

## 01 - Genesis - In the Beginning

1:1-50:26

Key Verse: 1:1; 12:2

Genesis, the first book of Moses, is the book of beginnings. Through Genesis study, we can understand why our world is like it is, and where we must look to find a solution to its many problems. We also find that our lives have meaning and purpose. Chapters 1 and 2 tell us that God is almighty and that he is sovereign. He created a good and orderly world for his own glory and for our happiness. He established spiritual order: God first, mankind next, and the material world last. When this creation order was kept, the world was full of peace and righteousness; God was glorified, man was happy, and all creation rejoiced day and night. Chapter 3 tells the tragic story of the fall of man--his deliberate disobedience which broke creation order. The rest of the Bible is about the devastating effects of sin in man's life and in the world. It is about man's long pilgrimage back to the tree of life. It is the story of Almighty God who loves the world and did not give up on mankind. God's redemptive history runs from Genesis to Revelation like a bright thread of life and hope through the dark history of sinful man.

We will study chapters 1-11. These chapters set the stage for the rest of the book. When we accept Genesis 1:1 in our hearts, we can begin to understand the Bible, the world and ourselves.

### **IN THE BEGINNING** *Genesis 1:1-2, Key Verse: 1:1*

#### 1. God created the heavens and the earth (1)

"In the beginning God..." God is eternal. He is from everlasting to everlasting. He is almighty. He created the universe and all that is in it for his own good purpose. He is the Owner of all things. The world was not an accident--and neither am I. Life has meaning when we know our Creator, find his purpose for our lives, and live for his glory. Verse 1 introduces chapter 1. It proclaims God as the Creator of all things in heaven and on earth. By faith we know that God created the universe (Heb 11:3).

#### 2. The earth was formless, empty and dark (2)

Verse 2 describes the state of things before God spoke. A world--or a human soul--without God's word is chaotic, empty of life and meaning, and full of darkness. The rest of chapter one describes how God brought order out of chaos, shined light into darkness, and filled the emptiness with life.

Prayer: Lord God, Creator and Owner of all things, I worship you and I acknowledge your sovereignty over my life.

One Word: God created me and all things

### **LET THERE BE LIGHT** *Genesis 1:3-5, Key Verse: 1:3*

### 1. "And God said...and it was so" (3)

God created all things by his word: "And God said..." He reveals himself in his works of creation. He is personal. He feels and thinks and communicates with his creatures. We can know him. His first word on the first day of creation was, "'Let there be light,' and there was light." God's word has absolute authority. We must obey him.

### 2. God saw that the light was good (4-5)

The light which God called into being was good because it was just as God wanted it to be. It fit into his creation plan. Light is mysterious. It is the source of all energy. Without light, there can be no life. Jn 1:4 says that "In him was life, and that life was the light of men." 1Jn 1:5 says that God is light and in him there is no darkness. Darkness is the absence of light. God separated the night from the day, and set the stage for the work of the 4th day.

Prayer: Lord of light, shine into this dark world today; shine your holy light into my soul, that I may walk in the light of life.

One Word: God said, "Let there be light."

## **THE SECOND AND THIRD DAYS OF CREATION** *Genesis 1:6-13, Key Verse: 1:10*

### 1. The expanse he called "sky" (6-8)

On the second day, God stretched out the sky and made the atmosphere. Perhaps the waters above were the clouds. How delicately God balanced the oxygen, nitrogen, CO<sub>2</sub> and all the components of the air so that the atmosphere could sustain life and support birds in flight. The water below the sky was ready to be filled with fish. So God prepared the environment for his work of filling on the 5th day.

### 2. The dry ground he called "land" (9-13)

On the third day God spoke and the water under the sky gathered to one place; the dry land appeared, and God saw that it was good. Then God commanded all kind of vegetation to grow out of the ground. Plants and trees bore fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. So God made a beautiful and orderly world. It was ready for animal inhabitants and for mankind. God saw that it was good. He created the world for his glory and for man's happiness; God is good.

Prayer: Father, thank you for creating a beautiful world, a world made for your glory and our highest good.

One Word: The heavens declare his glory

## **GOD FILLS THE EMPTINESS** *Genesis 1:14-25, Key Verse: 1:21*

### 1. The fourth day of creation (14-19)

God put a great light in the sky--the sun. He put it there to give light to the earth, to rule the sky, and to glorify himself. He filled the night sky with the moon and stars. These lights mark the orderly flow of time. So God created time. Time is the stuff of which history is made.

## 2. The fifth day of creation (20-23)

God created the creatures of the sea--fish and reptiles; he created the birds to fly across the sky. He blessed his creatures and commanded them to fill the empty ocean and sky. Each living creature was made to reproduce according to its kind. God was pleased, and he blessed his work.

## 3. The beginning of the sixth day (24-25)

On the sixth day God made the land animals. The stage was set for the creation of mankind. On the 4th, 5th and 6th days God filled the environment he had prepared with life and beauty. God was pleased.

Prayer: Father, praise your holy name, for you are almighty and you are good. Help me to give you glory during my brief lifetime.

One Word: God made everything beautiful

**GOD CREATED MAN IN HIS OWN IMAGE** *Genesis 1:26-27, Key Verse: 1:27*

## 1. God had a plan (26)

God wanted to make a man in his own image. He wanted this man to be the crown of his creation, a steward and ruler over all things. He wanted a man who could share in his work, a man with whom he could talk, a man who would appreciate the beauty and wonder of creation, a man who could understand spiritual things, a man whom he could love and who could love him. He declared his intention. God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit would all participate in the creation of mankind.

## 2. Created in God's image (27)

On the sixth day God created men and women in his own image. Like the other animals, man must eat and sleep and give birth to children like himself. But unlike the animals, man is a soul. He shares God's life. He is weaker physically than the lion or the elephant, but he can rule over them because he is a rational, caring person. He can wonder about the meaning of his life. He longs for fellowship with God.

Prayer: Father, help me to grow in your image until your life in me rules my animal nature.

One Word: Created in God's own image

**GOD BLESSED THEM AND SAID, "BE FRUITFUL"** *Genesis 1:28, Key Verse: 1:28*

## 1. God blessed them (28a)

God did not create mankind to be miserable, but to be happy. He blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number." Their first joyful task was to fill the earth with people who, like themselves, bore God's image. Man's misery comes from sin, not from God (Ch 3).

## 2. God gave them mission (28b)

In verse 28, God gave mankind a blessed command; he commissioned them to do the work for which they were created. He commanded man to subdue the earth--to cultivate it, and to rule over the animal world. This command establishes spiritual order. God is over all; man obeys God; man rules the world. God's command opens the door to all study, research and work that is done for the glory of God, for the happiness of mankind and for the well-being of all created things. Man was created for mission. Men without mission cannot be happy.

Prayer: Father, help me to know you and stay in your will so that I may know and do the work you have for me to do.

One Word: Man = mission

## **IT WAS VERY GOOD** *Genesis 1:29-31, Key Verse: 1:31*

### 1. God is the giver of every good thing (29-30)

After commanding mankind to be the stewards of the world, God gave necessary food to them and to the animals. Men and animals were vegetarians. There was plenty of food for all, so there was no need to struggle for survival. That struggle would begin after the fall. Men and animals were at peace with one another (Isa 11). When men sought God's kingdom and righteousness first, everything they needed was provided (Mt 6:33).

### 2. It was very good (31)

God saw that the world he had created was good. There was spiritual order and beautiful harmony. Each act of creation fit into the whole, and man was the crown of creation. God was glorified, and all his creatures were happy. God is the one who alone can say what is good and what is bad; what is valuable and what is not. He created you and me and said, "It is good."

Prayer: Father, thank you for teaching me that my life is precious to you, and that you created me for a good purpose.

One Word: God said, "It is good."

## **SABBATH REST** *Genesis 2:1-3, Key Verse: 2:3*

### 1. The heavens and earth were completed (1)

For six days God worked hard and completed the heavens and the earth in all their vast array. He set an example which he commanded us to follow (Ex 20:11). He wants us to work hard for six days; he wants us to finish what we start.

## 2. On the seventh day God rested (2-3)

God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on that day he rested from all the work of creating he had done. He commanded mankind to keep the Sabbath day holy (Ex 20:8-11). Music needs rests; mankind needs rest in order to restore his soul and body, so the Sabbath was made for man. Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath. We cannot find true rest apart from him (Mk 2:27,28; Mt 11:28,29). Now, God is working all the time; we find rest and restoration when we participate in his work (Jn 5:17).

Prayer: Father, thank you for creating the Sabbath. Help me to work hard for six days and take time to come apart and worship and serve you one day in seven.

One Word: Keep the Lord's day holy

## **FROM THE DUST OF THE EARTH** *Genesis 2:4-7, Key Verse: 2:7*

### 1. No man to work the ground (4-5)

The seeds were in the ground and everything was ready to spring to life, waiting to be watered--but there was no man to take care of the earth. God made man to be the shepherd and steward of his world.

### 2. God formed from dust (6-7a)

God molded man and animals (19) from dust. There is nothing innately precious or valuable about the stuff of which we are made. We are nothing but dust. But the hand of the Master Workman molded us. His touch makes our dust special.

### 3. God breathed the breath of life (7b)

God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being--an immortal soul. God is the owner of life. He breathes into us both physical and spiritual life. We belong to God. He loves us. He created us in his image, so we must respect our own lives and the lives of others.

Prayer: Father, I am only dust, so I cannot be proud. But your life is in me; I am precious to you--and so are my neighbors and all human beings.

One Word: Made from dust--but God-breathed

## **THE LORD GOD PLANTED A GARDEN** *Genesis 2:8-14, Key Verse: 2:9*

## 1. The LORD God (8)

"LORD" was the name God taught Moses when he sent him to redeem his people from slavery in Egypt. It is a name that reflects God's love (Ex 3:14;6:3). He loves his people and wants to be with them to bless them. He wants man whom he created to be happy, so, as an expression of his love, he planted a beautiful garden for him. He provided everything necessary for man's happiness.

## 2. The trees and rivers of the garden (9-14)

The garden must have been full of flowers and singing birds and delicious vegetables, but here the beauty of the garden is represented by trees. They stand tall, representing all the things man needs for life and happiness. They were good for food; they were beautiful. Man who bears God's image could appreciate and enjoy them. There were two special trees put there to provide for man's spiritual need. God would say more about these later. The rivers suggest that the blessed life of the garden would follow the rivers and gradually spread to all the earth.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for your love, and for your gracious provision for my needs.

One Word: God wants mankind to be happy

**ADAM'S BIBLE** *Genesis 2:15-17, Key Verse: 2:17*

## 1. To work the garden and take care of it (15)

God created man for mission. He put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. He must subdue and rule over the earth by being the steward and shepherd of one garden.

## 2. The Sovereign God's command (16-17)

God's command has two parts: first, "You are free..." God owns the garden; he gave mankind freedom to enjoy it to the fullest. A man who knows that everything he has is God's gift, and who is thankful, is happy. Second, God put limits on freedom: "You must not eat..." This limit makes man truly free, for he is free under God. If he does not acknowledge God's sovereignty, he becomes a slave to his animal nature, to other men and to the material world. When mankind freely chooses to obey God's command, creation order is established in the world and in his own life. God warned mankind about the dire consequences of disobedience.

Prayer: Father, thank you for the Bible, your word. It tells me about your love for me; it tells me how to live a happy life in your world.

One Word: Love God; obey his word

**A SUITABLE HELPER** *Genesis 2:18-25, Key Verse: 2:18*

## 1. It is not good for the man to be alone (18-20)

There was one thing lacking in the Garden of Eden--man was lonely. God knew man's problem. Man was busy naming the animals which God created. He was working as a steward and shepherd, so he didn't have time to think much about himself. But God knew he needed a suitable helper.

## 2. God created woman (21-25)

The creation of woman is an extension of the creation of man. 1:27 says that God created mankind, male and female, in his own image. God put the man to sleep, took one of his ribs, and created woman. He brought her to the man to be his friend, and to help him do the work God had given them to do. God joined them together in the mysterious union called marriage. What God has joined, man should not separate. The man must make a commitment to his wife. They must pioneer a new world. The family is the first building block of society. There must be order; there must be love.

Prayer: Lord, establish families that are bound together in you to do your work.

One Word: God made marriage

## **WHERE ARE YOU, ADAM?** *Genesis 3:1-13, Key Verse: 3:9*

### 1. A friendly conversation with Satan (1-5)

The serpent represents Satan (Rev 12:9). He cleverly planted doubt of God's love in the woman. He told her that obeying God's command was not a life and death matter; that eating the forbidden fruit would make her powerful like God. Instead of being thankful to God for the garden, she began to complain in her heart. She took God's word lightly and Satan's word seriously, and disobeyed God. The man thoughtlessly followed his wife. Because they disobeyed God and followed Satan, they left God's kingdom and became slaves to the ruler of this world.

### 2. Where are you? (6-13)

Mankind's relationship with God was broken; they were lost. They didn't know who they were. They were ashamed and tried to cover themselves; they tried to hide from God. Each tried to escape responsibility and blame someone else. Sin had already begun to make men and women miserable.

Prayer: Father, help me to obey your word and not be deceived by Satan's lies.

One Word: Thank God, and obey him only

## **A WORLD UNDER CURSE** *Genesis 3:14-16, Key Verse: 3:15*

### 1. God cursed the serpent (14-15)

God cursed the serpent. He punished him by destroying his pride (14); Satan would be at war with mankind, but in the end, he would lose. God planted the hope and assurance of victory in man's heart. The offspring of the woman would someday crush Satan's head. Jesus, the offspring of the woman, did this. He was sorely wounded, but he won the victory by his death and resurrection.

## 2. Woman's punishment (16)

God's blessing became a curse. Woman's greatest joy became her greatest pain; furthermore, she became a captive to her own desire, and instead of being a willing and joyful helper and friend to her husband, she became his slave. Only Jesus can set women free from the curse of slavery to desire, and enable her to serve God in freedom and joy.

Prayer: Father, I was born under the curse of sin; but I thank you for Jesus, who sets me free and gives me hope and makes me fruitful.

One Word: Jesus crushed Satan's head

## **MAN WITHOUT MISSION** *Genesis 3:17-19, Key Verse: 3:17*

### 1. Because you listened to your wife (17a)

When God rebuked him, Adam blamed his wife, and even hinted that his predicament was God's fault. But Adam could not avoid responsibility. He had God's clear command. He should obey God, no matter who suggested that he do otherwise. God's word must always have priority over every other word or idea. And God must be first in our affections.

### 2. Cursed is the ground (17b)

God cursed the ground because of man's disobedience. He did so in hope that men would repent. All creation suffers because of man's sin. So all creation waits for mankind's redemption.

### 3. Life without mission (18-19)

Man must now wrest three meals a day from the soil; he must labor for his own survival--then, in the end, die. Man without a mission from God must live a meaningless existence. Only Jesus can restore meaning and mission.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for restoring meaning and mission through your gospel.

One Word: Life without mission = misery

## **GOD'S LOVE FOR FALLEN MANKIND** *Genesis 3:20-24, Key Verse: 3:21*

### 1. Garments of skin (20-21)



Even though Eve had been a poor helper for Adam, he accepted her as his wife and as the mother of all the human race. As Satan had promised, their eyes were opened to know good and evil; but Satan had not told them the whole story. Because of sin, they were filled with shame; man's self-image became ugly. He could not like himself or anyone else. But God still loved them. He shed the blood of an animal and made garments of skin to cover their shame. God didn't give up on them, for love never gives up.

## 2. Banished from the Garden (22-24)

The tree of life was in the garden. Man in his fallen estate should not eat of it and live forever, so God banished him from the Garden. The tree of life appears again in Revelation 22:2,14,19. God gives eternal life to those who believe in Jesus. He plants hope in the hearts of men who must live in a cursed world.

Prayer: Father, thank you for covering my sin and shame with the blood of Jesus, and for giving me hope.

One Word: Garments of skin

## **CAIN AND ABEL** *Genesis 4:1-16, Key Verse: 4:7*

### 1. Cain's and Abel's offerings (1-5)

God accepted Abel's offering, but he did not accept Cain's. Cain offered something as if he were doing God a favor. Abel brought the first and best of his flock. He came by faith, knowing that he was a sinner. He feared and thanked God. When rebuked, Cain did not repent. He became angry.

### 2. If you do what is right (6-8)

God loved Cain and gave him a precious word. He warned him that sin, like a crouching lion, was at the door of his heart. He could take hold of God's word and overcome sinful desire. But Cain rejected God's word. Sin conquered him; he murdered his brother.

### 3. A restless wanderer on the earth (9-16)

Cain talked back to God, "Am I my brother's keeper?" God cursed the ground, and Cain became a restless wanderer, a man with no roots and no heavenly destination. He was full of fear and anxiety. He was cut off from the source of spiritual life. Still, God protected him with a mark-- but he was marked as a murderer.

Prayer: Father, help me to keep your word in my heart so that sin may not master me.

One Word: Don't become a restless wanderer

## **CAIN'S DESCENDANTS** *Genesis 4:17-26, Key Verse: 4:26*

## 1. A godless culture (17-24)

Cain wanted to be remembered--he longed for eternity. He wanted human fame. He bore a son, and built a city, and named the city for his son. Among his descendants we find the first musician, the first cattle rancher and the beginnings of technology. But the godless culture he spawned was full of violence, hatred and revenge; it was polygamous. Lamech sang a rap song praising violence and revenge to his wives. He made God's gracious promise to Cain an excuse for murder. Godless cultures degenerate into corruption and violence.

## 2. Men began to call on God (25-26)

God granted Adam and his wife a third son, Seth. Adam was grateful to God. When Seth's son Enosh was born, men began to call on the name of the Lord. Men asked God's mercy and help and put their trust in him. The slender thread of God's life in man was not broken. Hope was still alive.

Prayer: Father, thank you for raising up a few men of God even in the most godless culture.

One Word: Call on the name of the Lord

## **FROM ADAM TO NOAH** *Genesis 5:1-32, Key Verse: 5:24*

### 1. In God's image (1-17)

Adam's descendants through Seth were different from the descendants of Cain. Cain's descendants were corrupt and full of violence, but Seth's descendants called on the name of the Lord (4:24). God created mankind in his own image. Even though Adam sinned, the image of God was still there. Seth's descendants were mortal men: They were born, they begot children, and they died. Their life spans were long--perhaps the ravages of sin had not yet set in. Seth bore the image of his father Adam, and the image of God.

### 2. Enoch and Noah (18-32)

Enoch was in Seth's line. Hebrews 11:5,6 says that he was a man whose faith pleased God. He did not experience death; he walked with God, and God took him to heaven. Another Lamech is in Seth's line. He is quite different from the self-centered descendant of Cain. He feared God and overcame his despair, so he could name his son "Noah."

Prayer: Father, help me to walk with you as Enoch did, and hold your hope in my heart.

One word: Walk with God

## **NOAH'S ARK** *Genesis 6:1-22, Key Verse: 6:9*

### 1. The Lord was grieved (1-13)

God looked at men's hearts. He saw that people only tried to please themselves. Marriage is the touchstone of faith. Men of God should marry women of God, but instead, they chose wives who pleased their physical senses. So marriage lost its spiritual meaning; man became flesh. He ate and drank and had sex, but he shut God out of his life (Lk 17:26,27). He produced beautiful children, but they too were men and women of flesh. God's heart was full of pain. He was grieved. Corruption and violence spread. God made a hard decision.

## 2. Noah found favor with God (14-22)

Noah also ate, drank, and had children. But he walked with God. God told Noah that he was going to destroy the earth. He told him to build an ark for himself, his family and the animals. Noah believed God and obeyed his word (6:22;7:5,9,16). He had the courage to live by faith (Heb 11:7). So he became the lifeline of the human race.

Prayer: Lord, help me not to grieve you, but to obey your word and live by faith.

One Word: Don't grieve God--believe and obey

## **THE FLOOD** *Genesis 7:1-24, Key Verse: 7:23*

### 1. Go into the ark (1-16)

Noah believed God and built the ark. God made a covenant with Noah (6:18). When the time came, he commanded Noah to enter the ark with his family. He took pairs of every living creature, and necessary food for them and for his family. Noah did all that God had commanded. They went into the ark and the Lord shut the door. Those who entered the ark by obedient faith were saved; all others were lost. In the same way, God saves those who come to Jesus and put their trust in him. Those who refuse God's provision for salvation will be lost (Jn 3:16-18).

### 2. The floodgates of heaven were opened (17-24)

They entered the ark on the 17th day of the 2nd month of Noah's 600th year. On that day the flood came. Water came up from the ground and rain poured from the sky. It rained 40 days and 40 nights, and water covered the earth. Even the highest mountains were covered with water. Only Noah and those with him in the ark survived.

Prayer: Father, your judgment is just; I also deserve to die; keep me in Jesus, the ark of my salvation.

One Word: Fear God; trust and obey him

## **GOD REMEMBERED NOAH** *Genesis 8:1-22, Key Verse: 8:1*

### 1. God restores creation (1-17)

The earth was covered with water, as it had been in the beginning. But Noah's ark floated on the surface of the water. For Noah's sake, God again made the earth habitable. He pushed back the flood waters with a wind. The dry land appeared. The dove and raven tested the atmosphere as the first birds had on the 5th day. When the dove brought back a green olive leaf, Noah knew that the earth was not dead but alive! Hope was born in his heart.

## 2. Noah worships God (18-22)

Noah came out of the ark at God's command, one year and ten days after he entered it. Noah knew he was a sinner. He deserved to perish, but by God's grace he was saved. He built an altar and, with a thankful heart, offered a burnt offering to atone for sin. God accepted his offering. God knew that man's sinful heart had not been changed (8:21), but he accepted Noah's offering and looked forward to the perfect sacrifice for sin.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for remembering sinners and providing for our redemption.

One Word: God welcomes sinners who come to him

## **THE COVENANT OF LIFE** *Genesis 9:1-17, Key Verse: 9:16*

### 1. Order restored (1-3)

God blessed Noah as he had blessed Adam (1:28a). But creation order had been broken by man's sin, so man could not rule over the earth without God's help. No one can live in chaos, so God reestablished order. But it was an order based on fear, not on love and respect. Man became carnivorous. "Survival of the fittest" became the rule. Because of the carnage of the flood, life became cheap. So God had to teach man the value of life.

### 2. Man's life is precious (4-17)

The value of man's life is not derived from his pragmatic usefulness. He is valuable because he bears God's image (6). The fetus in the womb, the retarded or old person all have God's life in them. God taught the value of human life by making murder a capital offense. The covenant of life and the rainbow remind us that all life belongs to God. God remembered Noah's offering, and set aside blood to use as a sacrifice for sin on the altar (Lev 17:11). It was for atonement and man's spiritual life.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to respect every person, for your image is in each of us.

One Word: God made man in his image

## **THE SONS OF NOAH** *Genesis 9:18-28, Key Verse: 9:23*

### 1. Ham's disrespect for his father (18-22)

Noah was a man of human weaknesses. One day, he enjoyed wine and got drunk and lay uncovered in his tent. His two older sons respected their father and covered his shame. But Ham made fun of him.

## 2. Noah curses Canaan (23-28)

The human race was beginning again, and there was only one family on earth. From this family came the people who populated the earth. Noah cursed Ham's son Canaan because of what Ham had done. This was not just a family matter; Noah's family was the first building block of human society. Man must live in community, and there must be respect and order. A father, a king or a president must be respected because he represents the whole. Order in society demands that respect be given to those to whom respect is due (Ro 13:6,7). The words of Noah were prophetic. The descendants of Canaan were corrupt; God's hand of judgment fell on them when Israel conquered Canaan.

Prayer: Father, restore mutual respect to this nation and its families.

One Word: Respect to whom respect is due

## **THE CLANS OF NOAH'S SONS** *Genesis 10:1-32, Key Verse: 10:9*

### 1. The Japhethites (1-5)

Japheth was apparently the oldest (21). After Babel (ch 11), people spread to their territories. Their clans became nations, each with its own language. Some sons of Japheth built boats and sailed the oceans. Perhaps they were the ancestors of the Europeans.

### 2. The Hamites (6-20)

Among Ham's descendants were both godly and ungodly people. There was Nimrod, son of Cush. He was a powerful and godly man (9). He built the great cities of Mesopotamia: Babylon and Nineveh. The Cushites also pioneered Africa. Canaan was another son of Ham. The Canaanites lived in the land God gave to Abraham. They were godless and corrupt; God's judgment fell on them.

### 3. The Semites (21-32)

The descendants of Shem are the ancestors of the oriental peoples. Abraham was from the line of Shem. This genealogy is repeated in 11:10-26.

Prayer: Lord, I praise you for your sovereign rule of history. Help me to live before you even in a godless society.

One Word: Nimrod, a mighty man before God

## **THE TOWER OF BABEL** *Genesis 11:1-26, Key Verse: 11:6,7*

### 1. A tower that reaches to heaven (11:1-4)

The descendants of Noah settled in the plain of Shinar. Contrary to God's command, they decided not to scatter. They all spoke the same language. They developed technology. They believed in their human invincibility. Together they could rule the world without God. So they decided to build a tower that reached to the heavens. It would be a symbol of their pride and human greatness. They didn't need God. People still build such monuments to pride.

### 2. The Lord scattered them (5-9)

God saw their pride and disobedience, but he did not destroy them. Instead, he effectively thwarted their plans by confusing their language. They couldn't talk to each other without intense language study; so they scattered.

### 3. God's new plan (10-26)

God quietly began his own plan to save the world. He would focus on one man. So the genealogy of Shem is repeated, for it leads to Abram.

Prayer: Lord, help us to obey your word instead of using technology to build towers.

One Word: Use abilities to glorify God

**YOU WILL BE A BLESSING** *Genesis 11:27-12:9, Key Verse: 12:2,3*

### 1. Leave your country (11:27-12:1)

Abram lived in a world under curse. His wife was barren. He was stuck in a fruitless, meaningless life. Then God called him to leave his father's house and go to an unknown land.

### 2. I will bless you (2-5)

God does not call men to make them miserable. God promised to bless Abram. He promised to make this barren man into a great nation. He promised to make his name great. God would train him in faith until he became a man of great inner strength and character. God promised to make Abram a source of blessing for all people (Gal 3:8,9). God blesses us so that we can be a blessing.

### 3. Building altars in Canaan (6-9)

Abram obeyed God's word and left. When he and his family arrived in Canaan, God promised, "To your offspring I will give this land." Abram believed God and built an altar. He continued to build altars and call on the name of the Lord as he lived in tents in the promised land among the powerful Canaanites.

Prayer: Lord, give me courage to live by faith, and make me a blessing.

One Word: Blessed to be a blessing

**ABRAM GOES DOWN TO EGYPT** *Genesis 12:10-13:4, Key Verse: 13:4*

1. "Say you are my sister" (10-16)

Abram went to Canaan in obedience to God's word; he went to Egypt because of a material problem created by the famine. He did not pray or build altars in Egypt. He made a selfish plan for his own survival (11-13). His plan worked; he was treated well for Sarai's sake, and his life was spared (16). But he lost his wife, and the possibility of having children by her, and he lost the land God had promised him.

2. Abram comes out of Egypt (17-13:4)

Abram was trapped by his own folly. He did not know that God was in Egypt, but God was there. The Lord inflicted serious diseases on Pharaoh's household. Pharaoh realized that he was in trouble because of Sarai, so he expelled Abram's family from Egypt—with all the wealth they had acquired there. Abram returned to the altar he had built before, and again called on the name of the Lord. This was an act of repentance; it was a new beginning. God helped and blessed him in spite of his weaknesses.

Prayer: Lord, help me to depend on you and not on my human calculations.

One Word: A man of God must live by faith

**ABRAM AND LOT SEPARATE** *Genesis 13:5-13, Key Verse: 13:8,9*

1. God blessed Abram and Lot (5-9)

Abram came out of Egypt with great wealth and with a repentant heart. He trusted God and returned to his altar-building life. Lot, his nephew, moved around with Abram, but he maintained an independent life. Because of Abram Lot too became wealthy. Then a problem arose: The land could not support them together. So when their herdsmen began to quarrel, Abram suggested that they separate. Lot jumped at the chance. Abram offered Lot first choice. He regarded his relationship with Lot as more important than getting the best land.

2. Lot's choice (10-13)

The valley of the Jordan looked like a combination of the garden of the Lord and the land of Egypt--the best of both worlds. So Lot chose this, and moved near the city of Sodom. Two things about Sodom are mentioned here: First, it would be destroyed; second, the men of Sodom were sinning greatly against the Lord. Lot's selfish decision seemed small, but it would lead him to destruction.

Prayer: Lord, help me to trust you and your blessings; keep me from compromise.

One Word: People before property

**GOD ENCOURAGES ABRAM** *Genesis 13:14-18, Key Verse: 13:14,15*

1. After Lot had parted from him (14a)

After Lot left, Abram must have felt depressed. He loved Lot; perhaps he even regarded him as a son and heir to his material and spiritual treasures. Abram and Lot had been through many hard experiences together. Now, Lot was gone. He had accepted Abram's generous offer, laid claim to the best part of the land, and left.

2. The Lord said to Abram... (14b-18)

In at least five times of crisis God reminded Abram of the covenant promises. This was one of those times. God did not help Abram with material things or human comfort. He did not give him a son at this time. Nor did he leave him sitting in his tent feeling sorry for himself. He said, "Lift up your eyes.. Look! All the land you see I will give to you and your offspring forever." Then he told Abram to take a long walk. Abram believed God. He obeyed him and moved to Hebron, and there he built an altar of worship and thanksgiving.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for your promises which strengthen my heart.

One Word: God's word gives us strength

**ABRAM RESCUES LOT** *Genesis 14:1-16, Key Verse: 14:14*

1. Lot is captured (1-12)

The kings of the Tigris-Euphrates Valley, as well as the kings who lived near the Dead Sea, were vassals of Kedorlaomer, king of Elam (modern Iraq). After 12 years, the five kings who lived in the valley of the Dead Sea decided to quit paying him tribute. The next year, Kedorlaomer came with his allies, steam-rolled the whole region, then met the five kings in a show-down battle. His victory was complete. He took all the goods, food and many hostages from Sodom and Gomorrah, and left. Lot, who had moved into town, was among those carried off.

2. Abram's shepherd heart (13-16)

Abram had kept out of war and politics. He had maintained a low profile during the invasion. But the news of Lot's capture galvanized him to action. He marshaled his forces and pursued the enemy halfway back to Haran. By clever strategy, he defeated the most powerful ruler in the Middle East and rescued Lot. This dangerous and costly venture reveals Abram's shepherd heart.

Prayer: Lord, give me a heart that really cares about your sheep.

One Word: A shepherd heart pleases God



## **THE BLESSING OF MELCHIZEDEK** *Genesis 14:17-24, Key Verse: 14:19,20*

### 1. Melchizedek (18-20)

Abram returned triumphantly with much booty and great fame. He might have said, "God is keeping his promise to give me the land and make my name great," and claimed the power and wealth which his victory put within his reach. He might have abandoned his spiritual calling. He needed a shepherd. So God sent Melchizedek, priest of God Most High (See Heb 7:1,2). He ate a fellowship meal with Abram. Then he blessed Abram in the name of God Most High, Creator (Possessor) of heaven and earth and source of every blessing. He praised God Most High for giving Abram the victory. Abram raised his hand and took an oath of fealty to God Most High (22), and then he gave Melchizedek a tithe of everything, a symbol of commitment to God his Sovereign King.

### 2. Bera king of Sodom (17, 21-24)

The king of Sodom came with a tempting offer that would make Abram rich and powerful. But Abram did not want the wealth of Sodom. He wanted God's blessing only.

Prayer: Lord, help me to live as your servant and be content with your blessing.

One Word: Blessed be God Most High

## **FAITH CREDITED AS RIGHTEOUSNESS** *Genesis 15:1-6, Key Verse: 15:6*

### 1. I am your very great reward (1)

After his great victory and his clear decision to reject political power and wealth, Abram went home and thought about his own situation. Lot had returned to Sodom. Fear and a sense of loss crept into Abram's heart. At this time, God's word came to him in a vision. God himself was Abram's shield--his sure protector. God himself was Abram's everlasting portion and great reward.

### 2. So shall your offspring be (2-6)

Then Abram laid before the Lord his real problem--he had no heir. What good were great possessions to him if he had no son to inherit them? So God took him out of his small, dark tent, and told him to look up and count the myriads of stars which the Creator God had hung in the heavens. This Almighty God promised to give him a son from his own body, and descendants as numerous as the stars. Abram believed God. Heavenly sunlight shone into his dark heart. God forgave his fear and doubt, and his relationship with God was made right.

Prayer: Lord, you are my shield and great reward.

One Word: Faith credited as righteousness

## **A COVENANT OF ETERNAL FRIENDSHIP** *Genesis 15:7-21, Key Verse: 15:7*

### 1. I will give you this land (7-16)

When Abram had no hope of having an heir, he had no interest in the land. Now, he believed that God will give him son. But how could his descendants become numerous enough to possess the land? Even Abram and Lot could not live together in the land. God answered by instructing him to prepare for a covenant ceremony. He did so, and as the sun was setting, he fell into a deep, trance-like sleep. God revealed a remarkable plan. He would use the dark womb of Egypt and the suffering of slavery to mold Abram's descendants into a great nation. Then, at the right time, he would send them back to Canaan as his instrument of judgment on the godless Amorites.

### 2. A covenant sealed with fire (17-21)

When the sun had set, the Lord consumed the offering with a blazing torch and sealed his friendship covenant with Abram. He promised to give him the land from Egypt to the Euphrates River--the world that Abram knew (Ro 4:13).

Prayer: Lord, thank you for stooping to be our friend, and for keeping your promises.

One Word: God's great plan

## **GOD WHO SEES** *Genesis 16:1-16, Key Verse: 16:13*

### 1. Impatience is unbelief (1-4)

Abram and Sarai were impatient about God's promise. Sarai knew Abram's great desire for a son. She became fatalistic about herself. She loved Abram. They did not pray. She decided to sacrifice her own feelings as a woman and solve Abram's "no son" problem. When she suggested that he sleep with Hagar, he quickly acquiesced.

### 2. Obedience is belief (5-16)

Hagar conceived. She became proud and self-confident. When Sarai made it clear that she was the mistress of the household, and Abram supported her, Hagar ran away into the desert. God met her there, gave her a promise, and sent her back to live in a hard situation. Hagar believed God's promise and obeyed his word. Because of her faith in God's promise, she could endure her hard life for the sake of her son. She met God personally and confessed her faith, "I have seen the One who sees me."

Prayer: Lord, help me to learn the patience of faith and prayer. Help me to believe your promises and obey your word.

One Word: Obey the God who sees

## **FROM ABRAM TO ABRAHAM** *Genesis 17:1-8, Key Verse: 17:5*

## 1. Walk before God Almighty (1-3a)

After Ishmael's birth, thirteen years elapsed. Abram was busy being a good father to him. He thought that his "no son" problem was solved. But he was living a compromised life, for his heart was not wholly committed to God. When the Lord appeared to him and reminded him that God is Almighty, and called him to walk before God, not before his wives and son, Abram fell facedown in repentance.

## 2. Your name will be called Abraham (3b-8)

Abram means, "noble father," Abraham means "father of nations." God had a great plan for Abram. He wanted him to be the father of faith for the whole world--not just the physical father of one son. The Eternal God wanted to make an everlasting covenant with him. God called Abraham and blessed him so that through his descendants all nations might be blessed. God's long-range plan was to send the Savior of the world through Abraham.

Prayer: Lord, help me to walk before you with an undivided heart, and be a blessing to the world.

One Word: To bless all nations

## **THE EVERLASTING COVENANT** *Genesis 17:9-27, Key Verse: 17:19*

### 1. The sign and seal of the covenant (9-14)

God told Abraham to undergo circumcision, and to circumcise every male in his household as a sign of the covenant. This covenant was established by God as an everlasting covenant. God is Spirit and he alone is everlasting, so this is essentially a spiritual covenant. The physical act was an act of obedience which symbolized spiritual reality (Dt 30:6; Ro 2:28).

### 2. The promise of a son, Isaac (15-22)

The covenant son was a son of promise. He was the one through whom God would bless the world. Abraham loved Ishmael, but Ishmael, the fruit of impatience and unbelief, could not be the covenant son.

### 3. Abraham's obedience (23-27)

Abraham did not put off doing the hard thing. He obeyed that very day. He accepted the covenant promise and expressed his faith by his obedience.

Prayer: Lord, help me to express my faith in you and in your promises by obedience to your word. Thank you for the new covenant in Jesus' blood.

One Word: Believe the covenant promise

## **ABRAHAM'S HOSPITALITY--GOD'S PROMISE** *Genesis 18:1-15, Key Verse: 18:14*

## 1. Unexpected guests (1-8)

The Lord and two angels came to visit Abraham, God's friend. Abraham welcomed the visitors wholeheartedly, even though he may not have recognized them at first. They accepted his wholehearted invitation and his enthusiastic serving. His whole household participated. They served the guests with joy. God's people should show hospitality to strangers (Heb 13:2).

## 2. God's promise to Sarah (9-15)

Sarah needed faith. Abraham had already been told about Isaac, but Sarah needed to repent of her fatalism and unbelief and put her trust in God. She was too old to have children, so she needed resurrection faith in the Creator God, the Author of life. The Lord gave her a concrete promise to believe, and he taught her through a rebuke that nothing is too hard for the Lord.

Prayer: Lord, give me an open hand and heart toward the guests you send. Help me to be your friend, and help me to have "nothing is too hard for the Lord " faith.

One Word: Nothing is too hard for the Lord

**TO KEEP THE WAY OF THE LORD** *Genesis 18:16-21, Key Verse: 18:19*

## 1. Shall I hide my plan from Abraham? (16-19)

God chose Abraham to make him a great nation. He had promised to bless him, and through him, to bless all nations on earth. In order to claim God's blessings, Abraham's descendants must know God; they must keep his ways by doing what is right and just. So God taught Abraham that God hates sin; he is a God of judgment as well as a God of blessing. Abraham's personal relationship with God deepened. He was called a friend of God (Isa 41:8; Jn 15:15).

## 2. The outcry against Sodom is great (20-21)

Sodom and Gomorrah were known to be very wicked cities. When the Lord said that he would check out Sodom to see if it was as bad as he had heard, Abraham knew what the result would be. Sodom well deserved God's wrath and punishment. Abraham had an interest in Sodom because Lot lived there. God wanted Abraham to know how much God hates wickedness, and he wants Abraham's descendants--including us--to know that God is a Righteous Judge as well as a loving Father.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to keep your ways and do what is right and just.

One Word: Keep the way of the Lord

**ABRAHAM INTERCEDES FOR SODOM** *Genesis 18:22-33, Key Verse: 18:25b*

## 1. The righteous Judge of all the earth (22-26)

When the angels set out for Sodom, Abraham knew that Sodom would not pass God's test. He was distressed because of Lot, who lived there--so he stood before the Lord and prayed for Sodom. He based his prayer on the righteous character of God. The word "righteous" or "right" appears here seven times. Abraham believed that the Judge of all the earth would not destroy the innocent. Abraham knew that Lot was essentially a moral man; he hoped there were others like him. Abraham could not help Lot any more--but he prayed for him.

## 2. I am nothing but dust and ashes (27-33)

Abraham prayed with a shepherd heart for Lot. He humbled himself before God, and asked God to spare the city for the sake of 50 righteous men. He kept on, until God agreed to spare the city for the sake of ten. God would spare even Sodom for the sake of his remnant. When God destroyed Sodom, he remembered Abraham and spared Lot (19:29).

Prayer: Lord, I am dust and ashes, and you are great and righteous; thank you for hearing and answering prayer.

One Word: Prayer makes a difference

## **GOD SPARES LOT** *Genesis 19:1-38, Key Verse: 19:29*

### 1. The destruction of Sodom (1-29)

Lot was a believer but he loved the world. He thought he would be happy if he moved to Sodom, but he was not. He had many possessions, but he was poor in spirit. So he entertained the strangers without any joy and without any help from his family. He tried to live a moral life, but he had to compromise (6-8). He had no friends, for he lived like a Pharisee rather than a shepherd (9). Even his future sons-in-law had no respect for him (19). His heart was captured by the false material security of city life, so he could not leave Sodom by his own strength (15-22), and Mrs. Lot could not leave at all! But God remembered Abraham and brought Lot out of the catastrophe (29).

### 2. Lot's daughters (30-38)

Lot's daughters grew up to be just like the people of Sodom. They lived by situation ethics, following the ways of the world. So they committed incest with their father and left behind them children who would become a curse, not a blessing.

Prayer: Lord, help me to live like Abraham, not like Lot.

One Word: The Lord remembered Abraham

## **ABRAHAM AND ABIMELECH** *Genesis 20:1-18, Key Verse: 20:7*

### 1. When fear comes in (1-13)

Abraham had prayed for Sodom and had witnessed its destruction. He was shaken. So he moved away into Philistine territory. He did not pray. Sorrow and fear ruled his heart and made him weak and foolish. Abimelech looked like a godless giant. Abraham's old sinful habit came back. He told the same selfish half-truth as he had told in Egypt (12:10-20). He lied to Abimelech and Abimelech took Sarah. God protected them and held Abimelech responsible--even though he had acted in ignorance. God warned him to return Abraham's wife and to ask Abraham to pray for him--then he would live. God helped his servant Abraham in his time of weakness.

## 2. Abimelech's apology (14-18)

Abraham was wrong. He thought that God's rule did not extend to Philistine territory, but God was there. Abimelech and his people feared God. He had a moral conscience. He returned Sarah, and Abraham prayed for him. Abraham needed to trust God and believe his love. He needed God's training.

Prayer: Lord, help me to love and fear you and to remember that all people are made by you.

One Word: Abraham prayed for Abimelech

## **THE LORD DID WHAT HE HAD PROMISED** *Genesis 21:1-7, Key Verse: 21:1*

### 1. At the very time God had promised him (1-2)

God keeps his promises. The words "as he had said" and "what he had promised" emphasize God's faithfulness. God is the God of history. His timing is important. He teaches us faith and hope by making us wait on him. He gives his promised blessings at just the right time. God kept his promise to Sarah; her son was born at just the right time. God also waited a long time to send the Messiah. When the time had fully come, he sent his Son (Gal 4:4).

### 2. God has brought me laughter (3-7)

Abraham named his son "Isaac." It was an act of faith and obedience. Isaac means "he laughs." Isaac brought joy to Abraham's family. Ishmael had seemed to be the solution to Abraham's "no son" problem, but he was not God's solution. He had brought tension and compromise to Abraham's home. But Isaac was the child of promise. God's blessings are always better than things we grab for ourselves. We must wait on God.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to believe your promises and wait patiently on your time.

One Word: God's blessings are best

## **GET RID OF THE SLAVE WOMAN AND HER SON** *Genesis 21:8-21, Key Verse: 21:12*

### 1. Abraham's distress (8-13)

Ishmael was the fruit of Abraham's and Sarah's unbelief and impatience. His presence in Abraham's household was a threat to baby Isaac. At Isaac's weaning party, Sarah asked Abraham to get rid of the slave woman and her son. Abraham was distressed, because he loved his son. While Sarah's words came from her human feelings, God also wanted to protect Isaac, for he was the covenant bearer. God promised to take care of Ishmael--but Isaac was the child of promise, the covenant bearer through whom all nations would be blessed. Abraham obeyed God with the obedience that comes from faith. He did not put off the hard job.

## 2. Hagar meets the God who hears and sees (14-21)

Hagar despaired. Then she heard God's voice of promise and found that God was with her and her son. He was with her because of Abraham--and because she accepted God's love and comfort. God hears and sees.

Prayer: Lord, help me to obey you by faith and not compromise with my human feelings.

One Word: Cast out your Ishmael

## **THE TREATY AT BEERSHEBA** *Genesis 21:22-34, Key Verse: 21:22*

### 1. God is with you in everything you do (22-31)

Abraham continued to live in the land of the Philistines, but he had changed. Abimelech, the heathen king, saw from Abraham's life that God was with him. He came to Abraham because he wanted to be Abraham's friend instead of his enemy. Abraham no longer feared Abimelech. He boldly claimed the well he had dug, accepted Abimelech's apology, and gave him a gift. The two men made a treaty. Abraham had also accepted himself as God's servant.

### 2. Abraham plants a tree (32-34)

A tamarisk tree is a kind of evergreen. It was a sign of his living faith in the living God. He called on the name of the Lord, the Eternal God. He put his trust wholly in the Lord. Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved (Ro 10:13).

Prayer: Father, help me to live in such a way that even worldly people may recognize that you are with me.

One Word: God is with you in everything you do

## **THE LORD WILL PROVIDE** *Genesis 22:1-24, Key Verse: 22:18*

### 1. God tests Abraham (1-10)

God called Abraham by his covenant name, "Abraham." God knew that he was asking him to do something that was impossible to do in his human strength (2). Did Abraham love God more than God's blessings? Early the next morning Abraham took his son to Mount Moriah to offer

him as a burnt offering, as the Lord had commanded. He did not confide in anyone, and when little Isaac asked about the lamb for sacrifice, he taught his son to trust God, replying, "God himself will provide the lamb, my son."

## 2. Now I know that you fear God (11-24)

God stopped him, and provided a ram for the sacrifice. So Abraham called the place, "Jehovah-Jireh" (KJV)--"The Lord Will Provide." Because Abraham obeyed God, God swore by himself an unchanging and eternal oath that he would bless Abraham and that through his offspring all nations on earth would be blessed. God kept his promise by sending Jesus to die for the sins of the world. God provided the Lamb.

Prayer: Lord, teach me Abraham's faith.

One Word: The Lord Will Provide

## **AN ALIEN AND A STRANGER** *Genesis 23:1-20, Key Verse: 23:4*

### 1. Sarah's death (1-6)

Sarah's death marked the end of an era. Abraham lived to be 175; he took another wife and had children. However, Genesis is concerned with God's covenant history, so Sarah's death marks the final chapter in Abraham's story. His actions at this time reveal his faith. God had promised Abraham the whole land of Canaan, but actually, he did not own even one foot of land. He lived in tents as an alien and stranger in the land of promise. But he believed that God would keep his promise (Heb 11:9).

### 2. Abraham rose and bowed to the people (7-20)

Abraham bargained with Ephron the Hittite to buy the cave of Machpelah as a burial site. Someday God would give him the whole land, but he did not try to take advantage of his spiritual privilege to get material benefit. He accepted present reality and waited patiently on God's time.

Prayer: Lord, help me to live as a pilgrim, an alien and a stranger in this world, trusting you and your blessing. Help me to live and die believing your promises.

One Word: A pilgrim traveling toward heaven

## **ABRAHAM'S SERVANT'S MISSION**, *Genesis 24:1-9, Key Verse: 24:3,4*

### 1. Go, get a wife for Isaac (1-4)

It was time for Isaac to marry and have a son to whom he could pass on the covenant promises. Isaac's wife should be a woman of faith, and his marriage an event that built faith. The Canaanite culture around them was steeped in pagan religions, and the Canaanite lifestyle was godless and



immoral. Abraham did not want to compromise, so he commissioned his most trusted and responsible servant to go to Paddan Aram and find a wife for Isaac.

## 2. What if the woman is unwilling to come? (5-9)

The test of faith of the woman who could qualify to be Isaac's wife was that she make a decision of faith to accompany Abraham's servant back to Canaan to marry Isaac. Abraham's servant understood that his task was not easy, but he had God's promise and God's angel to help him, so he accepted the mission.

Prayer: Lord, help us to challenge a godless culture with the gospel. Give us your Spirit's help.

One Word: Accept God's mission by faith

### **ABRAHAM'S SERVANT'S PRAYER** *Genesis 24:10-27, Key Verse: 24:21*

#### 1. Give me success today (10-20)

Abraham's servant prepared gifts for the bride's family. Then he went to the town of Nahor. As he waited by the village well where all the women came to draw water, he prayed. He asked the Lord for a girl who would volunteer to water his 10 thirsty camels (12-14). This would be God's sign. He was asking God for a girl who was not selfish, but thoughtful and hard-working. A beautiful girl came to the well just after he finished praying, so he asked her for a drink of water, and she graciously complied--and offered to water his camels!

#### 2. Without saying a word, he watched (21-27)

This beautiful girl seemed to be God's answer to his prayer, but Abraham's servant did not rush. He waited on God. When he found that she was Rebekah, the virgin daughter of Abraham's nephew, he knew that she was the one. He bowed his head and thanked God. It is not easy to wait on God's step-by-step leading, but the man of mission must not get ahead of God.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to pray and wait on you from the beginning to the end.

One Word: He bowed down and worshiped

### **NOW TELL ME WHICH WAY TO TURN** *Genesis 24:28-49, Key Verse: 24:48*

#### 1. I will not eat until I have told you (28-33)

Abraham's servant was tired and hungry after a long, hot journey through the desert. But he had seen God's clear leading in answer to his prayer. He was a man of mission; now was the time to tell the family of Rebekah why he had come. He would not eat until he had given his testimony. So he told the story of how God had led him and answered his prayer.

#### 2. Now tell me your decision (34-49)

It had become clear to Abraham's servant that God was calling Rebekah to be the wife of Isaac. But would it be clear to Rebekah and to her family? Would they obey God's leading? He told them the facts, making sure that they knew that there could be no compromise. The decision was up to them. Every person must consider God's word and God's calling and make his own decision; but God's servant must make the choices clear.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to be clear in my testimony to your gospel and grace. Help me to honor you in whatever I say.

One Word: Praise the God of Abraham

**I WILL GO** *Genesis 24:50-67, Key Verse: 24:58*

1. Do not detain me (50-57)

Laban and Bethuel heard of God's work and accepted his sovereignty. Abraham's servant worshiped God; he shared a fellowship meal with the family. But his mission was not over. Early the next morning he announced that he was ready to go. The family asked for more time to prepare, but Abraham's servant was single-minded in his decision. He wanted to complete his mission.

2. Rebekah's decision (58-67)

The final decision was Rebekah's. No one could make it for her. She too had listened to the words of Abraham's servant, so her decision was based on God's word. She accepted God's sovereignty and his leading in this most important decision of her life. She did not know Isaac. She only knew that this was God's will, so she said, "I will go." She went to share God's history, not to live a self-centered family life (59, 60).

Prayer: Lord, help me to make the decisions of life by faith, not by feeling.

One Word: A decision of faith

**MILESTONES OF HISTORY** *Genesis 25:1-34, Key Verse: 25:23*

1. The death of Abraham (1-18)

Abraham's life after Sarah's death is a footnote to history. He had other children, but he was careful to protect Isaac's inheritance. This chapter rounds out and concludes Ishmael's history. His brief genealogy brings the Abraham story to a close, and brings Isaac's family into focus.

2. A family that prayed (19-23)

Rebekah was barren for 20 years. But Isaac did not seek a human solution; he prayed--and Rebekah conceived twins. When her pregnancy did not seem to go normally, she prayed. God revealed his will for her two sons. She never forgot this word of God.

### 3. Isaac's sons (24-34)

Jacob and Esau were different. Esau's manliness appealed to Isaac, but physical desire had priority in his life. Jacob, for all his weaknesses, knew the value of spiritual things. He valued the birthright which Esau despised.

Prayer: Lord, grant parents who pray; help our children to have spiritual values.

One Word: Don't despise your birthright

### **ISAAC'S WELLS** *Genesis 26:1-35, Key Verse: 26:3*

#### 1. Do not go down to Egypt (1-16)

There was a famine in the land like the one in the time of Abraham. Isaac wanted to go to Egypt. He got as far as Gerar. There the Lord appeared to him and told him to stay in that land. He promised to be with him and bless him. He renewed the Abrahamic covenant (3-5). Isaac was afraid of Abimelech and the Philistines (7-9), but he obeyed God and stayed; God kept his promise and blessed him (12-16).

#### 2. Isaac's wells (17-35)

Abimelech was jealous of Isaac's prosperity and asked him to move, so he moved to the valley of Gerar. The Philistines harassed him, first by stopping up his wells and later by taking them. Isaac dug new wells, and everywhere he dug, God gave him fresh water. God blessed Isaac's well-digging faith. Abimelech was moved and came to make a treaty with Isaac.

Prayer: Lord, help me to overcome fear and obey you; help me to have well-digging faith.

One Word: Stay in this land for a while

### **JACOB GETS THE BLESSING** *Genesis 27:1-40, Key Verse: 27:33b*

#### 1. Rebekah's decision (1-17)

Isaac was blind; he despaired of life, and thought he would die soon. He also became spiritually blind, for his decision to bless Esau came from his human feelings, not from God's leading (25:23). Rebekah helped Jacob risk his future to impersonate Esau, deceive his father, and get the blessing. Rebekah was a woman of courage and clear decisions. Deception is not good, and Rebekah paid for it--she would have to live with Esau and his Hittite wives. Perhaps her decision to help Jacob get the blessing of the firstborn came from her human affection--but most likely it came from remembering God's word (25:32).

#### 2. Jacob's and Esau's blessings (18-40)

Jacob carried out the deception like a pro, and Isaac blessed him. Isaac was God's servant, and God would honor this blessing. When Esau found out, he wept and begged for his father's blessing, but it was too late (Heb 12:16-17).

Prayer: Lord, help me to value your blessing; help me to use your methods to get it.

One Word: Indeed he will be blessed

### **JACOB LEAVES FOR PADDAN ARAM** *Genesis 27:41-28:9, Key Verse: 28:4*

#### 1. To marry by faith (27:41-28:2,6-9)

Rebekah had to send Jacob away because Esau plotted to kill him. So Rebekah talked with Isaac about Jacob's marriage. Esau, a man who did whatever he felt like doing, was impatient to marry. So he had already taken two wives from among the Canaanites (26:34,35). His Canaanite wives followed the customs and religion of their own people, and they were a source of grief to Isaac and Rebekah. Isaac commanded Jacob not to marry a Canaanite woman. He sent him to Rebekah's family to get a wife. Esau did not understand the spiritual meaning of this, so he married another wife--an Ishmaelite--to please his father (Heb 12:16).

#### 2. The blessing of Abraham (28:3-5)

Isaac blessed Jacob with the blessing of Abraham--the covenant blessing. Then he sent him away. His only protection was God's blessing. Most likely Rebekah died before he returned.

Prayer: Lord, help me to live by faith as a child of your covenant.

One Word: God protects & trains the son of promise

### **JACOB'S VOW** *Genesis 28:10-22, Key Verse: 28:20-21*

#### 1. Jacob's dream (10-15)

Jacob had inherited faith and God's covenant from believing parents; but he had no personal relationship with God. Now, he was by himself. Night fell. He put a stone under his head for a pillow and lay down to sleep. He was lonely, sorrowful, and a little afraid. God appeared to him in a wonderful dream. The very gates of heaven opened, and the Lord renewed the covenant he had made with Abraham. All people on earth would be blessed through his descendants. God also knew Jacob's situation, and he promised to be with him.

#### 2. Jacob's vow (16-22)

Jacob woke up. He knew that he had met the living God. He made a vow. He was not so interested in being a blessing--he just wanted to survive. But he began to talk to God. God used that vow as a handle to hold and train Jacob until he could learn obedient faith.

Prayer: Lord, I am too weak to keep my vows to you, but you are strong. Please be with me throughout my life's journey.

One Word: My personal commitment to God

## JACOB AND RACHEL

Genesis 29:1-30

Key Verse: 29:20

### 1. Jacob meets Rachel (1-14a)

When Jacob arrived in Haran, he had marriage on his mind. He met a woman who captured his heart. He met Rachel at the village well. She was beautiful, and it was love at first sight. He helped her water her sheep, kissed her, and wept. Her beauty and God's leading moved him. He introduced himself, and she ran to her father.

### 2. Jacob and Laban (14b-30)

Laban realized that his nephew was an able man, so he offered him a job. Jacob only wanted one thing--Rachel. He agreed to work seven years for her; he loved her so much that it seemed like only a few days. On his wedding night, there was a great feast. The bride was veiled, so Jacob did not know until the next morning that he had married cow-like Leah instead of the beautiful gazelle Rachel. He agreed to work another seven years, and the next week he married Rachel too. He suffered because of his faithful stubbornness, but God used this to lay foundations for a great nation.

Prayer: Lord, overrule my foolishness and accomplish your great purposes in and through me.

One Word: A foolish but faithful man

## LEAH AND RACHEL

Genesis 29:31-30:24

Key Verse: 29:35

### 1. God saw that Leah was not loved (29:31-35)

God was fair. He saw that Leah was not loved, so he blessed her with children. However, Leah was not satisfied. Each time she bore a son, instead of thanking God, she hoped in vain for her husband's love. But when her fourth son was born, she accepted God's love. She named her son "Judah" which means "praise," and she praised God. The two sons her maidservant bore Jacob she named "good fortune" and "happy" (30:10-12). Her fifth son was "reward" (30:17) and her

last son she named "honor" (20). She no longer begged for human love; she loved God who loved and blessed her.

## 2. Rachel's jealousy (30:1-24)

Rachel was not satisfied with Jacob's love. She demanded of Jacob, "Give me children or I'll die!" When her maidservant bore Jacob two sons, the names she gave them reflected her bitterness. When Joseph was born, she named him "give me another." She died giving birth to her second son, Benjamin (35:17-18).

Prayer: Lord, teach me to be satisfied with your love, and give me a thankful heart.

One Word: Be thankful for God's love

## JACOB BUILDS HIS OWN HOUSE

Genesis 30:25-43

Key Verse: 30:30

### 1. When may I do something for my house? (25-34)

Jacob completed the 14-year contract for his two wives. He was a man who set goals and got what he wanted. He had wanted honor, so he got the birthright from Esau; he wanted love, so he got Rachel--and three other wives, as well. God made use of this less-than-ideal situation to bless him with eleven sons and a daughter. Now Jacob turned his attention to money. He was only a hired hand in Laban's house, but Laban knew that Jacob was the key to God's blessing, so he did not want him to leave. He negotiated a new contract with him.

### 2. Laban's deception and God's blessing (35-43)

Laban agreed to give Jacob the less desirable animals--the spotted, speckled, and dark ones. Then, before the flock could be separated, he removed all such animals from his flock and gave them to his sons. Jacob worked hard to overcome Laban's treachery. He could succeed because God blessed him (31:5-9).

Prayer: Lord, let me learn diligence from Jacob, but teach my heart to trust you for your blessing.

One Word: God is the source of blessing

## JACOB LEAVES PADDAN ARAM

Genesis 31:1-55

Key Verse: 31:13

## 1. Jacob decides to leave (1-21)

When Jacob became wealthy, Laban's attitude toward him changed. Jacob feared him. But his real reason for deciding to leave Laban was because the God of Bethel, where he had made a vow, said, "Go back to the land of your fathers...and I will be with you." (3,13). Rachel and Leah declared their loyalty to Jacob; they told him to follow God's leading (16). So, one day when Laban was away, Jacob collected everything and fled. Rachel revealed her true nature by stealing her father's household gods.

## 2. Jacob and Laban part (22-55)

Laban caught up with Jacob easily. He searched through all of his possessions, looking for the stolen gods. When Laban did not find anything (Rachel had cleverly hidden them), Jacob rebuked him. Jacob was smart, hard-working and responsible, but the secret of his wealth was not his own effort or cleverness, but God's blessing. God kept his promise and protected him from Laban.

Prayer: Lord, without your blessing, human success only produces unhappiness. Grant that I may live with your blessing.

One Word: The God of Bethel keeps his promise

## JACOB WRESTLES WITH GOD

Genesis 32:1-32

Key Verse: 32:28

## 1. Jacob prepares to meet Esau (1-21)

As Jacob drew closer to Canaan, fear grew in his heart. He had struggled with men and won, but he had no peace in his heart, for he had made enemies. Now he must face his brother Esau. Even a vision of the army of God could not allay his fears. He sent messengers; he prepared for an attack; he prayed: "Save me from my brother Esau, for I am afraid." His prayer was based on God's promises. He trusted God, but he couldn't get over the habit of depending on himself, so he sent gifts to pacify Esau (20).

## 2. Jacob becomes Israel (22-32)

Jacob couldn't sleep. He got up in the middle of the night and sent his family and possessions across the river. He was left alone, and he wrestled with God until daybreak. Even after his hip was dislocated, he wouldn't give up. He asked for a blessing. He wanted to know God. He wanted peace. God blessed him with a new name and a new life direction.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to struggle in prayer until I know you more deeply and have your blessing.

One Word: Your name is Israel

## LIKE SEEING THE FACE OF GOD

Genesis 33:1-17

Key Verse: 33:10b

### 1. Jacob meets Esau (1-11)

Jacob had run away from home 20 years before because of Esau's threat of revenge. All those years he had carried this unsolved problem in his heart. Now he had to face Esau. Jacob arranged his family with his beloved Rachel and her son Joseph in the safest place, and went out to greet his brother. Their meeting was anticlimactic. Esau did not attack. He embraced his brother, and they wept. Jacob realized that God had answered his prayer. He said, "Seeing your face is like seeing the face of God."

### 2. Let me find favor in your eyes (12-17)

Esau wanted to know why Jacob had sent the droves of animals. He insisted that he needed no gift. He offered to accompany and/or to protect Jacob's family. Jacob only wanted to escape Esau's wrath. He wanted forgiveness and peace. Esau accepted his gift and went back to Seir. Jacob was tired of struggling, so he settled down in Succoth.

Prayer: Lord, help me to see your face in answers to prayer, and in impossible problems which you resolve.

One Word: Like seeing the face of God

## JACOB AT SUCCOTH

Genesis 33:18-34:31

Key Verse: 33:19,20

### 1. Jacob settles down (33:18-20)

Jacob wanted to settle down and live in peace with those around him. He did not want to struggle with anyone anymore. He bought a piece of land near Shechem. He called it "Succoth." He built shelters for himself and his family, and built an altar to the Almighty God of Israel. But God did not want Jacob to settle down in Succoth. His destination was Bethel.

### 2. Dinah and Prince Shechem (34:1-12)

Jacob's daughter went to town to make friends with the new neighbors. Prince Shechem saw her. He was handsome and popular and he always got what he wanted. He had sex with her. Then he



confessed his love for her and asked his father to arrange their marriage. Jacob was ready to make peace.

### 3. The treachery of Simeon and Levi (13-31)

Dinah's brothers, Simeon and Levi, were outraged. They deceived the Shechemites, killed the men and plundered the city. Jacob was angry. Now he had to leave. God used this event to send him back to Bethel.

Prayer: Lord, help me not to forget your calling when you give me your peace.

One Word: Don't settle down in Succoth

## GOD TALKS WITH JACOB AT BETHEL

Genesis 35:1-15

Key Verse: 35:15

### 1. Get rid of the foreign gods (1-8)

God reminded Jacob of how God had met him at Bethel as he was fleeing from Esau in fear and distress. Now, God commanded Jacob to go back to Bethel and build an altar. It was time to fulfill his vow. Jacob remembered God's faithfulness; he repented and obeyed God. He got rid of all the foreign gods in his household. Even the godless Canaanites felt the terror of the holy God who was with Jacob.

### 2. El Bethel (9-15)

God met Jacob at Bethel and talked with him personally. He blessed him and renewed the Abrahamic covenant; he confirmed the change of his name from Jacob, the deceiver, to Israel, the man who struggled with God. Jacob had built an altar and called the place "El Bethel." He set up a stone pillar (as he had done when he made his vow). He would not forget Bethel, the place where he met God first and where he talked with God.

Prayer: Lord, help me to remember my Bethel, and to live in your presence all the days of my life.

One Word: Remember your Bethel; talk with God

## JOY AND TRAGEDY IN JACOB'S FAMILY

Genesis 35:16-29 (36:1-43)

Key Verse: 35:18b

## 1. Benjamin's birth--Rachel's death (16-19)

A commitment to God does not guarantee an easy, trouble-free life. Jacob was changed to Israel, but the seeds sown during his life of struggle with men were still there to bear bitter fruit. Rachel was not satisfied with one son; she wanted another (30:24). God granted her desire, and Benjamin was born. But her ambition cost her life. With her dying breath she named her son, "trouble." But Jacob accepted him and called him, "son of my right hand."

## 2. Reuben's sin; Isaac's death (22-29)

Jacob was sad when Simeon and Levi acted in violence. Now, Jacob's firstborn Reuben committed a grave sin that cost him his birthright as the eldest son (Ge 49:1-7). The three oldest sons were disqualified, so the birthright went to Judah. Jacob and Esau made peace as they buried their father together. Isaac's death and Esau's genealogy (36) marked the end of a period of history.

Prayer: Lord, help me to remember your grace in times of joy and sorrow.

One Word: The God of history is our God

## FROM A PRINCE TO A SLAVE

Genesis 37:1-36

Key Verse: 37:6

## 1. Joseph's dreams (1-11)

Jacob loved Joseph more than any of his sons, for Joseph was the son of Rachel. Joseph's brothers' hatred and jealousy is the theme of verses 1-11. Joseph was a dreamer. His dreams were God's word to him. He lived on a spiritual level, while they lived on a physical and material level. God gave him dreams of greatness. He held those dreams in his heart, so that even in the darkest times he lived with a sense of victory. His brothers hated him most for his dreams.

## 2. Joseph sold to Egypt (12-36)

Joseph looked for his brothers until he found them. His sense of responsibility led him into a trap. When his brothers saw him coming in his beautiful coat, they said, "Here comes that dreamer. Let's kill him." They didn't kill him, however. At Judah's instigation, they decided to make some profit. So they sold their brother as a slave to some traders on their way to Egypt.

Prayer: Lord, help me to hold your dreams in my heart, and help me to accept your sovereignty in every area of life.

One Word: Dream great dreams

## JUDAH AND TAMAR

Genesis 38:1-30

Key Verse: 38:26

### 1. Judah's life among the Canaanites (1-11)

After committing a terrible crime against his father and brother, Judah couldn't endure being at home. So he left and went to live with the Canaanites. He married and had three sons. He raised them as Canaanites. He might never have returned home, except for the unusual faithfulness of Tamar.

### 2. She is more righteous than I (12-30)

Judah got a wife named Tamar for his eldest son. His son was wicked and died. According to the levirate law, Judah's second son should marry his brother's widow. But the second son also died. Judah then reneged on his promise to Tamar and left her as a barren widow in her father's house. She was determined to fulfill her duty to that family. By her strange faith, she became pregnant by her father-in-law. When Judah realized what she had done, he was moved by her faithfulness. He returned to his father's house and to God's history.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to have courageous faith, and help me to be faithful to you.

One Word: Righteousness by faith

## THE LORD WAS WITH JOSEPH

Genesis 39:1-23

Key Verse: 39:23b

### 1. Joseph's life in Potiphar's house (1-6a)

Joseph was only 17 when he was sold as a slave and taken in shackles to a foreign land. He was sold to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officials. He wept bitterly (42:21; Ps 105:18), but he turned his life over to God, and God was with him. He had a language problem, and he had no friends. But God was with him and he prospered. He lived before God, not before men (Eph 6:5-8). He became Potiphar's attendant; finally, he was put in charge of everything Potiphar owned.

### 2. Potiphar's wife (6b-23)

Joseph was handsome and well-built, and Potiphar's wife tried to seduce him. He could have been tempted by his own lust, pride, a desire for revenge or by ambition. But he lived before God and he rejected her. She made the victim into the criminal and had him put in prison. It looked like doing what was right only got him into trouble. But he did not doubt God's love.

Prayer: Lord, help me to live before you. Be with me as you were with Joseph.

One Word: The Lord was with Joseph

## A SHEPHERD IN PRISON

Genesis 40:1-23

Key Verse: 40:8

### 1. Two men and two dreams (1-17)

Joseph was in the king's prison, which was under Potiphar's jurisdiction. He was a faithful steward in prison, too. And God was with him, so he was put in charge of the prison. Two prisoners who were very close to the king were entrusted to his care. One was the king's cupbearer and the other, the king's baker. Joseph paid close attention to them; one morning, he noticed that something was bothering them. He found that each man had had a disturbing dream.

### 2. A faithful interpreter (18-23)

God was speaking to these men through their dreams, but they could not understand what he was saying. They needed a "Bible teacher." Joseph was God's servant. He listened to their dreams and uncompromisingly interpreted each dream. Even though the baker's dream was bad news, Joseph was honest; he did not spare the details.

Prayer: Lord, help me to have a shepherd heart for others, and to teach your word without compromising its truth.

One Word: Be a faithful Bible teacher

## JOSEPH BEFORE PHARAOH

Genesis 41:1-40

Key Verse: 41:25

### 1. God has revealed to Pharaoh his plan (1-36)

Pharaoh had two dreams. He knew that they meant something, but no one could tell him what. Then the cupbearer remembered Joseph. Joseph was brought out of his prison cell to stand before the king of all Egypt. Pharaohs claimed deity, but Joseph didn't calculate about what to say. He spoke the truth. He made it clear that interpretations belong to God who rules history and nature. God had revealed to Pharaoh what he was going to do. Pharaoh's dreams meant that God was going to send seven years of abundance, then seven years of famine to Egypt. Joseph then advised the king how to prepare.

## 2. Pharaoh accepts God's word (37-40)

Pharaoh might have become angry at Joseph's temerity, but he did not. He accepted God's word and recognized Joseph as God's servant. He put him in charge of his palace and made him the second man over Egypt. God was with Joseph.

Prayer: Lord, help me to stand before you instead of before the pharaohs of the world.

One Word: Stand before God

## JOSEPH IN CHARGE OF EGYPT

Genesis 41:41-57

Key Verse: 41:51,52

### 1. Joseph traveled throughout the land (41-49)

Joseph was changed from a slave to a ruler in one day. He did not become proud, nor did he seek revenge. He went to work. He believed God's word; for seven years he did not doubt but prepared for the famine. When the years of famine came, he opened the storehouses and fed the Egyptians and the world. He was the steward of the world.

### 2. Joseph's two sons (50-57)

During the years of plenty, Joseph married and had two sons. His sons' names testify to his faith. Manasseh means "forget." This was his testimony that God had taken away his bitterness and sorrow. He held no grudges against his brothers. Ephraim means "twice fruitful." Joseph was thankful to God who made him fruitful in the land of suffering. God's blessing did not make him proud; it made him thankful, humble and obedient to God. Joseph accepted God's sovereignty. He continued to walk with God.

Prayer: Lord, help me to believe your word and accept with thanksgiving your lordship.

One Word: Joyfully accept God's sovereignty

## JOSEPH REMEMBERS HIS DREAMS

Genesis 42:1-38

Key Verse: 42:9a

### 1. So that we may live and not die (1-20)

The famine was severe in Canaan, so Jacob sent 10 sons to Egypt to buy grain. Joseph recognized his brothers when they bowed before him. He remembered his dreams (37:6-11). He

knew that God was in control of his life and that he was God's servant. He began to test his brothers--not for revenge, but to help them to remember their sin, repent and meet God (21-22). This is real love.

## 2. What is this God has done to us? (21-38)

Joseph wept when his brothers confessed their sin and showed remorse, but he continued to press them. When they discovered their silver in their grain sacks, they were terrified. They began to examine their lives before God (28). They returned home and reported to their father: Simeon was a hostage; they could not go back without Benjamin. Joseph was pushing them to their human limits. They must face God.

Prayer: Lord, help me to love others truly by helping them to repent and meet you.

One Word: So that we may live and not die

## THE SECOND JOURNEY TO EGYPT

Genesis 43:1-34

Key Verse: 43:8,9

### 1. Take your brother and go back (1-14)

Jacob had no choice. They were starving. He finally yielded to Judah's plea and sent Benjamin with his brothers back to Egypt for food. He sent money and gifts.

### 2. Disciplined by love (15-34)

Joseph did not treat his brothers harshly this time. He saw Benjamin and wept. Then he prepared a wonderful banquet in his own home for them. He restored Simeon. But his brothers interpreted his kind acts as hidden threats. They only worried about the money that had been returned to them, and concluded that the prime minister was plotting to enslave them. Fear and guilt make people doubt even loving acts. The brothers were unnerved by the seating arrangement at the banquet. How did the prime minister know them so well? Joseph trained his brothers with love. He had forgiven them, but he wanted them to repent and become new men.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for redemptive love which leads to repentance and life.

One Word: Guilt robs the heart of joy

## JUDAH'S REPENTANCE

Genesis 44:1-34

key Verse: 44:33

### 1. They all went back (1-17)

Joseph had his silver cup planted in Benjamin's sack. When Joseph's steward caught up with the brothers and accused them of stealing the cup, they vehemently denied it. But when a search was made, it was found in Benjamin's sack. The brothers could have left Benjamin to his fate and gone free, but they tore their clothes, loaded their donkeys, and returned.

### 2. Judah's fruit of repentance (18-34)

Judah had promised his father that he would be personally responsible for Benjamin. Judah had been a man of broken promises (Ge 38). He had not cared about his father's sorrow in the past. Now he pled for Benjamin, and spoke of the unbearable grief that the loss of Benjamin would bring to his father. Then he made a practical offer: He would stay as a substitute for Benjamin. His repentance was real.

Prayer: Lord, help me to repent sincerely, and bear the fruit that befits repentance. Help me to keep my promises.

One Word: Let me remain in his place

I AM JOSEPH!

Genesis 45:1-28

Key Verse: 45:7

### 1. To save lives (1-24)

When Joseph revealed himself to his brothers, they were terrified. But Joseph had no thought of revenge. He taught them God's purpose in sending him to Egypt. He saw his life in the light of God's sovereignty. He understood the meaning of his suffering, and it was worth it all. God was using him in his redemptive work to save lives. He saved the lives of many Egyptians; he saved the lives of God's people by a great deliverance. To accomplish this purpose, God had humbled him to be a slave and exalted him to be a father to the king of Egypt. God wants to use us in his great redemptive work. In God, our lives have meaning.

### 2. My son Joseph is alive! (25-28)

Jacob had lived with great sorrow in his heart for 20 years. He could scarcely believe the good news. He finally learned that God is faithful.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to trust you in times of pain and sorrow, so that you can use me in your life-saving work.

One Word: God wants to save lives

## DO NOT BE AFRAID TO GO DOWN TO EGYPT

Genesis 46:1-30

Key Verse: 46:3

### 1. Jacob prays in Beersheba (1-27)

Jacob was still fearful and hesitant. So when he arrived at Beersheba, the place where Abraham and Isaac had met God and built altars (21:31-33;26:23-25), he prayed. God called Israel by his name, "Jacob," and he answered, "Here I am." God promised to go with him to Egypt and to make him into a great nation there. Jacob believed God's promises and went to Egypt with his family--70 persons. This journey was a part of God's plan and promise (15:13-16). In the dark womb of Egyptian slavery, Israel would grow into a great multitude.

### 2. Jacob meets Joseph (28-30)

Joseph had been a boy of 17 when he was snatched away from his father. Now he was a man of 37. He had two sons and he was ruler of Egypt. He threw his arms around his father and wept. Jacob had nothing more to ask of God. He knew he was a blessed man. Now he would bless others.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to trust you, for your ways are beyond my understanding--and they work out for good to your people.

One Word: I will go with you to Egypt

## JOSEPH'S STEWARDSHIP

Genesis 46:31-47:27

Key Verse: 47:25a

### 1. Jobs for Joseph's brothers (46:31-47:12)

Joseph did not have political ambitions for himself or for his family. He did not use his great power to enable his family to live easy lives. He provided for them, but he did not put them on government payroll. They were shepherds, an occupation despised by the Egyptians. So he arranged for them to settle in Goshen, where there was good pasture land. There they lived apart from the Egyptians and grew into a multitude, keeping their Israelite identity. Jacob's pilgrimage was coming to an end. He had grown from a man of struggle into a man of blessing.

### 2. Joseph saves many lives (47:13-27)

Joseph controlled all the food sources in the time of famine. He had the power of life and death over the people of Egypt. He used his power to save life. He fed the people, but he did not teach



them a beggar's mentality or plant a spirit of rebellion. Because of Joseph's wisdom the people were thankful, and were loyal to Pharaoh.

Prayer: Lord, help me to live before you and be a wise steward.

One Word: Be a steward of God's grace

GOD HAS BEEN MY SHEPHERD ALL MY LIFE

Genesis 47:28-48:22

Key Verse: 48:15

#### 1. Do not bury me in Egypt (47:28-48:4)

Jacob knew that Canaan was the land God had promised to Abraham's descendants. So, even though he lived an easy life in Egypt, he knew that he and his family someday must return to the promised land. He wanted Joseph to bury him in Canaan. He believed God's promise, and he planted this belief in Joseph and in his sons.

#### 2. God is my Shepherd (48:5-22)

Jacob's heart was full of thanksgiving, for God had allowed him to see Joseph again--and even to see Joseph's sons. He counted Joseph's sons as his own and blessed them to receive sons' portions instead of grandsons' portions. He gave the younger son, Ephraim, the blessing of the firstborn. This blessing is a confession of God's work in his own life. God his Shepherd led and protected and trained him all the days of his life. He prayed that God might also be the Shepherd of these two sons of Joseph.

Prayer: Lord God, you have been my Shepherd until now. Be my Shepherd all the days of my life.

One Word: The Lord is my Shepherd

A BLESSING APPROPRIATE TO EACH

Genesis 49:1-28

Key Verse: 49:28

#### 1. The scepter will not depart from Judah (1-21)

Jacob struggled with men and got what he wanted. But when he struggled with God, God changed him into a man of blessing. In this chapter, he blesses his sons with blessings which are appropriate to each. These blessings are prophecies. Judah, the 4th son of Leah, received the most important blessing. He is the ancestor of David and of Christ. His three elder brothers lost

their priority because of their evil acts (Ge 35:22;34:30). Read verse 10. The obedience of the nations belongs to Jesus through the preaching of the gospel to all nations.

## 2. Joseph is a fruitful vine (22-26)

Joseph's son Ephraim ("twice fruitful") became the ancestor of the largest tribe of Israel. Perhaps Jacob wanted him to be the covenant son, but this was not God's plan. However, Joseph's faith and character point to Jesus, so he is the spiritual ancestor of Jesus.

Prayer: Praise the God of blessing who sent Jesus to be a blessing to all nations.

One Word: A source of blessing

GOD INTENDED IT FOR GOOD

Genesis 49:29-50:26

Key Verse: 50:20

## 1. Jacob believed God's promise (49:29-50:14)

Jacob's death is recorded in these verses. Just before he died, he gave instructions about his burial. He wanted to be buried in Canaan, in the cave of Machpelah, the burial place of Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, and Jacob's wife Leah. He believed that God would bring his descendants back to the promised land. These instructions were an expression of that faith.

## 2. Joseph's faith and forgiveness (50:15-26)

After Jacob's death and burial, his sons were anxious. They thought that Joseph had withheld the harsh punishment they deserved only because of his father Jacob. So they came asking forgiveness. Joseph could forgive them because he accepted God's sovereignty in his life. They had intended to harm him, but God had turned their evil deed around and used it to accomplish his own redemptive purpose. Joseph loved God, so he loved and cared for his brothers.

Prayer: Lord, help me to humbly accept your sovereignty in my heart.

One Word: God intended it for good