (*Peniel* means “Face of God”) saying he had seen God face to face and been delivered.

Note: Some translations say Penuel. Penuel and Peniel are variations of the same word.

Genesis 33

Chapter 33 recounts the initial reunion of Jacob with his brother Esau.

In verses 1-17 Jacob reconciles with Esau:

- Jacob looked up and there was Esau coming toward him with 400 men.
- He divided the children among Leah, Rachel, Billah, and Zilpah. He put Billah and Zilpah and their children out first, then Leah and her children, then Rachel and her children.
- But Jacob went out first to meet Esau and bowed down to him seven times as he met him.
- But Esau ran to meet Jacob, hugged and kissed him, and they wept.
- Jacob introduced the entire family to Esau.
- Esau inquired as to the meaning of the procession he had met (the servants with gifts). Jacob explained it was his hope to obtain favor of his brother. At first Esau refused saying he had enough, but Jacob was insistent, and eventually Esau accepted the gift.

Note: Jacob’s comment that seeing Esau’s face was like seeing God’s face, suggests Jacob realized that God had once again delivered him from harm.

- Esau suggested they move on, and said he would go before Jacob.
- Jacob declined to go with Esau saying the women and animals cannot move that fast.
- Referring to Esau again as lord, Jacob suggested Esau go on ahead and they would follow at a slower pace and meet up in Seir.
- That day Esau headed back to Seir.
- But Jacob headed to Succoth where he built a house for himself and stalls for his animals.

Note: Seir was south, but Jacob headed a few miles north to Succoth east of the Jordan River. The word used for “stalls” indicates these were temporary stalls for livestock.

In verses 18-20 Jacob journeys on and settles near Shechem:

- Jacob completed his journey arriving safely in Canaan near the city of



Shechem.

- He purchased a portion of a field from the sons of Hamor.
- He set up an altar and called it, “El Elohe Israel” or “God, the God of Israel.”

Note: Shechem is between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim where Abraham first camped when he entered Canaan.

Note: Jacob’s name was changed to Israel, but he is still being referred to as Jacob, because his character has not yet changed to reflect his new name.

Note: Jacob was told by God to go to Bethel (Genesis 31:12) which was another 20 miles. Instead he buys land that God had promised to give him.

Some thoughts for additional consideration:

- *Jacob is willing to deceive others to advance what he believes is what God has promised.*
- *One minute he is praying to God asking for His help and protection, and the next minute he is making his own plans. He does not seem to have the faith to trust that God will protect and provide as He has promised.*
- *As a believer you cannot manipulate, lie, and deceive people and think that it is acceptable.*

What I Noticed Today

(Genesis 34-36)

Genesis 34

In verses 1-34 Dinah, Jacob's daughter through Leah is raped by a Canaanite prince:

- Dinah went to visit some of the women who lived nearby.

Note: Dinah was the only girl among all of Jacob's children. She may have visited the nearby women simply because she wanted companionship.

- Shechem, the son of Hamor (the same Hamor that sold Jacob the field) saw Dinah and raped her. He became infatuated with her, loved her, spoke tenderly to her, and asked his father Hamor to get her as his wife.
- Jacob heard what Shechem had done but didn't do anything immediately because his sons were in the field.
- When Jacob's sons returned from the field and found out what happened they were outraged because such a thing should not be done.
- Hamor told Jacob's sons that his son Shechem wanted to marry Dinah. Hamor proposed they allow intermarriage between the clans. In that way Jacob could settle in the land and acquire more property.
- Shechem offered to pay whatever bride price Jacob demanded.
- Jacob's sons answered Shechem and Hamor deceitfully saying they could not intermarry unless their men were circumcised. If they agreed to be circumcised, then they would agree to give each other's daughters in marriage, and become one people.
- Hamor and Shechem thought it sounded reasonable to be circumcised because they thought eventually they would acquire all of Jacob's possessions.
- All the men including Hamor and Shechem were circumcised.
- On the third day when they were still in pain from the circumcision, Simeon and Levi (Dinah's brothers) got their swords and killed every male in the city.
- They killed Hamor and Shechem and took Dinah from Shechem's house.
- The rest of Jacob's brothers plundered the entire city, taking all their possessions, cattle, wives, and children.
- Jacob was angry with Simeon and Levi. Because of their actions he knew he might face retribution from the Canaanites and Perizzites who lived in

the land. If they banded together Jacob and his household would be destroyed.

- Simeon and Levi's only response was to defend their sister's honor in not allowing her to be treated like a prostitute.

Note: Rape was certainly a criminal act, but not one that warranted the murder of all the men, the plunder of the city, and the taking of all the wives and children. Simeon and Levi will be cursed by Jacob for their actions (Genesis 49:5-7).

Genesis 35

In verses 1-15 Jacob completes the journey to Bethel:

- God told Jacob to get up, go to Bethel, and settle there. Once there he was to build an altar to God who appeared when he fled from Esau.

Note: Jacob had built an altar to God in Bethel more than 20 years before. God is reminding Jacob of the vows he made (Genesis 28:18-22).

Note: God's command for Jacob to build an altar is the only time He commands someone to build an altar in Genesis.

Note: Bethel is only about 15 miles south of Shechem. Had Jacob gone straight to Bethel without stopping in Shechem, the incident with Dinah would never have occurred.

- Jacob commanded everyone with him to get rid of their foreign gods, and purify themselves.
- Jacob told them they would journey to Bethel where he would build an altar to the God who answered his prayers when he was in distress, and with him wherever he went.
- Jacob hid all their foreign gods under a tree in Shechem.
- When they set out God protected them so no one came out against them.
- Jacob arrived in Bethel (also known as Luz) and built an altar to God there, because it was there that God revealed himself to Jacob when Jacob was fleeing from Esau.
- Deborah, the woman who nursed Rebekah and cared for her died and was buried. Jacob named the place where she was buried the "Oak of Weeping" (Allon Bacuth).
- God appeared to Jacob again after he arrived in Bethel. God confirmed Jacob's name will now be Israel. God told him to be fruitful and multiply. God promised an assembly of nations would come from him, and kings would descend from him. Finally, God promised to give him the land he had promised to Abraham and Isaac.
- **Note:** God's promised blessing to Jacob is expanded to now include

kings who would descend from him.

- Jacob set up a marker at the place where God spoke to him, poured out a drink offering and anointed the marker with oil. Jacob named the place Bethel.

In verses 16-20 Rachel dies:

- On the way to Ephrath, Rachel goes into labor, and delivers another son whom she named “Ben-oni” (Son of My Sorrow). Then she died. Jacob changed the boy’s name to “Benjamin” (Right-hand Son).
- Rachel died on the way to Ephrath (Bethlehem).

In verses 21-26 Israel journeys beyond the Tower of Edar:

Note: This is the first time Jacob is referred to as Israel.

- While they were living in this region, Reuben went in and slept with Bilhah, his father’s concubine, who was the mother to his brothers Dan and Naphtali.
- The 12 sons of Jacob are listed, not according to birth order but according to the order of Jacob’s relationship with their mothers: Leah, Rachel, Bilhah, and Zilpah.

In verses 27-29 Isaac dies:

- Jacob came to his father Isaac in Mamre in Kiriath-arba (Hebron).
- Isaac was 180 years old and he died.
- His sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

Note: This seems to be the first time Jacob and Esau were together since they separated in chapter 33.

Genesis 36

Chapter 36 includes the family records of Esau (Edom).


In verses 1-8 are the family records of Esau:

- Esau had three wives: Adah, Oholibamah, and Basemath.
- Esau had five sons, all of whom were born to him in the land of Canaan.
- Esau gathered up his family and possessions and moved to Seir away from his brother Jacob, because the land could not support them both.

Note: Oholibamah was the great granddaughter of Seir the Horite.

In verses 9-43 the family records of Esau are detailed in five major sections:

- Section 1. Verses 10-14. This section expands verses 4-5: six sons were born to Adah’s son Eliphaz, and four sons were born to Basemath’s son Ruel.

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- Section 2. Verses 15-19. This section lists the chiefs of Esau's sons, and grandsons, but adds a seventh son of Eliphaz named Korah.
 - Section 3. Verses 20-30. This section lists the sons and chiefs of Seir the Horite, the father of Eliphaz's concubine, Timna.
 - Section 4. Verses 31-39. This section lists the eight kings who ruled consecutively in the land of Edom prior to King Saul.
 - Section 5. Verses 40-43. This section lists eleven of Esau's chiefs who ruled over portions of Edom (see also 1 Chronicles 1:51-54 for a similar list).

Some thoughts for additional consideration:

- *The rape of Dinah brings out the worst in Jacob and his sons.*
- *They have attempted to do what God wants but in an unholy way, with bad motives. Lies and deceit abound as Jacob and his family act more like Gentiles than children of God.*
- *How often do we do that today? We try to help God out, do what God wants, but we do it with impure motives, in an unholy way. No wonder the unbelieving world looks at Christians and questions our beliefs.*

What I Noticed Today

(Genesis 37-39)

Genesis 37:2-50:26

The remainder of the book of Genesis covers the story of Joseph; his life as a shepherd in Canaan, being sold into slavery by his brothers, and concluding with his time spent in Egypt.

Genesis 37

In verses 2-11 Joseph's youth and his dreams:

- At 17 years old Joseph was a shepherd working with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah his father's wives.
- Israel loved Joseph more than his other sons because he was born to him in his old age. His brothers were envious of the preferential treatment Joseph received from Isaac.

Note: Joseph was the firstborn son of Rachel, the woman Israel loved first.

- Joseph had a dream about sheaves of grain in the field. His brother's sheaves of grain were bowing down to his. The suggestion that they would bow down to him made his brothers hate him even more.
- Joseph had another dream in which the sun, moon, and 11 stars were bowing down to him. Even his father rebuked him at the suggestion that he and his mother and brothers would all bow down to him.

Note: In this second dream the sun refers to Isaac, the moon refers to his mother Rachel, and the 11 stars are Joseph's 11 brothers.

In verses 12-28 Joseph's brothers sell him into slavery:

- Joseph's brothers were out tending the sheep in Shechem. Israel called to Joseph and told him to get ready, he was sending him to his brothers to see how the flocks were doing.
- Joseph went to Shechem and learned his brothers had moved the flocks to Dothan.

Note: From their home in the Valley of Hebron, Shechem was about 50 miles, and Dothan was another 15 miles north.

- His brothers saw Joseph in the distance and devised a plan to kill him and throw him into a pit.
- Reuben convinced his brothers not to kill Joseph, but to throw him into a pit (a dry cistern) hoping to rescue Joseph later and return him to Israel.

- When Joseph came to his brothers they stripped him of his robe of many colors, and threw him into the pit, intending for him to die there.
- As the brothers sat down to eat a trading caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead on their way to Egypt appeared.
- Judah suggested they sell Joseph into slavery rather than kill him, so they agreed to sell Joseph to the Midianites (another name for Ishmaelites) for 20 pieces of silver.

In verses 29-36 Israel's son deceive him by telling him Joseph is dead:

- Reuben returned and found Joseph gone, and tore his clothes (a sign of grief).
- The brothers took Joseph's coat, killed a goat, and covered the coat with blood.
- They sent the coat to their father asking if this was his son's coat.
- Jacob (Israel) recognized the coat and assumed an animal had killed Joseph.
- Jacob tore his clothes and mourned for Joseph, inconsolably.
- Meanwhile, the Midianites sold Joseph to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh and captain of the guard in Egypt.

Genesis 38

Genesis 38 breaks away from the story of Joseph to reveal ongoing corruption and deception in Judah's family.

- After selling Joseph into slavery, Judah left his brothers and stayed in Adullam and married a Canaanite woman.

Note: Adullam was about 15 miles northwest of Hebron.

Note: In marrying a Canaanite woman Judah rejected the family's tradition of not intermarrying with Canaanites (Genesis 24: 2-4).

- Judah had three sons: Er, Onan, and Shelah.
- Judah got a wife named Tamar for Er, but Er was so evil the Lord put him to death.
- Judah told Onan to take Tamar and impregnate her to carry on his brother's line. Whenever they had sex he spilled his semen on the ground. This was evil in the sight of the Lord so the Lord put him to death also.
- Judah told Tamar to remain a widow in his house until his son Shelah grew up.
- Judah's wife died and he mourned for her.
- Then Judah and his friend Hirah the Adulamite went to Timnah for the sheep shearing.

- When Tamar heard her father-in-law had gone up to Timnah she changed her clothes and went to Timnah. Joseph saw her, and thinking she was a prostitute, he slept with her promising to send a young goat from his flock. Judah left behind his signet ring, cord, and staff as collateral. Tamar was pregnant.
- Judah sent Hirah his friend back with the young goat to retrieve his ring, cord, and staff, but the woman could not be found.
- Hirah returned and reported to Judah, that not only could he not find the woman, he had been told there were no prostitutes there.
- Three month later Judah was told about Tamar being pregnant. Judah called for her to be brought to him saying she would be burned to death.
- Tamar sent the ring, cord, and staff to Judah and said these belonged to the man who made her pregnant.
- Judah recognized them and knew that Tamar was right because he had kept his other son Shelah from her.
- When it came time to give birth Tamar had twins. The first one put his hand out and they tied a scarlet thread around it, then he pulled his hand back in. The other brother was then born and he was named Perez (“breach”). Then the brother with the scarlet thread was born and they named him Zerah (“scarlet”).

Note: The genealogy of Jesus is traced back through Perez (Matthew 1:3)

Genesis 39


Genesis 39 returns to the story of Joseph as a servant in the house of Potiphar.

In verses 1-6 God blessed Joseph while he was serving Potiphar:

- The Lord blessed and prospered Joseph in the house of Potiphar.
- When Potiphar saw the Lord was with Joseph he made Joseph his personal attendant, and put him in charge of all his household and all that he owned.
- The Lord blessed the house of Potiphar because of Joseph.

In verses 7-20 Potiphar’s wife tries to seduce Joseph:

- After some time, Potiphar’s wife wanted Joseph to sleep with her, but he refused saying he was loyal to his master who trusted him, and it was an evil sin against God.
- She continued to ask Joseph to sleep with her but he always refused. One day she grabbed him by his garment and demanded he sleep with her. He left his garment behind and ran outside.

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- She screamed for help, so the household servants heard her.
 - When Potiphar returned home she told him the lie; accusing Joseph of trying to rape her.
 - When Potiphar heard this he was furious and had Joseph thrown into the king's prison.

Note: This is the second time Joseph's clothes had been used to lie about him, and put him into bondage.

In verses 21-23 the Lord blesses Joseph in prison:

- The Lord was with Joseph in the prison, and he gained favor with the warden. The warden put Joseph in charge of all the other prisoners. He did not worry about anything that was under Joseph's authority, because the Lord was with Joseph and made him successful.

Some thoughts for additional consideration:

- *Jacob shows preferential treatment to his son Joseph and the result is the other sons turn against their brother and conspire to kill him. This reminds me of what happened with Isaac and his sons Jacob, and Esau.*
- *Lies, deceit, and treachery abound in this family! We may think that we got away with disobeying God when nothing happens, but as we see in these chapters sometimes God's judgment is swift and sure.*
- *Sometimes in life it seems as though God has abandoned us because of the difficulties we encounter. But living for God sometimes requires us to patiently live through difficulties in order to realize God's plan for us.*

What I Noticed Today

(Genesis 40-42)

Genesis 40

Genesis 40 describes Joseph's interpretation of two prisoner's dreams.

In verses 1-8 two prisoners had troubling dreams they didn't understand:

Note: Several years had passed and Joseph was now 28 years old (See Genesis 41:1 & 41:46).

- The Pharaoh's cup-bearer and baker offended Pharaoh and were thrown into prison.
- The captain of the guard assigned them to Joseph.
- One night the cup-bearer and the baker each had their own dream with its own meaning.
- Joseph explained to them interpretations belonged to God and he offered to interpret the dreams for them.

In verses 9-19 Joseph interpreted the cup-bearer and baker's dreams.

- The cup-bearer said his dream was a vine with three branches, that budded, blossomed, and had grapes. Pharaoh's cup was in my hand and I squeezed the grapes into the cup and placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand.
- Joseph explained the dream saying the three branches were three days in which Pharaoh would restore the cup-bearer to his position.
- Joseph asked the cup-bearer to remember him when he was restored and help him get out of the prison.
- The chief baker said his dream was three baskets of bread on top of his head for Pharaoh. Birds were eating the bread out of the basket.
- Joseph interpreted the dream saying the three baskets were three days. In three days Pharaoh would hang the baker on a tree, and birds would eat his flesh.

In verses 20-23 Joseph's interpretations were correct:

- In three days Pharaoh gave a feast for all his servants because it was his birthday. Pharaoh restored the chief cup-bearer to his position, and hanged the chief baker just as Joseph said.
- But the chief cup-bearer forgot all about Joseph.

Genesis 41

Chapter 41 Joseph interprets Pharaoh's dreams, is promoted, and begins to

run the country.

In verses 1-13 Pharaoh has a dream he does not understand:

- Two years later (after the chief cup-bearer had been restored), Pharaoh had a dream while he was standing beside the Nile.
- In the dream, 7 healthy cows came up out of the Nile and began to graze in the reeds. Then 7 sickly cows came and ate the 7 healthy cows.

Note: It was common for cattle to avoid the heat of the day and the flies by lounging in the river, then coming up out of the river to graze.

- Pharaoh fell asleep and dreamed again. This time 7 healthy heads of grain came up on a stalk. After them 7 thin heads of grain came up and ate the 7 healthy heads of grain.
- The next day Pharaoh was troubled by the dreams and called the magicians and wise men of Egypt. None of them could interpret the dreams.
- Then the chief cup-bearer remember Joseph, how he had interpreted his dream and the baker's dream and both came true.

In verses 14-36 Joseph is summoned to interpret Pharaoh's dream:

- Pharaoh summoned Joseph from prison.
- Pharaoh told Joseph he had been told Joseph could interpret dreams. Joseph said, not he but God could interpret the dream.
- Pharaoh recounted the dream about the cows and the dream about the heads of grain to Joseph.
- Joseph told Pharaoh the dreams are the same, and they indicated what God was going to do. The seven good cows and the seven good heads of grain represented seven good years. The seven thin cows and the seven thin heads of grain represented seven bad years.
- Joseph explained it meant seven years of abundance are coming which will be followed by seven years of severe famine. Since the dream came twice it means God has determined this will happen soon.
- Joseph advised Pharaoh to find someone wise and discerning to oversee the land. Take a fifth of the harvest of the land during the years of abundance, store it, and reserve it for the seven years of famine. If this was done, the country would not be wiped out during the years of famine.

In verses 37-45 Pharaoh placed Joseph over all the land of Egypt:

- Pharaoh and his servants liked Joseph's proposal.
- Pharaoh recognized that God had made all this known to Joseph, and there was no one wiser or as intelligent in Egypt.
- Pharaoh placed Joseph in charge of his house, and all of Egypt. Only with

regard to the throne would Pharaoh be above Joseph.

- Pharaoh gave Joseph his signet ring, fine linen garments, and a gold chain.
- Joseph rode in Pharaoh's second chariot with servants yelling "*Abrek!*"

Note: The precise meaning of "*Abrek*" is not certain. In Egyptian it means *attention*. In Hebrew it means *kneel*. Regardless, it served to announce a ruler's presence.

- Pharaoh gave Joseph the name Zaphnath-Paaneah, and also gave him a wife, Asenath, who was the daughter of Potiphera, the priest at On.

Note: Zaphnath-Paaneah means "Then God said, 'Let Him Live.'" Asenath means "She who belongs to the goddess Neith." On is Heliopolis, the center of sun worship in Egypt.

Note: Joseph was 17 years old when he was sold into slavery, and was 30 years old when he interpreted Pharaoh's dreams.

In verses 46-57 Joseph begins his administration over Egypt:

- Joseph travelled throughout the land of Egypt. He gathered all the excess food produced in the land during the seven years of abundance, and placed it in storehouses in every city. There was so much he stopped keeping track.
- Two sons were born to Joseph. The first was named Manasseh (meaning "God has made me forget all my hardship in my father's house"). The second was named Ephraim (meaning "God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction").
- Just as Joseph had predicted after the seven years of abundance came seven years of severe famine in every country.
- Joseph opened up the storehouses and sold food to the people.
- Every nation came to Egypt to buy grain because the famine was severe.

Note: God's vision to Joseph years earlier of nations bowing down to him was being fulfilled.

Genesis 42-47:27

Genesis 42-47:27 describes how God moved upon Israel, taking them to Egypt where they stayed for 400 years in fulfillment of God's prophecy to Abram (Genesis 15:13).

Genesis 42

Genesis 42 describes how God used the famine to move the people of Israel to Egypt.

In verses 1-5 Jacob sent his sons to Egypt to buy grain:

- The famine was severe in Canaan so Jacob gathered all his sons except Benjamin and sent them to Egypt to buy grain. He did not send Joseph's brother Benjamin because he was worried something might happen to him.

In verses 6-26 Jacob's sons arrive in Egypt to buy grain:


- Joseph's brothers arrive in Egypt to buy grain and bowed down before Joseph.

Note: This fulfills the another part of God's dream given to Joseph that his brothers would bow down to him.

- Joseph recognized his brothers and treated them harshly asking where they were from and accusing them of being spies.
- Joseph's ten brothers explained they were sons of one man who lived in Canaan. One brother was no longer, and the youngest remained home.
- Joseph accused them of being spies again, and tested them. He declared one of them must return and get the younger brother to see if what they were saying was true. The remaining brothers would be imprisoned. Joseph imprisoned them together for three days.
- After the three days Joseph said he feared God and would let them live if they were honest. He changed his plan saying nine could return with grain, while one brother would remain imprisoned.
- The brothers, speaking among themselves, concluded the trouble they were facing was because of the way they had treated Joseph when he had pleaded with them years before. Reuben reminded them how he had warned them not to harm Joseph but they had refused to listen so now they must account for his blood.
- The brothers did not realize that Joseph understood them because he had been using an interpreter.
- Joseph turned back to them and took Simeon and bound him. He ordered their containers filled with provisions, and for their money to be returned to their sacks.
- The brothers loaded their donkeys and returned home.

In verses 27-38 Joseph's brothers return home with their provisions:

- When they stopped for the night one of the brothers opened his sack to feed his donkey and discovered his money. They trembled, saying "What is this that God has done to us?"
- When they got back to Canaan they recounted to Jacob everything that happened in Egypt; how they had been accused of being spies, and how Simeon had been kept as a hostage until the youngest brother returned with them.
- As they emptied their sacks, each person's money was there and they



were afraid.

- Jacob said, first Joseph was gone, now Simeon is gone, and you want me to give you Benjamin? Jacob was in despair.
- Reuben stepped forward and said he would take care of Benjamin, and if he did not return him to Jacob, Jacob could kill his two sons.
- But Jacob answered no, because if anything happens to him (Benjamin) he would die in sorrow.

Some additional thoughts for consideration:

- *Joseph remained in prison two years after interpreting the chief cup-bearer's dream. While the cup-bearer may have forgotten about Joseph, the Lord had not. Neither does He forget us.*

What I Noticed Today

(Genesis 43-45)

Genesis 43

Chapter 43 describes the Jacob's decision to send his sons back to Egypt for more grain.

In verses 1-7 the famine in the land of Canaan persisted:

- The famine in the land of Canaan was severe so Jacob told his sons to go back to Egypt to buy more food.
- Judah reminded Jacob the man they met told they would not see his face unless they brought the youngest brother. Judah even said if you will not send him (Benjamin) we will not go.
- Judah implored Jacob to send them with Benjamin and promised to keep him safe. He would take responsibility for him, and if he did not bring him back he would be guilty before his father the rest of his life.
- Israel (Jacob) told his sons, then pack some of the best products of the land as a gift, and twice as much money. Take your brother Benjamin with you and may God be merciful to you and release Simeon and Benjamin to you.

In verses 15-30 the brothers journeyed to Egypt:

- The men took double the money, the gift, and Benjamin to Egypt and stood before Joseph.
- When Joseph saw Benjamin was with them he ordered his steward to take them to his home and prepare a noon-time meal.
- When the brothers learned they were being taken to Joseph's house they were afraid they were being taken as slaves because of the money from the first trip. They explained to Joseph's steward how the money from the first trip had appeared in their bags, but they had brought that money along with additional money back.
- The steward comforted them saying their God must have returned the money to them, because he had received their money.
- Then he brought Simeon out to them, washed their feet, and took care of their donkeys.
- When Joseph arrived at noon they brought out their gift and bowed down to him.
- Joseph asked about their elderly father (Jacob), and learned he was well.
- Joseph look up and seeing Benjamin, blessed him, then hurried out of the

room overcome with emotion.

Note: Benjamin was Joseph's only full-brother. This was the first time he blessed any of his brothers. As an Egyptian official, Joseph was likely wearing eye makeup which would have run when he cried and why he rushed out to wash his face.

- When he refreshed himself and returned to them he ordered the meal served.
- He ate by himself and the brothers by themselves, because Egyptians are abhorrent to Hebrews.
- Joseph had them seated in order of age from youngest to oldest which astounded the brothers. As they ate, Benjamin's portion was five times the portion of the others.
- They all drank and got intoxicated with Joseph.

Genesis 44

Chapter 44 details Joseph's second test of the character of his brothers.

In verses 1-17 as his brothers begin the journey back home to Jacob, Joseph devises another test of their character:

- Joseph commanded his steward to fill each of his brother's bags with as much food as they could carry, and to put their money at the top of their bag. The steward was also told to put Joseph's silver cup at the top of Benjamin's bag.
- The next morning the brothers left to return home. Shortly after they left Joseph told his steward to pursue them, stop them, and accuse them of stealing the silver cup.
- The brothers said they would do no such thing as to steal from Joseph. Anyone who had stolen must die, and they would become Joseph's servants.
- The steward said only the one who stole would be his slave and the rest would be blameless.
- Each man lowered his sack to the ground and the steward searched the sacks starting with the oldest down to the youngest, Benjamin. The cup was found in Benjamin's sack. The brothers tore their clothes and returned to the city.
- Joseph confronted his brothers once again saying, didn't you know I could discover such things by divination?

Note: Joseph did not need to use divination to discover their "theft" since he was ordered his steward to place the cup in Benjamin's sack. However, this would make the brothers think he had this power.

- Judah (the oldest) speaking for the group admitted they could not justify

themselves, because the Lord had exposed their iniquity. They would all become Joseph's slaves.

- Joseph refused the offer, saying only the man who stole the cup would be his slave, the others were free to go.

In verses 18-34 Judah pleads for his younger brother Benjamin:

- Judah appeals to Joseph referring to him as "my lord" as he explains the promise to return Benjamin for the sake of his elderly father.
- Judah asked that Joseph hold him accountable: keep him as a slave, but let the boy Benjamin return to his father. Judah said he could not bear to see the grief of his father if he lost this youngest son.

Note: Judah's speech to Joseph (vv. 18-34) is the longest speech in the Bible of any of Jacob's sons.

Genesis 45

In chapter 45 Joseph reveals himself to his brothers and they return to bring Jacob to Egypt.

In verses 1-14 Joseph reveals himself to his brothers and reconciles with them:

- Joseph was overcome with emotion and sent all his servants out of the room.
- Weeping loudly, he revealed himself to his brothers, but they were terrified of him.
- Joseph told them not to be afraid because they had sold him into slavery. God had sent him ahead of them so he could preserve their lives.

Note: Joseph told his brothers three times it was God who sent him to Egypt in order to preserve a remnant of the people of Israel.

- The famine had been going on for two years and had five years to go. Therefore, God had sent Joseph there to be ruler over Pharaoh's household and all of Egypt.
- Joseph told his brothers to return to Canaan and bring Jacob and all the family and animals back to Egypt and settle in the land of Goshen.

Note: Goshen is in the eastern region of Egypt along the Nile river delta.

- Joseph promised to sustain them during the next five years of famine. Otherwise, he said, they will become destitute.
- Apparently Joseph's brothers were still struggling to believe him so he told them to compare his eyes with the eyes of his younger brother, Benjamin to see that he was telling the truth about who he was.
- Then Joseph hugged Benjamin and wept. Then he kissed each of his

brothers, and talked with him.

Note: Joseph kissing his brothers, who had meant to harm him, was an act of acceptance and reconciliation.

In verses 16-28 the brothers set out for Canaan to bring Jacob back to Egypt:

- Pharaoh heard about Joseph's brothers being in Egypt and this pleased Pharaoh. He told Joseph to tell his brothers to go back to Canaan and bring their family back to Egypt where Pharaoh would give them the best land to live in.
- Joseph gave them wagons and provision for their journey including changes of clothes. To Benjamin he gave five changes of clothes and 300 pieces of silver. He also loaded 10 donkeys with the best products of Egypt, and 10 more donkeys carrying provisions.
- As they left Joseph told them not to argue amongst themselves on the way.
- So the brothers journeyed to Canaan and when they arrived they told their father that Joseph was alive and ruler over all of Egypt. At first Jacob did not believe them, but when they told him all Joseph had said and showed him the wagons he believed them.
- Jacob's spirit was revived and he (now being referred to as Israel) said he would go see Joseph before he died.

Some thoughts for additional consideration:

- *Joseph secretly tested his brother's hearts twice to see if they had repented of their actions toward him. When he saw they had indeed repented he revealed himself to them and reconciled with them.*
- *Joseph realized that while their brothers had meant to harm him, God was preparing him to be able to save his family just as God had promised years before.*
- *The trials we encounter in life are often used by God to prepare us for the next great work He has for us.*
- *God is with us, even during the times when we do not feel close to Him. God will be faithful to fulfill His promises when we remain obedient to Him!*

What I Noticed Today

(Genesis 46-48)

Genesis 46

Chapter 46 describes Jacob's journey to Egypt.

In verses 1-7 God reassures Jacob that he should go to Egypt where He would make him into a great nation:

- God appeared to Jacob in a dream and reassured Jacob that he should not be afraid to go to Egypt, that God would be with him and bring him back from there, and that Joseph himself would be with him when he died.
- Jacob left Beer-sheba along with his entire family and all his flocks and possessions in the wagons provided by Pharaoh and journeyed to Egypt.

In verses 8-27 is a record of all 70 of the family members of Jacob who made the journey to Egypt:

- Verses 9-15. Leah's children and grandchildren, a total of 33 people.
- Verses 16-18. Zilpah's children and grandchildren, a total of 16 people.
- Verses 19-22. Rachel's children and grandchildren, a total of 14 people.
- Verses 23-25. Bilhah's children and grandchildren, a total 7 people.

Note: Dinah was not included in the list, perhaps because she had no children. Er and Onan died before the journey to Egypt. Manasseh and Ephraim were born in Egypt.

In verses 28-34 Jacob and the family arrive in the land of Goshen in Egypt:

- Jacob sent Judah ahead to Joseph to prepare for their arrival at Goshen.
- Joseph went to Goshen to meet his father Israel (Jacob). When they met they hugged and wept for a long time.

Note: Joseph was 17 years old when he was sold into slavery by his brothers and 22 years had passed. This meeting between father and son was not only a reunion but a confirmation of God's promise to build Israel into a great nation.

- Joseph told his father and brothers that he was going to tell Pharaoh they had arrived from Canaan and settled in the land of Goshen. They were shepherds but also raise cattle, and they have brought everything they have with them.
- If asked, they were to tell Pharaoh they raised cattle, not that they were shepherds, because shepherds were abhorrent to the Egyptians.

Genesis 47

In Chapter 47 Pharaoh welcomes Jacob to Egypt, the famine continues, and Israel settles in Goshen.

In verses 1-12 Joseph introduces five of his brothers to Pharaoh:

- As promised, Joseph introduces the family to Pharaoh by taking five of his brothers with him.
- Pharaoh asked their occupation and the brothers said they were shepherds.

Note: The brothers did not do as Joseph had suggested telling Pharaoh they raised cattle. Instead they said they and their fathers were shepherds.

- Pharaoh granted them permission to settle in Goshen and suggested the most capable of them should care for Pharaoh's own livestock.
- Then Joseph presented his father Jacob to Pharaoh. Jacob told Pharaoh he had lived 130 difficult years. Jacob then blessed Pharaoh and left him.
- Joseph settled his father and the family in the land of Goshen just as Pharaoh commanded, and Joseph provided food for his father's household and all their dependents.

In verses 13-26 the famine continues and all the land becomes Pharaoh's:

- The severe famine continued and the land produced no crops. Joseph sold grain to the people and gave the money to Pharaoh until the people had no more money.
- As the famine continued the next year the people gave Pharaoh all their livestock in exchange for food, because they had no money.
- The next year with their money and livestock gone, the people sold their land to Pharaoh in exchange for food, and the people became the slaves of Pharaoh.
- Joseph then moved all the people from the fields to the cities because the land belonged to Pharaoh.
- The only land he did not acquire was that belonging to the priests because Pharaoh had given them this land and provided for them.
- Then Joseph gave the people seed to work their land. At harvest they owed 20% to Pharaoh and could keep the remainder for themselves.

In verses 27-31 Israel settled in the land of Goshen:

- Israel settled in the land of Goshen and acquired property there.
- They were fruitful and multiplied.
- Jacob lived 17 years there and was now 147 years old and near death.

- He called to his son Joseph and made him swear an oath not to bury him in Egypt, but to take back to the land of Canaan and bury him in Hebron with his fathers.

Note: The family burial place in Canaan was the Cave of Machpelah (Genesis 23:19).

Genesis 48

Genesis 48 describes Jacob's blessing of Ephraim and Manasseh.

In verses 1-12 Jacob prepares to bless Joseph's sons Ephraim and Manasseh:

- Joseph was told that his father was getting weaker, so he set out with his sons Ephraim and Manasseh to visit his father.
- Jacob sat up in bed and recounted to Joseph how God had appeared to him in Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed him. God promised to make him fruitful and to multiply his offspring so that many nations would come from him.
- Jacob then "adopted" Ephraim and Manasseh making them primary heirs along with his own children. Children born to Joseph after them would be counted in Joseph's line.

Note: This action elevated Joseph's sons to being attributed to Jacob. In this way, Joseph's family received a double portion of the inheritance which was normally due the first-born son. They replaced the first-born sons, Reuben and Simeon, from Leah because they had dishonored their father (Genesis 34:25-30).


- When Jacob saw Joseph's sons he had them brought forward to bless them. His eyesight was poor, but he kissed and embraced them. Then Joseph took them from his father's knees and bowed down before him.

In verses 13-22 Jacob blessed Joseph's sons Ephraim and Manasseh:

- When it came time to bless the boys Joseph placed Jacob's right hand on Manasseh's head and his left hand on Ephraim's head. But Jacob crossed his hands putting his right hand on Ephraim and his left hand on Manasseh.

Note: Joseph was expecting Jacob to bless his older son, Manasseh, with his right hand (the greater blessing is conferred with the right hand). This is the fourth generation in which God chose to bless the younger over the older: Isaac over Ishmael, Jacob over Esau, Joseph over Reuben, and Ephraim over Manasseh.

- Then Jacob blessed Joseph praising God for having been his shepherd all his life, for having protected from harm. He called on the God of his fathers Abraham and Isaac to bless the boys.
- When Joseph saw that Jacob had his right hand on Ephraim he tried to



reverse them, but Jacob refused saying the older will be a great tribe, but the younger will become a great nation.

- Then Jacob told Joseph even though he was about to die, God will be with you and bring you back to the land of your fathers. Over and above his inheritance Jacob also gave Joseph the mountain slope that he won from the Amorites in battle.

Note: There is no other scriptural reference to this battle with the Amorites in which Jacob won the mountain slope that he then gave to Joseph.

Some thoughts for additional consideration:

- *Abraham got in trouble by going to Egypt, and God had stopped Isaac from going there, but Jacob could go there in confidence because it was God's plan and he had come to believe God's promises.*
- *Even though they were sojourners in Egypt, God watched over them, fulfilling every promise to care and protect them.*
- *God is with us always wherever we are. He cares for His children and His promises are true.*

What I Noticed Today

(Genesis 49-50)

Genesis 49

Chapter 49 includes Jacobs final words of blessing and prophecies to his children.

In verses 1-2 Jacob calls all his sons together to issue his final prophecies regarding their future.

Note: Jacob's prophecies are delivered in three groups: the sons of Leah verses 3-15, the sons of the concubines Bilhah and Zilpah verses 16-21, and the sons of Rachel verses 22-27.

In verses 3-15 the prophecies regarding the sons of Leah:


- Reuben, the first born of Leah, excelling in prominence and power you will excel no more because you defiled your father's bed (when he slept with Bilhah the concubine, Genesis 35:22).
- Simeon and Levi, may I never enter their council or join their assembly. Their anger is cursed, for it is cruel. (They conspired to kill the men of Shechem after the rape of Dinah, Genesis 34:2).
- Judah, your brothers will praise you, you will defeat your enemies, your brothers will bow down to you. The scepter and staff (signs of kingship) will not depart from you until He (the Messiah) comes.
- Zebulun, you will live by the seashore, a harbor for ships, and his territory next to Sidon.
- Issachar, like a strong donkey will be forced to work for others.

In verses 16-21 the sons of the concubines Bilhah and Zilpah:

- Dan, you will judge people as one of the tribes of Israel, but will be like a snake in the road who bites from behind.
- Gad, you will be attacked by raiders, but you will attack their heels.
- Asher, your food will be rich and you will produce royal delicacies.
- Naphtali, you are like a doe set free.

In verses 22-27 the sons of Rachel:

- Joseph, the fruitful vine, he was made agile by the hands of the Mighty One, by the name of the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel, the God of your father, the Almighty who blesses you. May the blessing of your father and your ancestors rest upon you. You are the crown prince of your brothers.



Note: Jacob's blessing of Joseph is the longest of all his sons. He uses five different titles for God, and uses six references to blessings.

- Benjamin, you are a wolf who tears at his prey and divides his plunder in the evening.

In verses 29-33 Jacob issues his burial instructions to his sons:

- Jacob gathered his sons together and told them he was about to die.
- He instructed them to bury him in the cave at Machpelah near Mamre in the land of Canaan, that Abraham purchased from Ephron the Hittite as a burial site.
- Abraham and Sarah are buried there. Isaac and Rebekah are buried there. And Jacob had buried Leah there.
- When he finished giving his instructions, Jacob died and was gathered to his people.

Genesis 50

Chapter 50 describes Jacob's burial, Joseph's kindness to his brothers, and Joseph's death.

In verses 1-14 Joseph prepares Jacob for burial, and takes him to Canaan for burial:

- Joseph commanded the Egyptian physicians to embalm Jacob (Israel). That process took 40 days. The Egyptians mourned Jacob for 70 days.

Note: The normal time of mourning for a pharaoh was 72 days. The 70 days of mourning for Jacob is a reflection of the great respect Egyptians had for Joseph.

- When the days of mourning were over Joseph told Pharaoh of the oath he had taken to bury Jacob in Canaan, and asked permission to bury him there.
- Joseph led a procession of Egyptian leaders and elders from Egypt along with his own household (except for children and the flocks) to Canaan.

Note: Horses and chariots used in the procession were used only by Egyptian aristocracy.

- When they reached the threshing floor of Atad across the Jordan River, they stopped and mourned for seven days.

Note: This is the first time Joseph had been in his homeland of Canaan in 39 years.

- The Canaanites who witnessed the mourning renamed the place Abel-mizraim ("The Meadow of Egyptians").
- After the 7-day period of Hebrew mourning they carried Jacob to Canaan and buried him in the cave at Machpelah.

- After Joseph buried his father they all returned to Egypt.

In verses 15-21 Joseph shows kindness to his brothers:

- Now that Jacob was dead Joseph's brothers feared he would take revenge on them for the suffering he endured because of them.
- They sent a messenger to Joseph stating his father Jacob had asked Joseph to forgive his sons their trespasses and suffering they caused.
- Then his brothers came and bowed down before him saying they were his slaves.
- But Joseph reassured them saying he was not in the place of God. The brothers had planned evil against him, but God planned it for good; the survival of their people.
- Joseph promised to care for them and their children, and spoke kindly to them.

In verses 22-26 Joseph died:

- Joseph and his father's household remained in Egypt and he lived 110 years and saw the third generation of Ephraim's children.
- The sons of Manasseh's son Machir were recognized by Joseph (meaning they were ritually adopted by Joseph).
- Joseph told his brothers he was about to die but God will certainly come to you and bring you up from this land as He promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
- So Joseph made his brothers, the sons of Israel, swear an oath that when God comes to their aid they would carry his bones out of Egypt.
- Joseph died at 110 years old, was embalmed, and was buried in a coffin in Egypt.

Note: Joseph's death came 54 years after his father Jacob's death.

Some thoughts for additional consideration:

- *Looking back over the history from Abraham to Joseph we see generation after generation of lies and deceit and the consequences sin brings. And these are God's chosen people! In one way it's depressing, but it gives me comfort to know that despite their sin God chose them, and was with them through every difficulty.*
- *God is with us today as well, despite our lies, deceit, and sins He has chosen us and will be with us always!*