

# Lessons the Patriarchs Lived

## Highlights From Genesis

<b>Lesson 1</b>	Five Facts about God from Creation
<b>Lesson 2</b>	Adam's Example
<b>Lesson 3</b>	Noah and the End of the World
<b>Lesson 4</b>	Noah: A Nobler Beginning?
<b>Lesson 5</b>	Abraham and the Three Promises
<b>Lesson 6</b>	Abraham: Keeper of the Covenant
<b>Lesson 7</b>	Abraham the Faithful
<b>Lesson 8</b>	Abraham the Deliverer
<b>Lesson 9</b>	Isaac: Son of Promise, Man of Peace
<b>Lesson 10</b>	Jacob the Supplanter
<b>Lesson 11</b>	Jacob the Chosen
<b>Lesson 12</b>	Joseph the Chosen
<b>Lesson 13</b>	Jesus and the Patriarchs

# Table of Contents

<i>Outline of Genesis</i> .....	3
<b>Five Facts about God from Creation</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<i>Genesis 1 and 2: Two Accounts of One Creation</i> .....	6
<i>Notes about Competing Theories of Origins</i> .....	6
<i>Song, "Day One"</i> .....	7
Questions .....	8
<b>Adam's Example</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<i>The Story of Our Lives: The Story of the Bible</i> .....	10
Questions .....	11
<b>Noah and the End of the World</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<i>Chinese Kanji, The Flood and More</i> .....	13
<i>Noah Versus Utnapishtim</i> .....	14
Questions .....	15
<b>Noah: A Nobler Beginning?</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<i>The Tower of Ur</i> .....	17
Questions .....	18
<b>Abraham and the Three Promises</b> .....	<b>19</b>
<i>Terah's Family Tree</i> .....	20
Questions .....	21
<b>Abraham: Keeper of the Covenant</b> .....	<b>22</b>
<i>Map for Abraham's Travels</i> .....	23
Questions .....	24
<b>Abraham the Faithful</b> .....	<b>25</b>
Questions .....	26
<b>Abraham the Deliverer</b> .....	<b>27</b>
<i>Abraham Saves Lot . . . Twice</i> .....	27
<i>Maps of Abraham Rescuing Lot</i> .....	28
<i>Sodom: An Example for All Ages</i> .....	29
Questions .....	30
<b>Isaac: Son of Promise, Man of Peace</b> .....	<b>31</b>
<i>Summary of Isaac's Life</i> .....	32
Questions .....	33
<b>Jacob the Supplanter</b> .....	<b>34</b>
<i>Chapter Summaries, Genesis 25 - 50</i> .....	36
Questions .....	37
<b>Jacob the Chosen</b> .....	<b>38</b>
Questions .....	41
<b>Joseph the Chosen</b> .....	<b>42</b>
Questions .....	43
<b>Jesus and the Patriarchs</b> .....	<b>45</b>
Questions .....	46

# Outline of Genesis

## Part One: Ancient History (1:1 – 11:9)

### I. The Creation 1:1 – 2:25

- A. Creation of the World 1:1 – 2:3
- B. Creation of Man 2:4–25

### II. The Fall 3:1 – 5:32

- A. The Fall of Man 3:1–24
- B. After the Fall 4:1 – 5:32
  - 1. Cain's line: Killing 4:1–24
  - 2. Seth's line: Calling on the name of the Lord 4:25 – 5:32

### III. The Judgment 6:1 – 9:17

- A. Causes of the Flood 6:1–7
- B. The Plan to Save Noah 6:8–22
- C. The Flood 7:1 – 8:19
- D. Results of the Flood 8:20 – 9:17

### IV. Another Fall; More Judgment 9:18 – 11:9

- A. Noah's Fall 9:18–21
- B. Curse and Blessings on Noah's Sons 9:22–29
- C. Family Lines from Noah 10:1–32
- D. Scattering from Babel 11:1–9

## Part Two: Hebrew History (11:10 – 50:26)

### I. Abraham 11:10 – 23:20

- A. Abraham's family and God's Covenant 11:10 – 12:3
- B. The Covenant Concerns the land of Canaan, not Egypt 12:4–20
- C. The Covenant is not for Lot 13:1 – 14:24
- D. The Covenant is not for Eliezer 15:1 – 21
- E. The Covenant is not for Ishmael 16:1 – 18:15
  - 1) Hagar and Ishmael 16:1–16
  - 2) The Sign of Circumcision and the Promise of Isaac 17:1 – 18:15
- F. Sodom and Gomorrah: The Covenant is not for the Ungodly 18:16 – 20:18
  - 1) Lot is Blessed for Abraham's Sake 18:16 – 19:29
  - 2) Abimelech is Blessed (in the end) for Abraham's Sake 20:1–18
- G. Offering Isaac: The Covenant is for the Faithful 21:1 – 23:20

### II. Isaac 24:1 – 26:35

- A. Isaac's Family Begins 24:1 – 25:34
- B. His Covenants with God and Abimelech 26:1–35

### III. Jacob 27:1 – 36:43

- A. Jacob Steals Esau's Blessing 27:1 – 28:9
- B. The Covenant Between God and Jacob 28:10–22
- C. Jacob's Life at Haran 29:1 – 31:55
- D. Jacob's Return to Canaan 32:1 – 33:20
- E. Jacob's Life in Canaan 34:1 – 35:29
- F. The Genealogy of Esau 36:1–43

### IV. Joseph 37:1 – 50:26

- A. The Corruption of Joseph's Family 37:1 – 38:30
- B. The Temptation, Trial and Exaltation of Joseph 39:1 – 41:57
- C. The Salvation of Jacob's Family 42:1 – 50:26

---

Adapted from Thomas Nelson, Inc., *Nelson's teaching outlines of the Bible [computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1986.

## Five Facts about God from Creation (Genesis 1 and 2)

Genesis 1:1 tells us not *how*, but *who*. We see God as the ultimate Father in every respect. **God is . . .**

### 1. Powerful/Authoritative

God used His supreme power to bring something (actually, *everything*) from nothing. We fear people who can destroy; how much more should we fear Him who can create!

In Genesis chapter 1, notice ten times that God spoke. (1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26, 28, 29-30) When God said something, it became reality. When God intended to do something, it was so.

By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible. -- **Hebrews 11:3**

<sup>5</sup>By the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, <sup>6</sup>by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. <sup>7</sup>But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. -- **2 Peter 3:5-7**

God has always controlled His creation by His word. By His word He brought it into existence, he purged it with a flood when it was overrun with evil, and He will destroy it in the day of judgment. His absolute power gives Him total authority. (Matthew 8:27; Mark 1:27)

*God's word controls the universe — does it control your life?*

### 2. Good/Holy

God's works were well planned and complete. They were done well the first try. There were no afterthoughts or corrections. He brought magnificent complexity to every corner of chaos. God's awesome power is controlled and directed by His pure knowledge and unsurpassed wisdom.

Notice the seven times that God assessed His creation. (1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31) Indeed, "He doeth all things well!"

Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. -- **Genesis 1:31**

[Man's being alone was not good (2:18), meaning simply that God's work was not yet complete.]

<sup>13</sup>Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. <sup>14</sup>But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. . . . <sup>16</sup>Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. <sup>17</sup>Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. -- **James 1:13-17**

God's works are good because He is good. He is completely, only and always good. He is totally separated from evil. (This moral goodness is called "holiness". See Isaiah chapter 6 and Revelation chapter 4.) Perhaps God's separation from sin is best illustrated when Jesus hung on the cross, bearing the sins of the world. He cried out from Psalm 22 which asks and then answers its own question:

My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? . . . <sup>3</sup>But You are holy. . . -- **Psalm 22:1, 3**

*God has no fellowship with sin. Can He have fellowship with you?*

### 3. Loving

Not only were God's works done well, they were designed to bless and help man. (Notice 2:5.)

- God provided for man. (The whole creation, chapter 1; a special garden, 2:8; a wife, 1:18; etc.)
- God exalted man. (. . . with purpose, with pleasures, in His image, etc.)
- God empowered man. (Dominion over the animals, 1:26; free choice; etc.)
- God communicated with man. (Instructions, 1:28; explanations, 1:29-30; commands, 2:16-17)
- Also notice from the next chapters that God did not abandon man in spite of sin. (He promised someone to overcome the serpent; He made them animal skin clothes, 3:21; He provided children, 4:1; He continued interacting with them, 4:1-15; etc.)

By way of contrast, notice man's inadequacy. Take a simple example of zoo animals. Not only is man unable to anticipate or understand the animals' needs, he lacks the power to provide anything like a paradise for them, his works often have to be done over again, and he does not always have the animals' best interest at heart.

Even God's discipline [e.g., the curses (3:16-19) and banishment from the garden (3:23-24)] is motivated by His love. (See Proverbs 3:11-12, etc.) When we read about God's wrath and His punishment, we must always remember that we *first* read about his *love*. In God's case,

*"Absolute power loves absolutely."*

### 4. Truthful

Of all God's creation, God spoke only to the man. He gave simple instructions that both the man and the woman understood:

The LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat;<sup>17</sup> but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." -- **Genesis 2:16-17**

God keeps His promises. He simply cannot lie. (Titus 1:2) When He speaks, you can bet your soul on it!

<sup>13</sup>When God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, <sup>14</sup>saying, "Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you." . . . <sup>16</sup>For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is for them an end of all dispute. <sup>17</sup>Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, <sup>18</sup>that by two immutable things [i.e., a promise and an oath -- GC], in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. <sup>19</sup>This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast . . . -- **Hebrews 6:13-19**

*Do you love God's truth, or would you rather hear something else? (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12)*

### 5. Life-giving

Not only did God cause things to exist, and not only did He mold things into millions of beautiful shapes and patterns, He caused them to come to life. He made the ocean abound ("teem", NIV) with life. (1:20-21) The variety and sheer numbers of living things are staggering, but even more overwhelming is the fact that life exists. We fear people who can kill; how much more should we fear Him who can make alive!

No theory of evolution can begin to hint at how or why dead matter would increase in order and complexity, much less come to life.

"Secure is life from mortal mind; God holds the germ within His hand. Though men may search, they cannot find, for God alone does understand." -- **A.W. Dicus, *Our God, He is Alive***

*I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. -- Jesus, John 10:10*

# Genesis 1 and 2: Two Accounts of One Creation

"Though some scholars interpret the creation narratives of Genesis 1:1–2:3 and 2:4–25 as . . . two different and inconsistent creation accounts, 2:4 does not introduce a new creation account but is rather an expansion of 1:26–27. The second chapter presupposes the first, and the differences are complementary and supplementary, not contradictory."

**Genesis 1**  
**God the Creator**  
**Elohim**  
**God as powerful**  
**Creation of the universe**  
**Climaxes with man**  
**The six days of creation**

**Genesis 2**  
**God the covenant-keeper**  
**YAHWEH**  
**God as personal**  
**Creation of man**  
**Climaxes with marriage**  
**The sixth day of creation**

(From Thomas Nelson, Inc., *Nelson's complete book of Bible maps and charts: Old and New Testament* [computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1996.)

---

## Notes about Competing Theories of Origins

- **Re: The "Big Bang" Theory:** In Genesis, the "sun and moon and stars galore" were made *after* the earth.
- **Re: Carbon dating:** Carbon dating wants to make the world much older than Genesis suggests. Some Bible believers have tried to accommodate science by ideas such as the "Day-Age" Theory. But how old would Adam have *appeared* the moment he was created? *The Bible account has no need for more time.*
- **Re: "Theistic Evolution":** Some people want to believe *both* the Genesis account as well as some aspects of general evolutionary theory. While we don't know *how* God created things, we do know this from science:
  1. Nature winds down to the basic -- it does not become more complex on its own.  
(Witness the Second Law of Thermodynamics.)
  2. Genetic mutations are sterile.

*There is no other source of intelligence or wisdom besides God.*

And this from Genesis:

1. Man was formed from the dust, not from another life form.
2. God intervened each day, and ultimately to breathe life into man.

*There is no other source of life besides God.*

# Song, "Day One"



Day One, Day One, God made light when there was none.

Day One, Day One, God made light when there was none.

The image shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff is a treble clef with a 2/2 time signature and a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The melody consists of eight measures: G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3. The bottom staff is also a treble clef with the same 2/2 time signature and key signature. Its melody consists of eight measures: G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3. The lyrics 'Day One, Day One, God made light when there was none.' are written below both staves, with the first line of lyrics aligned under the top staff and the second line under the bottom staff.

Day 2, Day 2: God made seas and skies of blue;  
Day 2, Day 2: God made seas and skies of blue.

Day 3, Day 3: God made grass and flowers and trees;  
Day 3, Day 3: God made grass and flowers and trees.

Day 4, Day 4: Sun and moon and stars galore;  
Day 4, Day 4: Sun and moon and stars galore.

Day 5, Day 5: God made birds and fish alive;  
Day 5, Day 5: God made birds and fish alive.

6th Day, 6th Day: God made animals and man that day;  
6th Day, 6th Day: God made animals and man that day.

Day 7, Day 7: God then rested in His heaven;  
Day 7, Day 7: God then rested in His heaven.

## Questions

**(From Genesis chapters 1 and 2)** Does the text explain where God came from?

According to verse 1, what did God do?

What does this tell us about Him?

From chapter 1, what did God do on each day that caused things to happen (or even caused them to *be*)?

Who besides God helped create things? **(Pick one)**

a. angels b. people c. other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_ d. no one mentioned

When God said, "Let Us . . .", to whom was He referring?

a. Genesis 1:1 \_\_\_\_\_

b. Genesis 1:2 \_\_\_\_\_

c. John 1 \_\_\_\_\_

**(Fill in the blanks.)** At the end of the sixth day, "God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_." -- Genesis 1:\_\_\_\_.

What does this tell us about God?

**(Dig a little.)** Find other Bible passages that make this same point about God.

James 1:\_\_\_\_ -

1 John 1:\_\_\_\_ -

(Other?) \_\_\_\_\_ -

Does the text explain why God created man?

Can you think of any other Bible verses that help on this question?

List some of the demonstrations of God's *love* for man in Genesis 1 and 2: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

Summarize the statements of God to man from the following verses:

1:28 - \_\_\_\_\_

1:29-30 - \_\_\_\_\_

**(Look ahead to Genesis 9.)** At what point did this instruction change?

2:16-17 - \_\_\_\_\_

**(Look ahead to Genesis 3.)** This statement was directly challenged. If God was mistaken (or lied), the rest of the Bible (and even the first two chapters) are unreliable. Find elements of the story that either support or contradict this statement.

We can conclude that God always tells the \_\_\_\_\_.

What did God breathe into man? \_\_\_\_\_.

**(For thought and discussion)** Compare and contrast what you've heard about other gods (e.g., from mythology or movies) along each of the following points made about God of the Bible:

Powerful, Good, Loving, Truthful, Life-giving

# Adam's Example

## Genesis 3

### Concerning the patriarch, Adam

Adam was the oldest male member of his family, and he was given instructions and commands by God even before Eve was formed. (2:16-17) So by definition, he was the "patriarch". The "patriarchal dispensation" is the period of time when God revealed His will directly to the heads of the families. A father's role (more specifically, a *patriarch's* role) is summarized well in what God says later regarding Abraham:

“For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice. . . .” -- **Genesis 18:19**

Then when God revealed His laws to Moses for the entire family of Israel, the "patriarchal dispensation" was replaced by the "Mosaic dispensation". Even later, Jesus' death on the cross sealed a new covenant, and the "Christian dispensation" began. We know that Adam followed some of God's instructions (e.g., naming the animals), and he had apparently taught Eve well. (3:2-3)

### Concerning the temptation

The first utterance we read from Satan accused God of lying (not being truthful) and of not having man's best interest in mind (not being loving), almost as if God were in competition with man.

Other trees were also pleasant to the sight and good for food (2:9), but Satan focused Eve's attention on the forbidden fruit.

In a sense, Eve experienced every temptation. (See 1 John 2:16; contrast Jesus' example, Matt. 4:1-11.) How sad that Eve became Satan's minister to tempt Adam.

### Concerning the fall

Instead of trying to correct or rebuke Eve, Adam participated in her sin. (3:6)

Eve, not Adam, was deceived. (1 Timothy 2:14) That makes one wonder who bears the greater guilt!

### Concerning the consequences

Adam and Eve were both . . .

. . . ashamed, in spite of their attempts to cover themselves.

. . . discovered by God, in spite of their attempts to hide.

. . . punished, in spite of their attempts to shift the blame (the "Garden of Eden Shuffle").

The curses on Satan include the first reference to Jesus Christ. (See Galatians 4:4.)

The curses on the woman mention sorrow and conception being multiplied. Pain, NKJV (or "sorrow," KJV) in childbirth may have been a new phenomenon. The third curse mentions her "desire for [her] husband." The "desire" is defined from the Hebrew as, "intense appetite," and can probably best be understood in light of the next phrase, "And he shall rule over you." Also compare Genesis 3:16 with 4:7. The words and phrases regarding desire and rule are the same in both English and Hebrew, and the meaning is unmistakable from 4:7. So the woman's desire was more than *affection* for her husband which led ultimately to the painful process of having children. The desire itself, an appetite *to rule*, was a curse. The woman was placed under the man's rule because of her sin (1 Timothy 2:11-14), but would not find her *role* easy or comfortable.

The curses on man stripped away the pleasure, beauty and security of paradise.

Banishment from the garden removed man from God's presence and from the tree of life. Because of the banishment, physical death passed to all. (See 1 Corinthians 15:21-22.)

In spite of all this, God did not cease loving man. (Witness the tunics of animal skin.)

### Concerning the contrast between God and man

*On the one hand,*

God is . . .  
Powerful/Authoritative  
Good/Holy  
Loving  
Truthful  
Life-giving

*On the other hand,*

Man is . . .  
Weak and rebellious (A sorry response to God.)  
Sinful (. . . by free choice.)  
Selfish (Eve was thinking only of herself.)  
Deceived (Revelation 12:9; 2 Corinthians 11:3)  
Dying (Adam was like a fresh cut flower.)

# The Story of Our Lives: The Story of the Bible

## The Temptation

<b>A part of life</b>	<p style="text-align: center;">Permitted by God Many liberties Every need is supplied A “helper suitable”</p>	<b>The way of death</b>	<p style="text-align: center;">Exploited by Satan Focus on one “no-no” Desire for more An evil influence</p>
-----------------------	---	-------------------------	--

## The Fall

<b>From . . .</b>	<p style="text-align: center;">Peace with God Closeness Blessedness Knowledge of God’s will In comfort At ease In paradise Gold, spices, precious stones Help from angels Eating from the tree of life</p>	<b>To . . .</b>	<p style="text-align: center;">Fear, due to guilt Man withdraws in shame Curses/Blessings removed Knowledge of “too much” In pain In toil Cast out Thorns and thistles Opposition Returning to the dust</p>
-------------------	--	-----------------	---

## The Contrast

<b>God</b>	<p style="text-align: center;">Powerful/Authoritative Good/Holy Loving Truthful Life-giving</p>	<b>Man</b>	<p style="text-align: center;">Rebellious Sinful Selfish Deceived Dying</p>
------------	---	------------	---

## The Need

**Someone to overcome temptation**  
**Someone to overcome Satan**  
**A way back to God and paradise**

## Questions

**(From Genesis chapter 3)** Does the text explain where Satan came from?

Which passage identifies the serpent in Genesis 3 as the “Devil” and “Satan”? **(Pick one)**

- a. Matt. 4:1-3    b. 2 Cor. 4:4    c. Rev. 9:11    d. Rev. 12:9-10

**(From Genesis 2:16, 17)** What was the man allowed to do?

What was the man forbidden to do?

What would be the punishment for disobedience?

How do we know that the man told God’s instructions to his wife?

**(From Genesis 3:1)** The serpent drew Eve’s attention to what?

What did the serpent say was God’s motive for forbidding the one fruit?

What type of fruit was it? **(Pick one)**    a. apple    b. banana    c. pear    d. it doesn’t say

What attracted Eve to the fruit?    ---    What term from 1 John 2:16 matches this?

- |    |     |
|----|-----|
| a. | --- |
| b. | --- |
| c. | --- |

What part of the truth did the serpent use in tempting Eve?

Could God have prevented Adam and Eve from being tempted?

Explain the temptation that God allowed in light of **1 Corinthians 10:13**.

How does God try to control people’s behavior?

How does Satan try to control us?

**(From 1 Timothy 2:14)** Who was deceived, Adam or Eve or both?

Who *admitted* to being deceived?

Who sinned, Adam or Eve or both?

**(From Genesis 2:7-10)** Tell two psychological or emotional consequences of their sin.

Whom did Adam blame for his sin?

Whom did Eve blame for her sin?

List the curses laid on the serpent.

- |    |    |
|----|----|
| a. | b. |
| c. | d. |

List the curses laid on the woman.

- |    |    |
|----|----|
| a. | b. |
| c. | d. |

List the curses laid on the man.

- |    |    |
|----|----|
| a. | b. |
| c. | d. |

How else did God punish Adam and Eve? Why?

Which of the curses do we suffer in modern times?

Do we suffer the *guilt* of Adam and Eve’s sin, or the *consequences*, or *both*?

How did God help Adam and Eve in spite of (that is, after) their sin?

(At least one answer from Genesis 3.)

(Also at least one from chapter 4.)

Who is referred to in the curses on Satan? (Find a passage that says so.)

Who overcame all three types of temptation? (Find a passage that says so.)

So, who brings us back to the tree of life? (Find a passage that says so.)

## Noah and the End of the World

### Genesis 6-9

#### Before the flood: Corrupt conditions

Adam's story basically ends in Genesis chapter 3. Although he had sons and daughters other than the three sons, Cain, Abel and Seth (Genesis 5:4), the others are neither named nor followed. Chapter 4 follows the oldest, Cain, "who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother" out of hatred "because [Cain's] works were evil and his brother's righteous." (1 John 3:11-12) Cain is cursed by God (4:11) but is also marked by God as a partial protection. (4:15) Cain's family is followed for only six generations, and in the sixth we still see murder and attempts at self-justification. (4:23-24)

Abel, who sacrificed acceptably by faith, might have made a godly patriarch, but did not live to see the opportunity. Through his example, however, he still serves as a spokesman for righteousness. (Hebrews 11:4) Seth's family (Genesis 4:25 through chapter 5) contains a couple of references to godliness (4:26; 5:24), but by the eighth generation from Seth, not only were *Cain's* descendants evil, Seth's line, even "all flesh", had become fully corrupted -- "fully", that is, except for another man who "walked with God," Noah.

<sup>5</sup>The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. <sup>6</sup>And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. . . . <sup>8</sup>But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. -- **Genesis 6:5-8**

Notice that the text is speaking generally of mankind ("man"), and points out Noah as the exception. Clearly, "all flesh" in verses 12 and 13 is not intended to include Noah. Although Noah "found grace in the eyes of the Lord" (6:8), he was not afforded the blessed escape from this wicked world that his grandfather, Enoch, had enjoyed.

God's plan for Noah involved destroying all people in the world (perhaps even including his great-grandfather, Methuselah) by a flood. Noah and his immediate family escaped with God's warning and instructions on how to build a unique, box-shaped boat (or, ark). Noah, then, became the new "Adam", patriarch of the entire world. (The events themselves are covered by the questions on page 15.)

#### After the flood: The story survives

The Earth's geological record attests to significant changes in land formations and locations of oceans which can best be explained by a world-wide flood, so the earth, itself, testifies to these events. (Rainbows do, too, as do the seasons, but these must be interpreted by faith.) Other compelling evidence for the fact of the flood comes from flood stories from around the world. First, the sheer number of such stories -- 88 according to one German scholar's count -- is impressive. Second, these stories are found from a wide variety of cultures.

There are basically only two natural ways to explain how a single story would appear in two cultures:

- 1) One culture copied from a story told earlier by another people, or,
- 2) Each culture knew of the same events (via shared experience), and told the story in its own way.

The Babylonian's flood story is part of the Gilgamesh Epic, and is apparently the most similar of other records to that of the Bible. The Gilgamesh Epic was written on tablets which were buried around 612 B.C., and discovered in the 1850's. But it was adapted from ancient Sumerian accounts and dates back to at least 1750 B.C.. (Moses probably wrote Genesis at least a two hundred years *after that*.) The Epic tells of petty, bickering gods (reminiscent of the childish Greek and Roman gods), and we are left with an ultimately unspiritual story. The fact is that oral traditions can easily become corrupted. Also, one culture does not typically adopt the stories, myths and fables of others and might modify the story according to its own beliefs.

Bible believers do not think, however, that the Jews borrowed their account from Sumerians or Babylonians and simply framed the story with their own theology. We believe that, as with the rest of the Scriptures, the writer was inspired by God, so did not rely on the oral traditions of men at all! And we believe that the Babylonians got their story from corrupted oral traditions based on real events of the Flood. (See page 14.)

Jehovah did not regret the flood (as did the gods in the Epic). Rather, He was sorry *He had made man* on the earth! Once God's justified wrath was appeased, He promised never to curse the earth again, and never again to destroy it with a flood. He made a sign of that covenant, as a reminder both to Himself and to us.

The flood teaches about 1) God's righteous judgment [i.e., His ability to deal distinctly with the godly and the ungodly (2 Peter 2)], 2) the timing of the coming of judgment (Matthew 24), and 3) the power and purpose behind God's judgment (2 Peter 3), and it 4) serves as a type of a Christian's salvation. (1 Peter 3)

Noah was one of the outstanding patriarchs. He is on the "short list" of godly men, both in the Old Testament (e.g., Ezekiel 14) and the New. (e.g., Hebrews 11) Unlike Gilgamesh, who could *not* attain immortality in the same way Utnapishtim had, Christians are called on to be *exactly* like the patriarch, Noah! May we walk with God in faith, leading our families on a path separate from the world, preaching righteousness, obeying in all things,

being “saved through water”, and sacrificing in response to our salvation. May we always be true to the better covenant we have with God.

## Chinese Kanji, The Flood and More

Another culture with a flood story originating long before the Bible was written is the Chinese. The Chinese claim an unbroken 4,500 year old civilization, which would place the beginnings of their writing around the time of the Flood. Surprising as it may be, in 2230 B.C., the Chinese were known to worship one God, Shang Ti. Notice one of their writings from centuries before the Bible was written:

Of old in the beginning, there was the great chaos, without form and dark. The five elements (planets) had not begun to revolve, nor the sun and moon to shine. In the midst thereof there existed neither forms nor sound. Thou, O spiritual Sovereign, camest forth in Thy presidency, and first didst divide the grosser parts from the purer. Thou madest heaven; Thou madest earth; Thou madest man. All things with their reproducing power got their being.

So, while oral traditions can easily be corrupted, they can also be passed down quite accurately. (Before the flood, stories would have only had to survive three generations, because Adam was apparently alive when Methuselah was born, and Methuselah was alive when Noah’s sons were born.)

The written Chinese language, which eventually matured into Kanji, is made of pictographs (for visible objects like trees) and ideographs (for abstract concepts such as “rest”), and often combines two symbols. (Chinese and Japanese both use Kanji, but pronounce the words very differently.)

Here is an example  
of a modern  
ideograph:



Some ancient Chinese st<sup>prohibit + smoking = no smoking</sup>

This idea would be pronounced very differently in English and Spanish, for example, even though the same ideograph might be used in both the U.S. and Spain.

Noah was named “Fah-He”, and he survived the flood with his wife, three sons and three daughters. Also, the Chinese language itself contains many references to Bible events. Here are some Chinese (Kanji) ideographs which are still used in A.D. 2000, and which are true to Bible concepts and events:

- God:** rain + 3 persons + worker of magic = Spirit (modern Kanji has dropped the concept of “three”)
- Creation:** dust + mouth + alive = to talk
- Eden:** two trees + revelation = prohibition  
two trees + women = desire/covet  
2 of the 3 ways to write “naked” - body + fruit of a tree (not “leaves” of a tree)  
man + fruit of a tree
- Cain and Abel:** I + sheep = righteousness  
beautiful + ox and sheep + spear = sacrificial animals
- Noah:** eight + mouths + boat = ship [The number “eight” also appears in “total”, “flood”, “cave”, “empty”, “public/common to all”, and “division”.]
- Babel:** united + clay + grass = tower

### Influences which could not have affected the development of Kanji:

- Confucius (intellectual/philosopher), born in 551 B.C.
- Lao-tse (founder of Taoism with many myths and magic), contemporary with Confucius.
- Buddhism (atheistic) entered China from India in 67 B.C..
- Christianity (The oldest known Chinese translation of any gospel portion is from A.D. 641.)

---

See, *The Discovery of Genesis*, C. H. Kang and Ethel R. Nelson, 1979. (“The ancient Chinese people were quite familiar with the same record which . . . Moses is popularly given credit for writing some 700 to 1,000 years later.”) This book was a main source for, *Bible Stories in Kanji*, a booklet by Robert P. Nichols, 1984.

# Noah Versus Utnapishtim

Since the discovery of the Gilgamesh Epic, some scholars have been “overcome by emotion” and inspired to retell the story of the Babylonian hero, King Gilgamesh, of the city of Uruk. [Uruk is the same as “Erech” (Genesis 10:10) a close, often warring neighbor to Ur.] Like the later hero Odysseus, he sets out on many adventures, being both helped by the gods and competing with them. King Gilgamesh’s quest takes him at one point to a man named Utnapishtim, who, along with his wife, is granted immortality after building a boat to survive a flood which destroyed his world.

By comparing the story of Utnapishtim with the Bible’s account of Noah, it is my hope that we will be impressed with (even overcome by) the superiority of the Bible’s drama as well as its players (especially the patriarch, Noah). I hope we will be inspired to tell the Bible account to everyone we know. We can also tell them that, while many cultures pass down a flood story, the Bible’s is superior to anything dreamed up by man.

Item	Noah	Utnapishtim
<b>Divine Planning</b>	By God, at one with His Spirit	By the council of 6 gods at odds with each other
<b>Divine Warning</b>	By God	By the god, Ea, in a dream
<b>Divine Justice</b>	A justified and tempered response to man’s sin; an example forever	An unethical response to man’s noise; later regretted by the gods
<b>Divine Control</b>	God is completely in control	The gods “cowered like dogs” in fear
<b>Physical Causes</b>	Land upheavals, subterranean waters, rain	Dikes breaking, subterranean waters, rain
<b>Duration</b>	40 days and nights of rain; a year to dry	6 days and nights of rain; drying time not told
<b>Boat Dimensions</b>	Rectangular (300 X 50 X 30 cubits); modern models are virtually unsinkable; 3 levels; door; window; pitch coating	Cubical (120 X 120 X 120 cubits); modern models have probably not been made; 7 levels, 9 sections; door; window; pitch coating
<b>People Saved</b>	Noah, his wife, 3 sons, 3 daughters-in-law	Utnapishtim, several families, the craftsmen
<b>Other Items Saved</b>	2 each of unclean animals; 7 each of clean; some of “all food that is eaten”	Representatives of all animals; all kinds of seeds
<b>Boat’s Landing</b>	On the mountains of Ararat	On Mount Nisir
<b>Birds Sent Out</b>	Raven; dove (3 times)	Dove; swallow; raven
<b>Worship</b>	Sacrifice of clean animals and birds	Sacrifice for appeasement
<b>Divine Blessing</b>	Earthly Covenant	Divinity and immortality

Adapted from Walton, John H., *Chronological and Background Charts of the Old Testament*, ©1978, The Zondervan Corporation.

## Internet references:

- For an overview of the Gilgamesh Epic, see “<http://www.soas.ac.uk/Gilgamesh/home.html>”, but beware the faithless bias. For example, the flood dates back to near 2500 B.C., but because the *writing* of the Epic “dates back to at least 1750 B.C.”, and because Moses probably *wrote* Genesis around 1400 B.C., the Epic is said to be “undoubtedly older,” and “it must have been the original source for the story recounted in Genesis.”
- To read the Epic’s Flood Account: “<http://www-relg-studies.scu.edu/netcours/rs011/restrict/gilflood.html>”.
- Re: ancient Babylonian and Sumerian mythology, see “<http://mockingbird.creighton.edu/worldlit/lit/gilga.html>”
- For much more information and many other links, search on “[www.dogpile.com](http://www.dogpile.com)” for “Gilgamesh”.

## Questions

**(From Genesis 6)** Describe the moral condition of the world from 6:5 and 6:11.

Describe God's emotional reaction.

What did God decide to do?

Why was Noah spared?

What did Noah have to do to be saved from the flood?

**(From Hebrews 11:7)** Name two things that moved Noah to build the ark.

a.

b.

**(From Genesis 6)** How big was the ark, measured in feet? (a cubit is about 18 inches)

List the people who entered the ark.

**(From Genesis 7)** How many of each animal did Noah take into the ark?

For how long did it rain?

Where did all the water come from?

**(From Genesis 8)** For how long did water stay on the earth?

What birds were sent out by Noah, what did they do, and what did it mean?

	Bird	Action	Meaning
--	------	--------	---------

a.

b.

c.

d.

What did Noah do with some of the clean animals after the flood?

When had God previously cursed the earth?

What new promise did God make?

**(From Genesis 9)** What were Noah and his sons to do regarding populating the earth?

When had this command been given previously?

(Notice that the animals had been commanded to do the same thing.)

What law did God establish relating to violence?

What was the sign that there would be no more world-wide flood?

**(From Ezekiel 14:14)** Name two other great men of faith who rank with Noah.

**(From Matthew 24:36-39)** What point does Jesus make about God's judgment from the story of Noah?

**(From 1 Peter 3:20)** Tell a couple of points that Peter makes about salvation from the story of Noah.

a.

b.

**(From 2 Peter 2:5, 9-10)** What does Peter teach about God's dealings with the (un)righteous?

**(From 2 Peter 3:6, 7)** What points does Peter make about the end of the world from the story of Noah?

a.

b.

## Noah: A Nobler Beginning? Genesis 9:18 - 11:9

Sadly, Noah, the pillar of faith from chapters 6 - 8 crumbles in chapter 9. While we can only speculate about the emotions he experienced during and after the flood, and while we are left with more questions than answers concerning the particular circumstances of the story (as with many stories from Genesis), we are told of a very ugly night in Noah's life. He had set aside his construction tools and had started farming, including planting a vineyard. But more significantly, he set aside the diligence and apparent focus on his mission necessary for him to build the ark, and took up wine. Rather than walking with God, he was lying drunk and naked in his tent.

Maybe it should come as no surprise to us that Noah was not perfect, but if we had been reading this for the first time without knowing the rest of the Bible story, we might have been hanging our hopes on *Noah* for defeating the serpent and restoring Man to paradise. However, *no patriarch*, no matter the grace he found in God's eyes (Noah), no matter his integrity (Job), no matter his faith (Abraham), etc., was equal to that supreme task. If we look to any man to save us, we will be constantly disappointed, not only as we read Genesis, but as we read the rest of the Old Testament. Once we read about that ugly night, we read no more about Noah.

Not only was *Noah* not sinless, neither were his sons. One of the three, Ham, took a perverse pleasure in seeing his father's nakedness, to the extent that he announced it to his brothers. The other two brothers showed respect for their father and were careful not only to avoid seeing him in his shameful condition, but also to cover him. So Noah realized when he awoke that someone had covered him, and then found out who had seen him and how word of his condition had spread (inferred from 9:24, "knew what his younger son had done to him").

Not surprisingly, Noah pronounced a curse because of how he had been treated. How sad it is to see Noah's family thus divided, considering how few relationships were available for *anyone* at that point. (The Kanji ideograph for "division" is "eight + knife".) And it's especially sad considering what all they had endured together, both during and before the flood. Surprisingly, though, he cursed Ham's *son*, Canaan, to be "a servant of servants . . . to his brethren". (9:25) Canaan's servitude was also mentioned in each of the blessings for Shem and Japheth, while the relationship between Shem and Japheth was specifically blessed (i.e., the mention of them dwelling in each other's tents).

Notice that Noah's pronouncement of curse and blessings is the only utterance from Noah recorded in the Bible. As such, the statements take on a greater, even a prophetic, significance. We read in Genesis 10 that Japheth's descendants eventually inhabited Asia and Europe, Shem's family settled in Arabia and the upper part of the fertile crescent (not Canaan or Egypt), and Ham's children moved into Canaan, Egypt and Africa. It is significant to note that the Canaanites would later become the object of God's wrath because of their ungodliness and shameful practices, and to notice how often African peoples have been enslaved, both to themselves as well as to Europeans and their other brethren.

And then we are told of the tower of Babel. This story serves not simply to explain *why* Noah's family "broke up" and separated from one another (because their migrations into the various continents did not happen all at once), but also to show that Noah's other descendants strayed from God's will. Without making too much of their sin, notice that Noah had been instructed to "fill the earth". (9:1) But the people had a different destiny in mind, and were obviously driven by pride.

They said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth." -- **Genesis 11:4**

The Kanji ideograph for "united" is "mankind + one + mouth". But God foiled their plans and broke their collective strength, causing them to scatter "over the face of all the earth" (stated *twice*) by changing, or confusing, the languages that they spoke. [The Kanji ideograph for "confusion" is "tongue + right leg (extended for walking)".] While God accomplished the scattering of the people, perhaps this was also partly a preventive measure on God's part to at least postpone the corruption of the world back into the pre-flood condition.

# The Tower of Ur

While much could be said about the many ruins of cities and ziggurats in Mesopotamia, the best preserved ziggurat is from Ur, which was in the general vicinity of, and contemporary with, Babel. (Note that Babel and Erech (Uruk) were mentioned together (Genesis 10:10), and that Erech and Ur were close neighbors.)



*This tower may have been very similar to the tower of Babel.*

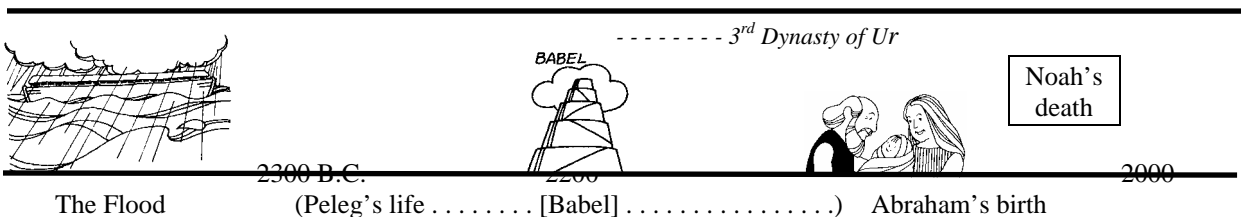
The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Volume 4, page 953, © 1988 by William Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI.

Around the time of Babel, Ur was a marvelous cultural center. During the 3<sup>rd</sup> Dynasty of Ur (which lasted till ca. 2000 B.C.), the city may have had a population of some 300,000. In modern times, we have approximately 100,000 cuneiform tablets from that period. Burial practices were very similar to the now famous practices in Egypt, complete with burials of furniture, animals and dozens of human servants, apparently in preparation for the next world, and pictures of half human-half animal creatures. Sixteen royal tombs, six “death pits” (or mass graves for the attendants), and some 1,800 private graves and tombs can be found in Ur.

Besides the inferences we can make from burial practices and artifacts about ancient Mesopotamian theology (which had so quickly been corrupted in Noah’s family), we also have many specific references to a moon-god, Nanna, from before the time of Abraham well into the time the Babylonians ruled that land. The ziggurats all contain temples at their tops, and it doesn’t take much thought to realize that those people were not worshipping the God of Noah and Abraham.

Some notes about time: Assuming that the genealogies given do not leave out large periods of time, we can date the flood around 2300 B.C.. Genesis 10:25 mentions that “the earth was divided” in the days of Peleg. (We assume this is a reference to Babel.) We can calculate when Peleg lived and for how long he lived from Genesis 11:10-19, so we can say that the events at Babel occurred from 100 to 300 years after the flood.

Notice from the timeline below that Abraham was born near the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Dynasty of Ur, around 2000 B.C., around the end of Peleg’s days and before the death of Noah.



Notice also that Noah lived 350 years after the flood. (Genesis 9:28) So imagine what Noah must have thought as he saw God’s judgment return to the earth at Babel, and how he must’ve taken comfort in the fact that God still notices people’s behavior, both for the good as well as the bad, and that He indeed keeps His covenant.



## **Abraham and the Three Promises**

### **Genesis 11:31 - 12:9 and Acts 7:1-7**

As we read about Noah's descendants, we see that God gradually narrows His focus to one particular family, that of Terah. The rest of the book of Genesis follows Terah's family, especially through his son, Abraham, as they travel toward and in Canaan. See Terah's family tree on the next page. It will become clear in the next lesson (*Abraham: Keeper of the Covenant*) why God chose Abraham. For now, though, notice the three sacrifices required from Abraham, and the three historic promises that God made to him. First, the sacrifices.

**1. "Get out of your country."** Abraham's country was the center of civilization at that time, as evidenced by any quick glance at the history of early Mesopotamia and the Fertile Crescent. (Re-read the notes with the picture, *The Tower of Ur*, on page 17.) His destination, Canaan, had nothing from the standpoint of culture or standard of living to attract anyone away from Ur. Not only did it not compare with Abraham's homeland, it was unfamiliar to him, and *he* was unfamiliar to the Canaanites. Anyone who has traveled out of his country (or even to a different state or region) knows what it feels like to be an outsider.

**2. Get out "... from your kindred."** Abraham's brother, Haran, had died in the homeland, Ur, before the journey began. (Genesis 11:28, 31) Then Abraham's father, Terah, died in the first stopping place, named Haran. None of Abraham's extended family traveled with him, except his nephew, Lot.

**3. Get out "... from your father's house."** Abraham sojourned in that less attractive and unfamiliar country, never settling down to enjoy the comfort his riches might have afforded him, for example, in a house. He lived the life of a nomad, herding sheep. Sometimes we, too, have to leave family and familiar places, simply trusting God in order to receive the promises.

Now consider the three promises that God made.

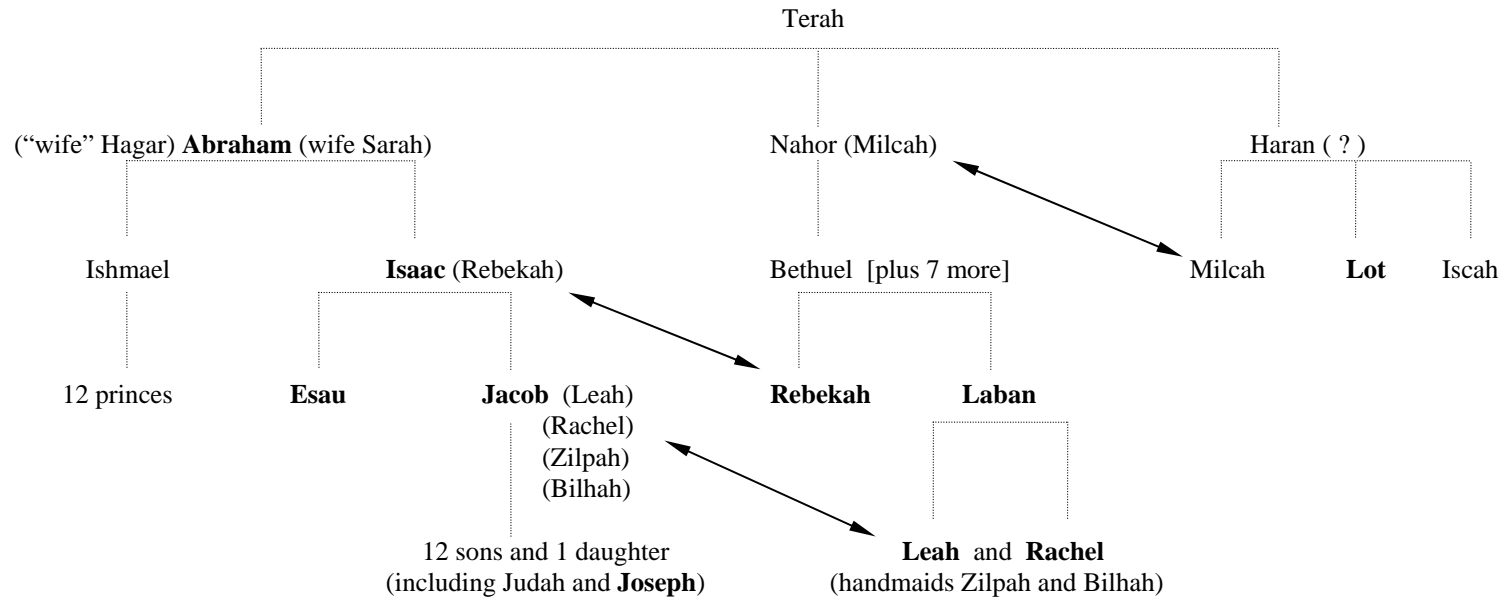
**1. "... A land that I will show you."** Abraham journeyed from Haran into Canaan (Genesis 12:5), and once he was there, God specified "this" land. (12:7) God had said before, "... to a land that I will *show* you", and now He said, "... I will *give* this land." The patience, the faith, and the warfare needed to see this promise fulfilled (including the 40 year delay in the wilderness) occupy the remainder of Genesis through the book of Joshua. This promise was, indeed, fulfilled (see the verses listed on page 21), and the promise was never restated after that point. God later scattered His people to the nations in captivity, bringing back only a remnant into a small part of the land. Modern hopes in this promise are tragically misplaced.

**2. "I will make you a great nation."** At first, we could say Abraham had a nice family, but he had no children. By Genesis 14, he had a large and powerful household and local allies, but he was a far cry from being a great nation. While he was still childless, God repeated this promise (Genesis 17:1-6), emphasizing the future size of Abraham's family. At that time, God changed his name from "Abram" ("exalted father") to "Abraham" ("father of a multitude"). Through several unexpected and even miraculous events, and *in spite of* Abraham's human efforts to realize this promise (i.e., Hagar and Ishmael), God fulfilled this promise, and Abraham's descendants became as the sand and the stars in number. (Be watching for later references to the many descendants who would comprise this great nation.) The nation of Israel would later intimidate their enemies, plunder Egypt, conquer Canaan, and become the envy of the world. (1 Kings 4)

**3. "In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."** God's selection of one single family was not meant to *exclude* other families, it was ultimately meant to *include and bless all* other families! The fulfillment of this promise is seen in the coming of Jesus Christ who extended promises to all families of the world, offering God's spiritual blessings to everyone on the basis of faith rather than family ties. "The promise" is a key concept for understanding differences between the Old and New Testaments, especially regarding the intent and purpose of the Law of Moses. (See Romans and Galatians.) The Land Promise and Nation Promise are not carried into the New Testament. This Blessing Promise, however, is the *basis* for the New Testament, and is the one promise from God to Abraham that continues to be fulfilled!

God expected much from Abraham. Any necessary sacrifice is worth our being pleasing to God, but God did not set out to *burden* Abraham, He set out to *bless* him. He asked him to leave his father's house, but He gave him his own land. God asked Abraham to leave his home country, but He made him a great nation. He asked him to leave his kindred, but He made him "the father of all those who believe" (Romans 4:11), and blessed all families of the earth through him. (Abraham actually experienced the fulfillment of these promises to varying degrees. This will be discussed more in the next lesson.)

# Terah's Family Tree



## Legend:

Names of principal characters are **bold**.

(Wives' and concubines' names) are in parenthesis.

----- Dashed lines show descendants.

↔ Arrow lines show the same person marrying into another family.

## Some Genealogies in Genesis:

Terah (11:27-32)

Nahor (22:20-24)

Lot (19:30-38)

Ishmael (16:7-12; 17:20; 25:12-18)

Isaac (25:19-26)

Abraham's sons by his 2nd wife, Keturah (25:1-4)

Jacob's wives (28:1-9; 29:15-30)

Jacob's children (29:31 - 30:21; 35:16-26; 37:35?)

Esau (26:34-35; 28:6-9; chapter 36)

## Questions

### The Land Promise (Genesis 12:1, 7)

In Genesis 12:1, how did God describe the land that was Abraham's destination?

What did Abraham have to leave in order to go to the land?

- a. \_\_\_\_\_ b. \_\_\_\_\_ c. \_\_\_\_\_

After leaving Haran, to what land did Abraham come?

What town did he stop in first?

Underline the words from God's statement to Abraham in Genesis 12:7 which gave Abraham *new* information:  
**“To your descendants I will give this land.”**

What did Abraham do in response to this promise?

Where did Abraham go next (verse 8) and what did he do there?

Toward what place did Abraham journey next?

**(From Acts 7:5, 16; see Genesis 23)** How much of the land did Abraham ever own?

Select the passage that best describes when this promise was fulfilled.

- a. Deuteronomy 17:14-17      b. Joshua 21:43-45      c. Joshua 23:14-16

### The Nation Promise (Genesis 12:2)

God said He would make Abraham a \_\_\_\_\_ nation. God also said Abraham's \_\_\_\_\_ would be great.

Select two passages that describe this promise being fulfilled.

- a. Genesis 23:6      b. Exodus 1:7-9      c. Exodus 19:6

### The Blessing Promise (Genesis 12:2-3)

**Genesis 12:2** “. . . You shall be a \_\_\_\_\_.”

What would happen to people who blessed or cursed Abraham?

What family or families would be blessed through Abraham?

“\_\_\_\_\_ the families \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_”

Select the passage that best describes when this promise was fulfilled.

- a. Gal. 2:16      b. Gal. 3:7-9      c. Gal. 3:16-19

**(For Discussion)** Comment on the nature of promises. Specifically, what happens to promises once they're fulfilled? Think of some every day examples. Is there any reason to continue hoping in the promises made to Abraham? If so, which one(s)?

## Abraham: Keeper of the Covenant

### The Nature of a Covenant

God had made a *covenant* with Noah and with every creature on earth: He had *promised* never again to destroy the earth with a flood, and He had given a *sign* of that covenant, the rainbow. (See Genesis 6:17-18; 8:20 - 9:17.) He also expected certain action from Noah. Notice the language: “I will . . . You shall . . .” (6:18); “As for you . . . And as for Me. . . .” (9:7, 9)

A “covenant” is “an agreement between two parties,” a “treaty,” or a “pact”. Covenants in the Bible were usually sealed with an oath and some sort of gift or ritual or sign. (For example, a gift of animals, Genesis 21:22-32; a stone heap, Genesis 31:44-54; clothing, 1 Sam. 18:3-4; animal blood on the Book and the people, Exodus 24:1-8; the blood of Jesus, Hebrews 9:15; the Lord’s Supper, Matthew 26:26-29; baptism of Christians; etc.) While men are fickle (Jeremiah 34:17-20), God always remains true to His part of the agreement.

When we first see Abraham in Haran, we see God making a tremendous *covenant* with him. God asked Abraham to move to a new land, and God made the promises studied in the previous lesson. (Genesis 12:1-3)

### The Covenant Re-affirmed

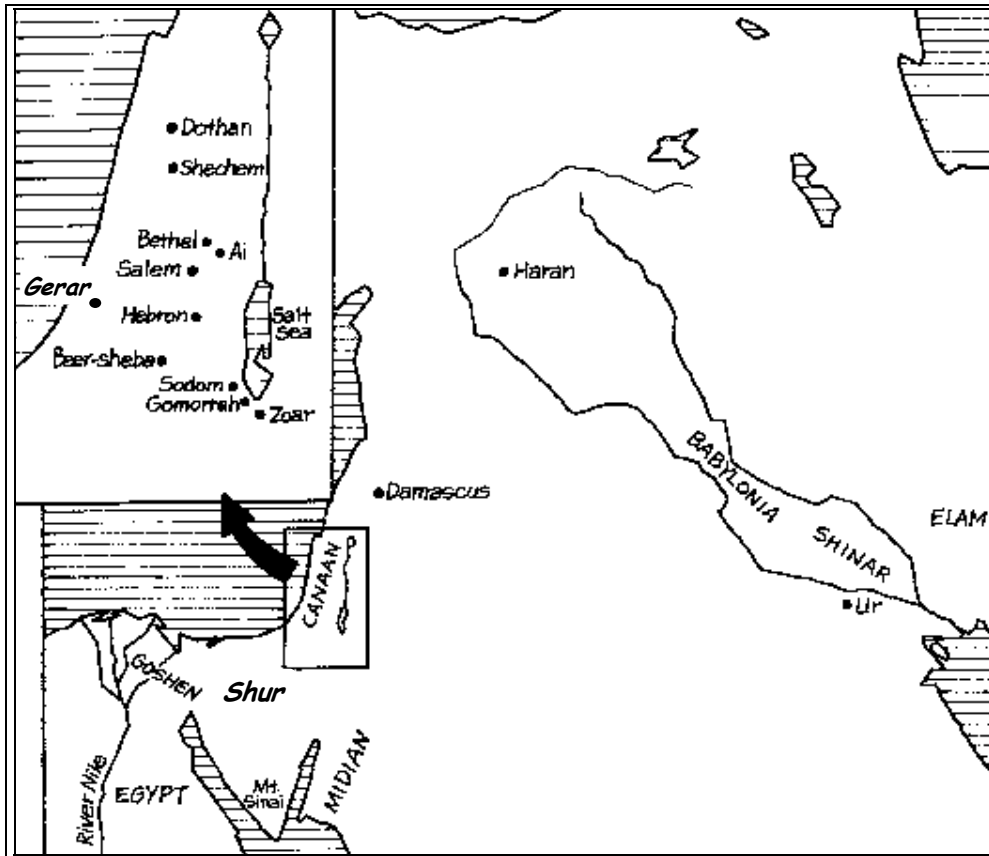
Notice that when we first read the promises, the text reads, “The Lord *had said* to Abram. . . .” (Genesis 12:1) The covenant had actually first been stated before Abraham arrived in Haran (Acts 7:2), and was restated several times over the next 25+ years as Abraham traveled in and around Palestine.

### Abraham’s Travels

Place (See map, next page)	Main Events	Act of Worship or Covenant	Promises Restated
<u>Shechem</u> , age 75 (Genesis 12:7)	First stopping point in Canaan	Abraham’s first altar	Land Promise
<u>Bethel</u> (Gen. 12:8)		Second altar; Called on the name of the Lord	
<u>Egypt</u> (Gen. 12:10-20)	Deceived Pharaoh and was sent away		
Return to the altar at <u>Bethel</u> (Gen. 13:1-17)	Lot separated from him		Land Promise; Descendants as the dust
<u>Hebron</u> (Gen. 13:18)		Third altar	
Still in <u>Hebron</u> (Gen. 15)	“How shall I know?”; God tells his people’s future - “Know certainly”	A sign of the covenant (oven and torch passing between animal sacrifices)	Descendants as the stars; Land Promise, naming nations and boundaries
Still in <u>Hebron</u> , age 99 (Gen. 17:1 - 18:15)	Renaming Abraham and Sarah; Promise of Isaac	Circumcision - “My covenant ... in your flesh”	Nation Promise; Land Promise
<u>Gerar</u> (Gen. 20)	Deceived Abimelech		
Probably <u>Beersheba</u> (Gen. 21:1-21)	Isaac is born; Hagar is cast out with Ishmael	Isaac is circumcised	“In Isaac your seed shall be called.” (21:12)
<u>Beersheba</u> (Gen. 21:22-34)	A covenant with Abimelech	Planted a tree; Called on the name of the Lord	
<u>Moriah</u> (Gen. 22), a 3-day trip from Beersheba	Offered Isaac	Fourth altar; offered a ram	Descendants as stars/sand; Dispossess their enemies; Blessing Promise

Clearly, chapters 15, 17 and 22 are the most significant regarding the covenant. In chapter 15 we see Abraham questioning God regarding a sign that the covenant would indeed be kept. God answers him and leaves no doubt at all concerning His intention to keep His promises. Abraham receives a look into the future of Israel

(compare Acts 7:5-7), as well as a sign from heaven. In chapter 17, Abraham is already old and is still childless. But God makes very specific statements concerning Abraham being “exceedingly fruitful” (17:2, 6), and changes his name accordingly. Ishmael’s fruitful future is also spelled out (verse 20), and Sarah is promised to bear a son named Isaac (“laughter”). The events in chapter 22 are the final and ultimate test of whether Abraham would hold up his end of the covenant. (His success is the focus of the next lesson.)



## Map for Abraham's Travels

From "The Complete Bible Story: Clip Art CD-ROM." Gospel Light.

Shechem and Hebron were later 2 of the 6 cities of refuge.

The theme of Abraham being a sojourner is quite unmistakable from all the moving he did.

### God's Promises Fulfilled

The promises were fulfilled quite slowly by our estimation. Time itself was surely a test of Abraham's faith. The greatest challenge for anyone living in this world and hoping in the next has always been to trust in God, which is the essence of faith, and to keep trusting over time. Trust allowed Abraham to endure, regardless of the obstacles, and in spite of actually seeing or experiencing very little of the fulfillment of the promises. Upon Abraham's death, think of the meager beginnings of the fulfillment of promises which he had seen:

Land: Abraham only owned a burial site. (Genesis 25:9-10)

Nation: Still nomads, with no city of their own. He had dozens of servants, but no "multitudes."

Blessing: Abraham lived only to see his twin grandsons be born and grow to be teen-agers.

(Compare Genesis 21:5; 25:26; 25:7.)

<sup>13</sup>These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. <sup>14</sup>For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. <sup>15</sup>And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. <sup>16</sup>But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

-- Hebrews 11:13-16

### The Promises Remembered

This covenant was remembered throughout Jewish history (Exodus 6:4-8; Psalms 105:8-11; Romans 9:6-9), and is the basis for our Christian faith, because Jesus fulfilled the Blessing Promise. (Galatians 3:15-18, 26-29)

## Questions

Define a “covenant.”

Give an example of a covenant between two men.

Give an example of a covenant between God and man.

**(From Genesis 11:31 - 12:5; Acts 7:1-4)** Where was Abraham when God first made the promises?

Where did Abraham go next, and who died there?

**(From Genesis 12:6-20)** Name the cities where Abraham built altars in Canaan before leaving for Egypt.

- a.
- b.

Why did Abraham go to Egypt?

What did Abraham do because he feared the Egyptians?

**(From Genesis 13)** To what place did Abraham return when coming out of Egypt?

After Lot separated, what promise(s) did God restate?

Where did Abraham go next, and what did he do there?

**(From Genesis 15:1-6)** What did Abraham ask God?

What was God’s reply?

**(From Genesis 15:7-21)** What else did Abraham ask God?

What was God’s reply, and what happened after dark?

Tell some key points of God’s message to Abraham while he was in a deep sleep.

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.

**(From Genesis 17:1 - 18:15)** What two promises are restated in 17:1-8?

- a.
- b.

What new sign of the covenant did God give, and what did Abraham do “that very same day”?

What new information did God give regarding the Blessing (or, Seed) Promise which made Abraham laugh?

**(From Genesis 21:1-21)** What conflict arose on the feast day when Isaac was weaned?

What did Sarah tell Abraham to do?

Why did God approve of Sarah’s advice (although Abraham didn’t)?

What help did God give Hagar and Ishmael immediately?

What promise did God make regarding Ishmael?

## Abraham the Faithful

### Genesis 22

Abraham had failed at times to see God's ability to keep His promises, especially concerning the birth of Isaac. (We remember Sarah laughing "within herself" in 18:1-15, but "Abraham fell on his face and laughed," 17:15-21.) He did not make that mistake again. When asked to sacrifice Isaac as a burnt offering, he *did so*, "concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense." (Hebrews 11:19) On the altar, Isaac was indeed offered up, and was as good as dead, when God preempted the killing. This story is the greatest example of Abraham's great faith. His faith wavered and allowed human doubts and fear to enter from time to time, but who else would've raised the knife to his only son?

The story receives most of its significance from the fact that God was asking Abraham to sacrifice *Isaac*, the son of promise. God had kept Abraham waiting for 25 years before giving him a son. God had repeatedly pointed out that no servant (such as Eliezer, 15:2-4) would be the Seed through whom all nations of the earth would be blessed, nor would Abraham's son, Ishmael, conceived at his wife, Sarah's, suggestion with her own handmaid, Hagar. (16:1-5; 17:18-21; 21:12) The birth of Isaac had been foretold by God to Abraham twice (17:16-21; 18:10), and apparently involved a miracle for both Abraham and Sarah because of their age. (Genesis 18:11-12; Hebrews 11:11-12) From a human perspective, there was no way that the sacrifice of Isaac made sense with God's earlier promises. But with the miraculous *birth* of Isaac, Abraham had learned that *nothing* is too hard for the Lord (Genesis 18:14), and his perspective of faith allowed him to obey promptly and without objection.

The location that God chose carries incredible significance -- one of the mountains in the land of Moriah. We have other Scriptures which help us identify Moriah.

Now Solomon began to build the house of the LORD at Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the LORD had appeared to his father David, at the place that David had prepared on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. -  
**- 2 Chronicles 3:1**

1 Chronicles 21 tells of the time when the Lord had plagued Israel, and that David had stopped the plague by offering a burnt sacrifice on the threshing floor of Ornan (or, Araunah; cp. 2 Samuel 24). The next verses (1 Chronicles 22) tell of the preparations for building the temple on that site.

So we know we have two Biblical references to Moriah, one on which Abraham offered Isaac, and one on which Solomon built the temple. Some writers doubt that the two are the same, but they offer no basis on which to separate the two, and cartographers who put Moriah anywhere but Jerusalem place a question mark by it. Jewish and Muslim traditions *equate* the two. (In fact, the Muslim structure, The Dome of the Rock, claims to be on the very site of the sacrifice.) Besides, Abraham was living around Beersheba, in the land of the Philistines at the time (Genesis 21:34), and his destination, Moriah, was a three-day's journey. (Genesis 22:3-4) The distance from Beersheba to Jerusalem fits the equation.

So God had Abraham sacrifice his only begotten son, the son of promise, the son of a miraculous birth, on that mountain around 2000 B.C., and then chose that same spot for a sacrifice by David to stop a plague around 1000 B.C.. Temple sacrifices were made on that spot for most of the next 1000 years, until God finally offered His own, only begotten Son on (or very near) that mountain to stop the plague of sin once and for all.

The reward to Abraham was a renewal and strengthening of the covenant. For the first time, God said, "By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD. . . ." (Genesis 22:16) This oath was remembered by Abraham when choosing a wife for Isaac (Genesis 24:7), and is mentioned repeatedly in Biblical history. (E.g., Genesis 50:24)

While the Angel of the Lord said, ". . . Now I know that you fear God," we can understand that there was benefit to *Abraham* as much as to the Lord, in seeing Abraham's faith put into action.

Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? <sup>22</sup>Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? -- **James 2:21-22**

Abraham's works on Moriah *fulfilled*, or perfected, his faith which had been pointed out in chapter 15. God had promised Abraham descendants from his own body as innumerable as the stars,

and he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness. -- **Genesis 15:6**

James teaches that Abraham's works on Moriah *fulfilled* this Scripture. (James 2:23-24)

After the events on the mountains of Moriah, we read only of Abraham burying his wife, Sarah (Genesis 23), sending back to his homeland for a bride for Isaac (chapter 24), and of his remarriage to Keturah and additional children. (25:1-6) Then we read of his death and burial (25:7-11), and the story shifts to Isaac.

## Questions

**(From Hebrews 11:11-12)** What did Sarah do by faith?

How many other sons besides Isaac did Abraham have?

How many other children did Abraham and Sarah have?

Which passage(s) in Genesis tell(s) of God promising Isaac to Sarah?

12:1-3                      17:15-21                      18:9-14                      20:1-7

What circumstances surrounded Isaac's conception that would've made his parents feel especially attached to him?

**(From Galatians 4:21-31)** How are we Christians like Isaac?

a.

b.

c.

**(From Genesis 22:1-19)** What did God tell Abraham to do to Isaac?

What was the name of the land where this would be done?

How far away was it?

What did God usually think of human sacrifice? (Notice Leviticus 20:1-5.)

So, what was the purpose of God's instructions to Abraham? (Explain this in light of James 1:13.)

At what point did Isaac become curious (or confused) about the events?

Could God simply have read Abraham's mind to know whether he believed God?

So, what did God "learn" from having Abraham act it all out?

**(From Genesis 22:17-18)** Which promises from Genesis 12:1-3 are repeated at this time?

a.

b.

c.

How does Abraham's offering remind us of God's offering? (especially Genesis 22:8)

a.

b.

c.

d.

How are the two sacrifices different?

**(From Hebrews 11:17-19)** God had promised to "call [Abraham's] seed" in Isaac, but asked Abraham to kill Isaac before Isaac had any children. How did Abraham figure God might resolve this conflict?

**(From Genesis 22)** How did God *actually* resolve the conflict?

**(From Hebrews 11:19)** In what sense did Abraham receive Isaac from the dead?

## Abraham the Deliverer

### Genesis 14:1-24; 18:16 - 19:29

We are told two stories of dangerous and difficult times for Abraham's nephew, Lot. The first takes us back to a time when Abraham had no children, so Lot was the closest thing to a son to Abraham. Lot's father, Haran, had died back in Mesopotamia, so Abraham had been the closest thing to a father to Lot for some time. By the time of the second story, Ishmael had been born, but not Isaac. In both cases, Lot's life was in the balance, and he was saved by his uncle, Abraham, patriarch and deliverer.

#### Concerning the rescue from the four kings (Genesis 14)

Lot had been taken more than 150 miles to the north (although Abraham had a slightly shorter trek because of where he was living). Once Abraham and his troops arrived, they attacked near Dan, then pursued another 20+ miles to the area near Damascus.

Abraham had formed some alliances with his neighbors, but the fighting men who helped him on the rescue mission apparently came from his own household.

Notice Abraham's attitude toward the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah. (It might stand in contrast to Lot's attitude seen by his settling in that city.) On the way back from the rescue, Abraham met Melchizedek and gave him a tenth (tithe) of the spoils. (Compare Hebrews 7:4 to understand who gave whom the tithe.) Then when Abraham returned the captives to the king of Sodom, he was offered to keep the spoils, but refused to accept *any* gift from Sodom (except a square meal for his troops). Abraham said, "I have lifted my hand to the Lord, God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth, that I will take nothing. . . ." (Genesis 14:22-23) Abraham wanted to be sure that God, rather than some king, received full credit for the blessings in his life.

#### Concerning Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18:16 - 19:29)

Geography in that area has likely changed some over 4,000 years, but the Salt Sea (Dead Sea) was the low point in elevation. The valley of Siddim lay on the southern end of the Sea, and was formed by a broad, flat plain full of asphalt pits. (14:3, 10) Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboim, and Bela (or, Zoar) are cities mentioned in that vicinity, along the brook Zered which flows westward from nearby mountains, and empties into the Salt Sea. The brook Zered also served as the border between Moab and Edom.

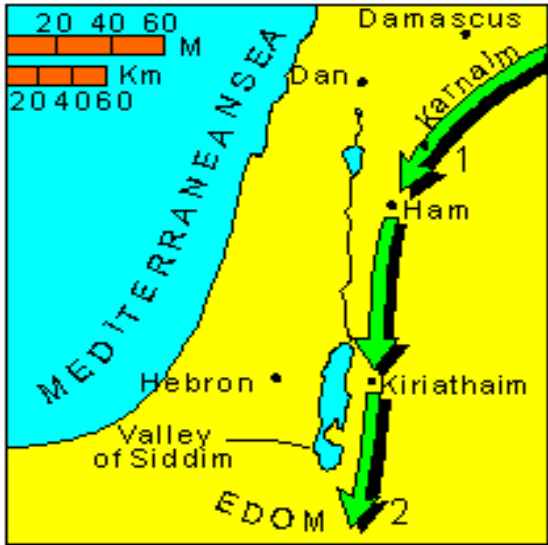
The asphalt was a highly flammable form of bitumen (related to crude petroleum), and could be found in forms ranging from liquid to semi-solid. It was used to pitch Noah's ark (Genesis 6:14) and Moses' basket (Exodus 2:3), and as mortar in the Tower of Babel. (Genesis 11:3) Brimstone is roughly equivalent to sulphur, being bright yellow, flammable, and foul smelling.

Imagine Abraham's feelings when he returned early in the morning to the place where he had repeatedly petitioned God the afternoon before, and saw the entire plain going up in smoke. (19:27-28) Abraham's pleas for Sodom suggest that he already knew roughly how sinful the cities were. Now God's answer had come in only about 12 hours, and was sadly, "No." Abraham had been able to rescue the people of the valley from invading kings, but not even his prayers could save them from themselves and God's justice.

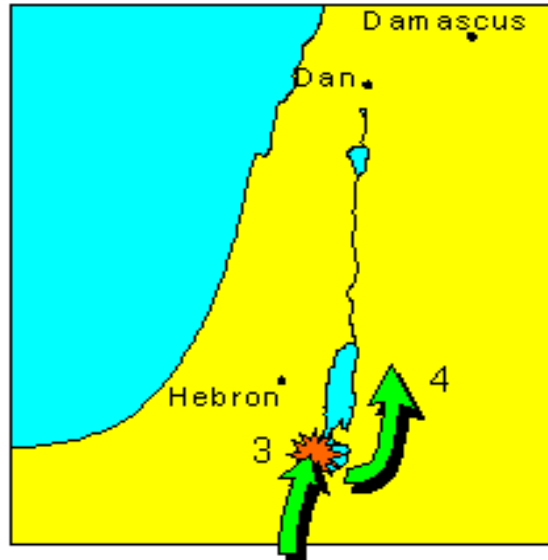
### Abraham Saves Lot . . . Twice

	<b>Captured by Kings</b> (chapter 14)	<b>Sitting in Sodom</b> (chapters 18 - 19)
<b>The Danger to Lot</b>	Kings plundering the area	God destroying the area
<b>The Cost to Abraham</b>	318 troops; 125 miles one way	6 requests; "Let not the Lord be angry."
<b>The Rescue</b>	Paramilitary raid	Prayer based on his life of faith
<b>What Was Saved</b>	All the cities' goods; all the people	Only Lot and two daughters
<b>Credit Given</b>	"I have lifted my hand to the Lord," 14:22	"God remembered Abraham," 19:29

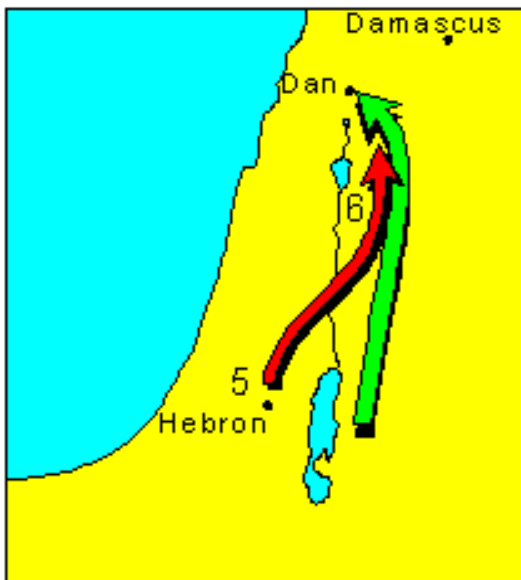
# Maps of Abraham Rescuing Lot



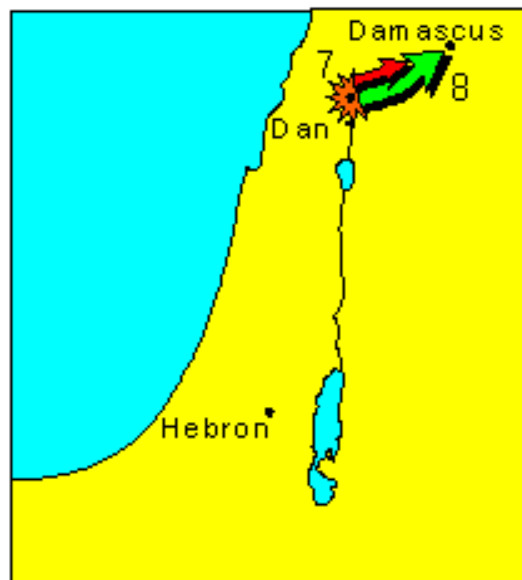
1. Five kings in the Valley of Siddim rebel against their distant overlords (4 kings). The overlords travel south from Babylonia and Elam to restore their rule, defeating others on the way.
2. They conduct raids into the mountains of Edom.



3. The four kings defeat the five rebel kings.
4. They carry off people and loot from Sodom and Gomorrah, including Lot.



5. Abraham hears that Lot was captured.
6. He pursues the kings along the King's Highway north to Dan.



7. Abraham's men attack the enemy by night and defeat them.
8. They pursue the fleeing armies, rescue Lot, and recover the other prisoners.

Simon Jenkins, *Nelson's 3-D Bible mapbook [computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1985 by Lion Publishing.

# Sodom: An Example for All Ages

*Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them . . .  
having given themselves over to sexual immorality  
and gone after strange flesh,  
are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.*

**(Jude 7)**

The Sodomites' behavior as well as their neighbors' was as foul-smelling as brimstone, and when their sins sparked the fire of God's wrath, all the cities of the plain (except Zoar, thanks to God's mercy toward Lot) became an object lesson for all time to those who would practice unrighteousness.

## ***Sodom serves as a picture of . . .***

- . . . "the vine" on which God's enemies grow. (Deuteronomy 32:32)
- . . . Judah's wicked rulers and people (Isaiah 1:9-10 - "Rulers of Sodom" and "people of Gomorrah"),  
with regard to their wicked prophets (Jeremiah 23:14),  
their open, shameless sinning (Isaiah 3:9), and  
their predicted doom because of their sins -- pride, idleness, neglect of the needy.  
(Ezekiel 16:44-59)
- . . . the predicted overthrow of various nations:  
Babylon (Isaiah 13:10; Jeremiah 50:40),  
Edom (Jeremiah 49:17-18), and  
Moab and Ammon. (Zephaniah 2:9)

## ***Sodom is the ultimate example of . . .***

- . . . sudden and terrible punishment. (Lamentations 4:6; Luke 17:28-32)
- . . . the Lord's anger, and the extent to which He is willing to punish, turning an "Eden" into a wasteland.  
(Deuteronomy 19:23-29; 2 Peter 2:6-8)
- . . . complete and utter destruction. Thankfully, God left Israel a remnant. (Isaiah 1:9; Romans 9:29)
- . . . punishment intended to bring about repentance. (Amos 4:11)
- . . . the Lord's ability to deliver the faithful. (2 Peter 2:6-8)  
(Sometimes He has to take us by the hand and pull us out!)

## ***What could be worse than Sodom?***

- It's easy to sit in judgment against Sodom and wag our heads. But,  
Judah *sinned* worse. (Ezekiel 16:44ff)
- Also, 1st century Jews who rejected Jesus' disciples would be *punished* worse (Matthew 10:15; Mark 6:11; Luke 10:12), especially Capernaum because they didn't repent. (Matthew 11:23-24)

## Questions

**(From Genesis 13:10-13)**

Contrast the physical and moral conditions of Sodom.

Why had Lot chosen to live in that area?

**(From Genesis 14)**

How many kings near the Dead Sea had been paying tribute to their Babylonian conquerors?

For how many years did they pay the tribute before rebelling?

What was the consequence to the kings near the Dead Sea?

What was the consequence to Lot?

Describe Abraham's rescue operation.

**(From Genesis 18:22-32)**

Whose prayers for Sodom failed to save the city?

Describe his prayers.

Fewer than \_\_\_\_\_ righteous were found in the city.

**(From Genesis 19:1-10)**

Who came to visit Sodom, and who met them?

How did the host treat the visitors?

Who came from the town, and what did they want?

What did Lot offer instead?

How did the town's people respond?

**(By the way, from 2 Peter 2:6-8)** What word is used three times to describe Lot?

Explain this in light of Lot's offer to the town's people.

**(From Genesis 19:11-29)**

What did the visitors do to the town's people?

What warning was given, and how did the sons-in-law react?

How many people were allowed to flee the city?

Was Lot reluctant to leave Sodom, or eager to leave? Support your answer.

How many actually made it to safety?

**(From Matthew 11:23-24)** What point did Jesus make from the story of Sodom?

**(From Luke 17:28-32)** What point did Jesus make from the story of Sodom in verses 28-30?

What point did Jesus make in verses 31-32?

## **Isaac: Son of Promise, Man of Peace**

### **Genesis 26:1 - 27:40**

Hebrews 11 refers to Isaac from three angles. Once, Isaac is listed with his father, Abraham, and his son, Jacob, without any special mention of his own. (verse 9) Secondly, he is named as Abraham's "only begotten son", the channel for God's Blessing Promise, who was offered during a test of Abraham's faith. (verses 17-18) Judging from these two references, maybe we could say that he stands out in Scripture more for *who he was* and for *what happened to him* than for what he *did*. But *he did* set an example of faith, monogamy and peace, and he did utter a prophetic blessing. (verse 20)

#### **Concerning the Promises and Covenant with Isaac**

Chapter 26 opens with a famine, and Isaac was apparently thinking about moving to Egypt. But he made it only as far as the land of the Philistines before God intervened: "Do not go down to Egypt."

The term "Abimelech" *may* have been a title, like "Pharaoh" to the Egyptians.

God's promises are repeated (that is, the covenant is restated) to Isaac in Genesis 26:1-5. God refers to "the oath which I swore to Abraham your father." This is surely intended to remind Isaac of the very time he was offered on the altar on Moriah, because *only then* had God prefaced His promises to Abraham with an oath, saying, "By Myself I have sworn, says the Lord. . . ." (Genesis 22:16) In 26:1-5 we find a promise of God's presence as well as . . .

The Land Promise: "To you and your descendants I give all these lands." (verse 3)

The Nation (or, Many Descendants) Promise: "I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven" (verse 4), and

The Blessing (or, Seed) Promise: "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed." (verse 4)

Notice that the reason stated for continuing the covenant with Isaac was *Abraham's obedience*, and the next thing we read concerning Isaac is that *Isaac obeyed* by staying in Gerar.

The covenant is partially repeated in 26:24 after Isaac had separated from the Philistines, and Isaac responded by building an altar and calling on the name of the Lord.

(The main points of Isaac's interaction with the Philistines are covered in the questions on page 33.)

#### **Concerning the scheme by Jacob and Rebekah**

Notice that Isaac was suspicious and tested Jacob repeatedly, but was ultimately deceived. Notice how willing Jacob was to participate in the lies and deception. Notice how God used Rebekah's treachery for His own purpose. (Compare Genesis 25:23 and Romans 9:10-13 with Genesis 27:29.)

#### **Concerning strife in Isaac's family**

How sad it is to see trouble in the family of a man of peace (even though no patriarch before or since has been immune!). For example, his older son made a grievous choice in marriage (26:34-35), and his wife showed favoritism to the younger son. In fact, Rebekah, was instrumental in *deceiving* Isaac. (She and her brother, Laban, were cut from the same cloth.) Also, his older son wanted to kill the younger for some 20 years. We know Isaac was not a perfect parent (e.g., 25:28), but we can't blame him for these poor choices and evil actions. How sad it is to see trickery and disloyalty in the family of a man of faith.

#### **Concerning family fighting through the ages**

The covenant with Abraham was promised to be established with Isaac instead of Ishmael, even before Isaac was conceived (17:19, 21), and again on the day Isaac was weaned. (21:12) Isaac was specifically named over his half-brother, Ishmael (Genesis 17:18-22), although Ishmael was blessed by God. In fact, Ishmael would become a "great nation" (21:13, 18), the father of twelve princes (17:20), with countless descendants. (16:10)

After Sarah's death and Isaac's marriage to Rebekah, Abraham remarried and had six more children, more half-brothers to Isaac, who became the ancestors of many peoples in the Middle East, including the Midianites. (Genesis 25:1-4) The Midianites bought and sold Joseph as a slave (Genesis 37:28, 36), and were the target for several defeats by God's people under both Moses (Numbers 25, 31) and Gideon. (Judges 6 - 8)

Esau married two Canaanite wives. (Genesis 26:34-35) He also married into his uncle Ishmael's family. (28:8-9) Some of his descendants, the Edomites (Genesis 36:1-18), refused passage to the Israelites (Numbers 20:14-21), and were repeatedly the object of God's wrath. (Psalm 60; Isaiah 34; Obadiah; Malachi 1:1-4; etc.)

In the same way that Canaan had been cursed by Noah to be a servant (Genesis 9:25), and we understand the curse to extend down through time (as with the curses in the garden on the serpent, woman and man), various curses were placed on Terah's grandchildren and great-grandchildren with respect to their brothers:

Of Ishmael: "He shall be a wild man; His hand shall be against every man, And every man's hand against him. And he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren." -- **Genesis 16:12**

Of Esau: "By your sword you shall live, And you shall serve your brother; And it shall come to pass, when you become restless, That you shall break his yoke from your neck." -- **Genesis 27:40**

These predictions apply not only to Ishmael and Esau, but to their children as well. Maybe this helps us better understand the source of some of the conflicts in the modern Palestinian, Muslim and Israeli worlds. Especially in light of all the in-fighting, Isaac's example of peace stands out as the godly standard and example for us all.

---

## Summary of Isaac's Life

(Parallels between Isaac's and Abraham's lives are highlighted.)

- Isaac's miraculous birth was predicted, making him the son "of promise." (Genesis 17:15-21; Galatians 4:28.)
- Isaac was offered on an altar by his father. (Genesis 22) This event surely remained with him his entire life, and likely helped shape his faith and encouraged him to live true to the covenant.
- Isaac's bride was chosen from Abraham's kindred, not from the Canaanites, although Isaac remained in the promised land of Canaan. (Genesis 24) This probably says more about Abraham than about Isaac, but Isaac was already 40 years old (25:2), and he accepted Rebekah. (24:67)
- Isaac prayed for his wife to conceive. (Genesis 25:21)  
[Abraham's wife, Sarah, had also been barren,
- Isaac headed toward Egypt when there was a famine but we have no mention of Abraham praying on her behalf.] [Abraham dwelt there (Genesis 12), while Isaac was prevented from going all the way. (Genesis 26:2-3)]
- Isaac was the object of God's covenant. (Compare Genesis 22:17-18 and 26:3-4.)
- Isaac dwelt in Gerar and deceived Abimelech by saying his wife was his "sister". (Cp. Genesis 20 and 26.)
- Isaac was later petitioned by Abimelech for a covenant of peace because "the Lord is with you." (Cp. 21:22-34 and 26:26-33.)
- Isaac was blessed by God with great prosperity. (Cp. Genesis 13:2, 24:34-35, and 26:12-16.)
- Isaac made peace by moving to make room in the land. (Cp. Genesis 13 and 26:12-33.)
- Isaac witnessed strife between his children (Cp. 21:8-21 and 27:41), but they were finally reconciled. (Cp. Genesis 25:8-9 and 33:4; 35:29.)
- Isaac's wife showed favoritism to one of his children. (Cp. Genesis 21:9-10 and 25:28. Notice that Isaac, himself was partial to the *other* son.)
- Isaac was deceived by Jacob who had Rebekah's help. (Genesis 27:1-36)
- Isaac uttered a prophetic blessing "by faith." (Genesis 27:27-29, 39-40; Hebrews 11:20)
- Isaac died in Hebron at age 180 and was buried by two sons. (Genesis 35:27-29)  
(Abraham was 175, Genesis 25:7.)

## Questions

Which passage first mentions Isaac, even before he was born?

**(From Genesis 26)** Which land did God not want Isaac to go to, and in which land was he to dwell?

Not \_\_\_\_\_ but \_\_\_\_\_

Fill in the missing promises from 26:3-4:

a. I will be with you and bless you

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham

d. \_\_\_\_\_

e. I will give to your descendants all these lands

f. \_\_\_\_\_

On what occasion had the Lord sworn an oath regarding the covenant with Abraham?

What did Isaac tell Abimelech about Rebekah, and why?

How many wives did Isaac ever have?

Describe Isaac's material wealth, and tell its source.

What do we learn about Isaac from him re-digging wells in the Valley of Gerar?

What did Isaac do in response to God restating the covenant? (verses 23-25)

What had Abimelech *seen* about Isaac that prompted him to ask for a covenant of peace?

**(From Genesis 27)** What physical condition was Isaac in? \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

Tell at least three ways that Isaac showed his suspicion.

a.

b.

c.

d.

What blessings did Isaac pronounce on Jacob?

a.

b.

c.

What did Isaac predict would happen to Esau in verse 40?

a.

b.

c.

**(From 2 Kings 8:20-22)** When and how was the last part of the prediction fulfilled?

Why did Isaac not "take back" the blessing from Jacob and give it to Esau?

# Jacob the Supplanter

## Jacob lived true to his name

Isaac's younger son was named "Jacob", or "One who takes the heel" (or, "a supplanter"), at birth because his hand grabbed his twin brother's heel during the birth process. (Genesis 25:26) As his story unfolds, we see him repeatedly trip up his brother. In fact, Jacob's next recorded action was to take advantage of Esau in a weak moment, demanding the birthright in exchange for a simple meal. (Genesis 25:29-34) The story is mentioned in the New Testament, surprisingly not for the unfair trade proposed by Jacob, but for Esau's "profane" response. (Hebrews 12:16)

When we next see Jacob, he is over 40 years old (judging from 26:34) and is carrying out his mother's plan for him to steal the blessing that belonged to his brother. (Genesis 27) It was an elaborate ruse, and Isaac did not fall for it easily, but he did fall for it. (See the previous lesson.) Focusing now on Jacob's role, notice that his objection was not about being asked to deceive and cheat, but simply about fear that he would be caught. Once this fear was allayed, he brought the animals to be cooked, dressed up in his brother's clothes (for the smell) and goat skins (for the feel), served the dish to his father, and repeatedly and blatantly lied.

Jacob's sinful actions in this story surely disturb us, and his use of the phrase, "the Lord your God" (Genesis 27:20) may make us cringe. This is the first use of this phrase in the Bible out of some 450 total, and it is used in various contexts. The phrase sometimes seems intended to distance the speaker from God (i.e., "He is *your* God, not mine"), as with Pharaoh (Exodus 8:28), and the Queen of Sheba. (1 Kings 10:9) At other times, though, the speaker seems to be subtly emphasizing the relationship that the listener *should have* with God, as with Moses' many uses in his farewell address (throughout Deuteronomy) and Samuel's farewell address. (1 Samuel 12:12, 14) We also have clear examples of people using the phrase, not by way of separation or admonition, but simply as a clear acknowledgment of the other person's relationship with the Lord (i.e., "*I know* He is *your* God.") This comes from both sinners (the Israelites in 1 Samuel 12:19) and the godly (David to Solomon, 1 Kings 2:3). In the case of King Saul (1 Samuel 15:21, 30), we are left to speculate whether the ungodly Saul is verbally distancing himself from God, or whether he is simply acknowledging Samuel's faith, or both. In Jacob's case, a statement he makes later may help us understand his meaning in 27:20. (See Genesis 28:20-21.)

At any rate, Jacob successfully tricked Isaac and received the blessing:

Let peoples serve you, And nations bow down to you. Be master over your brethren, And let your mother's sons bow down to you. -- **Genesis 27:29**

When Esau learned of this, he said,

Is he not rightly named Jacob? For he has supplanted me these two times. He took away my birthright, and now look, he has taken away my blessing! -- **Genesis 27:36**

## Concerning Jacob's life

We should remember what a uniquely unhappy life Jacob lived, and his unhappiness began here when he incurred his brother's wrath, and fled his home. He was gone from the land of Canaan for 20 years, and was sadly mistreated by his uncle, Laban. (Genesis 29 - 31) Upon returning to Canaan, his sons slaughtered their enemies out of revenge, and Jacob then lived with a certain degree of fear of his neighbors. (34:30) A few years later, he is devastated by the apparent loss of his favorite son, Joseph.

Jacob the deceiver received poetic justice when he was deceived by Laban who gave him Leah in marriage instead of Rachel. Bethuel's family seems to have had strong "scheming" genes, because Rebekah had deceived her husband, Laban (her brother) deceived Jacob, and Laban's daughter, Rachel, later tricked *him!* (31:34-35)

Jacob, very late in his life, was also deceived by his sons regarding Joseph in a not-so-elaborate scheme which played on Jacob's insecurities and fears. Also ironic is the fact that Jacob, who had been the object of his mother's favoritism, had himself shown favoritism to Joseph, and this fueled the events that caused Joseph to be lost from Jacob from some 20 years. Sad, but true in Jacob's case,

*"He who lives by deceit dies by deceit."*

### Concerning Jacob's personality

Jacob was clearly a shrewd man, as seen in his dealings with both Esau and Laban. Notice that Jacob made a great flock from Laban's stock. Although Jacob and Laban clearly agreed to the terms of their deal (30:27-34), Jacob's increase was seen by Laban's sons as unfair. In this instance, Jacob out-did his rival not by deceit, but because of the Lord's help.

Aside from his cut-throat deal in "buying" Esau's birthright (chapter 25), Jacob's wisdom is seen when reconciling with Esau. (chapters 32 and 33) Notice that he reconciled not because he was a man of peace like his father, but for his own survival. When he learned of Esau coming to meet him with 400 men, Jacob made groups (or, "droves") of his possessions and sent them ahead in waves. He also separated his wives and children into groups, but Jacob "crossed over before them" (33:3) and groveled, bowing seven times to the ground, when he saw Esau. After 20 years, and apparently largely because of Jacob's wise and humble presentation to Esau, Esau was able to bury the hatchet (*not* in his brother)!

As strong as he was at times, Jacob allowed himself to be used in a competition between his wives. (chapter 30)

### Concerning Jacob's new name

In chapter 32, Jacob is met by angels in "God's camp" (Hebrew, <Mahanaim>, "Double Camp"). When he left that place, he headed south on the east side of the Jordan between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea, and began crossing the brook Jabbok at night. As his family crossed, Jacob was left alone. We aren't told the circumstances leading up to his encounter with a "Man", but we clearly see Jacob's tenacity in continuing a long and seemingly impossible struggle, and we see his audacity in demanding a blessing. To get a feel for the mismatch, imagine a two-year-old exerting himself against a grown-up. The grown-up holds him away with one hand with no effort, but the little kid won't give up. The grown-up trips him, but the kid still holds on to the grown-up's ankle. The grown-up tries to walk away, but the kid allows himself to be dragged along.

The "Man" did not prevail with ordinary wrestling, and even when He dislocated Jacob's hip, Jacob did not let go. Jacob was renamed accordingly. "Israel" means "prince with God" or "ruling with God." In Genesis 32:28, the KJV and NKJV are quite different.

KJV, "for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed."

NKJV, "for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed."

The word for "power" or "struggled" is a Hebrew word used only twice in Scripture. The other occurrence is in Hosea 12:3: (The word in verse 4 is slightly different.)

KJV, <sup>3</sup>He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God: <sup>4</sup>Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed . . .

NKJV, <sup>3</sup>He took his brother by the heel in the womb, And in his strength he struggled with God. <sup>4</sup>Yes, he struggled with the Angel and prevailed . . .

Jacob "prevailed" only in the sense that he did not give up, and ultimately received a blessing. The angel's power was obviously superior in absolute terms, but He allowed Jacob to wrestle him to a draw. Afterwards, Jacob knew very well that he had "seen God face to face", and he named that place "Penuel" (same as "Peniel", "face of God").

Jacob's "struggle" that night characterized his whole life, and perhaps that's what the episode was intended to illustrate to Jacob (as well as to us). The very next morning, as he was reconciled with Esau, his long struggle with his brother ended, and Jacob had again prevailed.

# Chapter Summaries, Genesis 25 - 50

(Chapters not pertaining to Jacob are shown in this style.)

25 - Birth; “Buys” Esau’s birthright

26 - Isaac in Gerar; Covenants with God and Abimelech

27 - Deceives Isaac for the Blessing

28 - Flees to Haran; “Jacob’s Ladder” dream

29, 30 - Marries; Is deceived by Laban; Grows prosperous (children and flocks)

31 - Rocky separation from Laban

32 - Prepares to meet Esau; Wrestles with an angel

33 - Reunion with Esau

34 - Simeon and Levi take vengeance on Shechem

35 - God renames Jacob and restates the covenant; Benjamin is born; Jacob returns to Isaac

36 - Esau separates from Jacob

37 - Conspiracy against Joseph; Jacob is deceived by his sons

38 - Judah and Tamar

39 through 45 - Joseph in Egypt

45 - Learns that Joseph is alive

46 - God restates the covenant; Reunion with Joseph

47 - Jacob meets Pharaoh; [Surviving the famine](#)

48 - Blessings on Ephraim and Manasseh

49 - Blessings on the twelve; Jacob dies

50 - Jacob is mourned and buried in Canaan

## Some Parallels with Isaac’s life

Several details in Jacob’s life remind us of events in the lives of the other patriarchs (for example, his covenant of peace with Laban is like Abraham’s and Isaac’s covenants of peace with Abimelech), but some of the more significant similarities to his father, Isaac’s, life are as follows:

Jacob

- was chosen by God for the covenant and promises (Genesis 35),
- was blessed by God with great possessions (the land could not support both Esau and him, Genesis 36:6-7),
- was deceived by his own family in his old age (Genesis 37:31-35), and
- uttered prophetic blessings and curses on his sons. (Genesis 49)

## Questions

**(From Genesis 25:21-28)** How much difference was there in the ages of Jacob and Esau?

Tell about the two brothers' personalities and ways of life.

Jacob:

Esau:

Describe how the parents took sides with their children.

What two things did the Lord predict about the boys at the time of their birth?

a.

b.

**(From Genesis 25:29-34)** What did Jacob have that Esau wanted?

What did Esau have that Jacob wanted?

What condition was Esau in at that moment?

How did Jacob treat his brother?     a. with mercy, love and kindness     or,     b. kicked him when he was down

**(From Hebrews 12:16)** How is Esau's character described?

**(From Genesis 27:1-40)** What did Isaac want from Esau?

Whose idea was it for Jacob to steal the blessing? \_\_\_\_\_

Tell 3 things (s)he did to help Jacob steal it.

a.

b.

c.

Tell what (s)he was willing to suffer in case the plot failed.

What objection did Jacob raise?

What lies did Jacob tell his father?

a. (Told it twice.)

b. (Told once.)

What two things had Jacob taken from Esau?

a.

b.

Describe Esau's emotions, and what Jacob had to do as a result.

Tell of two instances when Jacob was deceived by others.

a.

b.

**(From Genesis 32:22-32)** Why was Jacob alone when the "Man" met him?

From what two passages do we know that the "Man" was an "Angel"?

Genesis 32: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ 12:3-4  
(verse) (book)

Define "Jacob":

Define "Israel":

## Jacob the Chosen

Up to this point, we have probably not gotten a good impression of Jacob. And it probably seems that Jacob got what he got in life (especially concerning Esau's birthright and blessing) by his own aggression and cunning. So we need a lesson to remind us of his place in God's plans, and the reason he was (perhaps unexpectedly) chosen by God. By the time Jacob fled to Haran, we know that Isaac had blessed him twice:

Let peoples serve you, And nations bow down to you. Be master over your brethren, And let your mother's sons bow down to you. Cursed be everyone who curses you, And blessed be those who bless you!  
-- **Genesis 27:29**

<sup>3</sup> May God Almighty bless you, And make you fruitful and multiply you, That you may be an assembly of peoples; <sup>4</sup> And give you the blessing of Abraham, To you and your descendants with you, That you may inherit the land In which you are a stranger, Which God gave to Abraham. -- **Genesis 28:3-4**

Now, *Isaac unintentionally* gave the first of these blessings, but *God intended* for Jacob to receive the blessing, as we see from God's own blessing on Jacob which had been stated to Rebekah even before Jacob's birth.

### Concerning Isaac and Jacob

The apostle Paul uses Isaac to help illustrate a key concept. As you may recall, Isaac was named and was chosen to be a channel of God's blessings before he was even conceived. (Genesis 17:19-21; Romans 9:7-9) Paul reminds us that Jacob, also, was chosen before birth, and he goes on to why: Not because of his faith, and not because he deserved it, but because God is Sovereign and can choose to bless "whomever [He] will".

God's sovereign right to choose whomever He will is being defended in Romans 9 because the Jews objected to God's choice of believers in Christ. God had chosen Isaac, not Ishmael. (The Jews cried, "Good!") God had chosen Jacob, not Esau. (The Jews cried, "Good!") Then God chose Christians, not Jews OR Gentiles. (The Jews cried, "Unfair!") And so Paul develops this theme in Romans chapters 9 – 11.

### Concerning Jacob and Esau

While God had chosen Noah and Abraham (and others down through time) apparently *because of their faith*, such was not the case with Jacob.

<sup>10</sup> When Rebecca also had conceived by one man, even by our father Isaac <sup>11</sup> (for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls), <sup>12</sup> it was said to her, "The older shall serve the younger." <sup>13</sup> As it is written, "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated."

<sup>14</sup> What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not! <sup>15</sup> For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion." <sup>16</sup> So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.

-- **Romans 9:10-16**

The human reasoning that suggests that God chose Jacob because He knew Jacob would be faithful in the future simply undermines the teaching of this passage in Romans 9. Listen again: Jacob was chosen "[not] having done any good or evil," and God's "purpose according to election" stems "not of works but of Him who calls . . . it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs."

Two key points deserve emphasis. First, Jacob and Esau are mentioned as representatives of the *nations* that descended from them.

And the LORD said to [Rebekah]: "Two nations are in your womb, Two peoples shall be separated from your body; One people shall be stronger than the other, And the older shall serve the younger." -- **Genesis 25:23**

This prophecy, made to Rebekah while she was expecting, finds its fulfillment not in the personal lives of Jacob and Esau themselves (because we read nothing about Esau serving Jacob), but in the histories of their descendants. (See 2 Samuel 8:14)

Second, Jacob was not chosen *for salvation* over Esau, but *as an instrument for fulfilling God's plan*. If salvation were under discussion, then the mention of Esau being the first-born would be totally out of place, because birth order has never had anything to do with salvation. And besides, we have already shown that nations, not individuals, are under discussion. The individuals are named because God's promises were fulfilled through

them, not because God granted them salvation over their brethren. Whether or not Jacob would later live up to God's high calling, God could and would fulfill His promises and His plan through Jacob.

### Concerning Pharaoh

Obviously, there are many people whom God has *not* chosen to bless, including the Pharaoh who withstood Moses and Aaron. God had raised up Pharaoh and “endured with much longsuffering” (Romans 9:22) his rebellious ways, in order to show wrath and power and to declare His name. God even hardened his heart. (Romans 9:17-18)

In case we are tempted to judge God's choices as unfair, Paul reminds us that no one deserves God's blessings, so any choice of His to bless someone is merciful. When God chooses to bless, for example, Isaac over Ishmael, the person *not* chosen is in no way injured; he is simply ignored. (Although Ishmael, himself, was specifically blessed by God under a separate promise.)

Now everyone, good or bad, are being used by God according to His will, to accomplish His purpose. God sometimes used people because their ideas were consistent with God's (for example, Abraham), and sometimes in spite of their plans to the contrary. (For example, Herod and Pilate regarding Jesus, Acts 4:25-28.) How, then, can God blame anyone for being hardened? (Romans 9:19) Isn't it God's doing that they have hard hearts in the first place? This is a key question related to Calvinistic doctrine, and can be restated as, “Does God override a person's will?” To answer the questions directly, “Yes,” God hardens people's hearts, but “No,” God does not override anyone's will. God has never taken someone with a soft heart and made it hard. He only takes people with a soft heart and make their hearts softer [for example, Cyrus (2 Chronicles 36:22-23), and Lydia (Acts 16:14)], and takes people who already have a hard heart, and makes them harder [for example, Pul (1 Chronicles 5:26), and the Philistines (2 Chronicles 21:16)]. We might also think of people's reactions to gospel preaching throughout the New Testament. Some people were humbled and prompted to become Christians, while others were enraged against the Christians. (“*The same sun that melts butter, hardens clay.*”) Everything God made was “very good” (Genesis 1), and He always gives people the power to choose whether to obey or disobey Him. (E.g., Eve.)

Taking a closer look at Pharaoh, notice how hard his heart was to begin with. (Exodus 5:2-8) We learn from the next few chapters that Pharaoh hardened his own heart, and we learn just how God made his heart even harder: 1) God allowed magicians to partially copy some of the signs (Exodus 7:13, 22), 2) The magicians said, “This is the finger of God.” (Exodus 8:19), 3) God sent plagues (Exodus 9:7); 4) God removed the plagues (Exodus 8:31-32; 9:35) and 5) God led Pharaoh to believe that he could get the Israelites back. (Exodus 14:1-4)

But there is no injustice with God. (Romans 9:14) In fact, God showed *mercy* on Pharaoh, “enduring with much longsuffering” his rebellion! (verse 22)

... Let no one charge injustice on God. Rather let it be said that if He was unjust at all, it consisted in his excessive kindness to the obdurate and stupid heart that never responded to it. Where, in all the annals of time, did God ever do so much to soften the heart of any man as he did to soften that of Pharaoh; and yet the world clamors, “unjust!” Had God, after the first miracle, opened the earth and engulfed the stubborn wretch, should we not rather have cried, “right!” How much less then, as matters stand, can we cry, “injustice”?<sup>1</sup>

The Calvinistic version of predestination, in which God makes Pharaoh “into the monster he was” (ibid.) and then punishes him for it (“finds fault”), is, indeed, unjust by any standard, human or divine. Pharaoh was “raised up” (verse 17) to be king. God exalted him (him of the hard heart) to a position of power in order to show God's power in him, that God's name might be declared in all the earth. The text in no way implies that God created Pharaoh “hard” from birth or in any way caused him to be evil.

### Concerning “the potter” and the “vessels”

Notice that this illustration applies both to nations (Jeremiah 18:1-12) and individuals. (2 Timothy 2:20-21) Notice too, that the nations and individuals in those passages had the power to decide their behavior.

God endures people and nations who reject Him, then uses them for His own purposes, ultimately delivering them to destruction. They were prepared for destruction in the same way that the vessels of mercy were “prepared beforehand for glory,” (Romans 9:23) the separation being made on the basis of faith in Christ.

Paul quotes from two Old Testament passages (Hosea 2:23; Isaiah 10:22) to show who these vessels of

---

<sup>1</sup> Moses E. Lard, Commentary on Romans, page 308, Gospel Light Publishing Company, Delight, Arkansas.

Also see, Robertson L. Whiteside, A New Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Saints at Rome, GT Press, Dallas TX, 1982.

mercy were (namely, us Christians who have “attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith,” Romans 9:30-33), and to make two key points: 1) The Gentiles were always to be included eventually in God’s blessings (“all the families of the earth shall be blessed”), and 2) The Jews were lucky to have anything left of their nation at all (the remnant)!

God’s calling is extended because of His mercy, and His election is now based on our seeking righteousness by faith in Jesus. This is consistent with the teaching of Ephesians 1:3-14, that we are “predestined to adoption” *in Christ*. God chooses those who choose Jesus. In other words, God predestined for salvation a *category* of people, namely believers in Jesus. The only individual’s *name* which He selected before the foundation of the world was “Jesus Christ”. As a earthly illustration, let’s say I decide to have a SuperBowl party. I make that decision simply because I can (my sovereign right) and because I want to (the pleasure of my good will). Now let’s say I invite all my co-workers (a category of people). I do not invite some and exclude others -- I invite them all. The invitation will be accepted depending on the individuals’ choices, based on their interest (or lack of interest) in the SuperBowl or in parties, but the choice is theirs.

God’s ability to see into the future and know about certain individual’s behavior (omniscience; foreknowledge) in no way *causes* those individuals to behave like they do. That ability to know the future is well beyond our comprehension, and generates philosophical questions which the Bible doesn’t try to answer. But we know that God’s choice was made “before the foundation of the world” (Ephesians 1:4), and fully allows for individuals to freely choose or reject Jesus.

God’s plan was according to His sovereign choice and His mercy. Now our participation is according to our free-will choice and our faith. Gentiles and Jews alike (verses 24, 30-31) can attain to “the righteousness of faith” by believing in Jesus.

### **Concerning God and Jacob**

As Jacob left Canaan, (soon after his shameful, ungodly behavior), God appeared to him in order to bless him. In the dream referred to nowadays as “Jacob’s Ladder,” God stated all three promises of the covenant to Jacob -- Land, Nation (descendants as the dust), and Blessing (or, Seed) Promise:

I am the Lord God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. <sup>14</sup> Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. <sup>15</sup> Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you. -- **Genesis 28:13-15**

God protected Jacob in Haran, warning both Jacob (31:11-13) and Laban (31:24) in order to facilitate their separation. Then, once Jacob had returned to Canaan, God restated the covenant again. (35:9-12)

Jacob gave God credit for his blessings (31:5-9, 42; 33:5; 35:3) and recalled the promises in time of trouble. (32:9-12) But while we study Jacob’s expression of his faith, we must always keep in mind the main point of this lesson: The covenant was established with Jacob because of God’s choice, not because of Jacob’s faith or holiness. At the same time, Jacob was a faithful patriarch to the extent that he lived up to the covenant.

One of God’s promises which was made to both Abraham and Jacob is related to the Blessing Promise, but we have not focused on it to this point: Blessings on those who blessed them, and curses on those who cursed them. We see examples of blessing in the stories of Abraham and Abimelech, Isaac and Abimelech, Jacob and Laban, and Joseph and Pharaoh. We see an example of curses on those who cursed (or mistreated) them regarding the men of Shechem (chapter 34), and later throughout Israelite history regarding various nations.

### **Concerning second choices**

This might be a good time to reflect on several of God’s choices. So often, it was not the older son who was chosen. For example, God chose Seth, not Cain; Isaac, not Ishmael; Jacob, not Esau; Joseph, not Reuben; and Ephraim, not Manasseh. (Genesis 48:8-20) Some of these men were apparently chosen largely because of the other’s sin (Seth, Joseph), but not all. Many of these men lived up to the trust put in them, but again, not in every case. This surely serves as a great admonition to us Gentiles who have ourselves, in a sense, been chosen second (or, “grafted in” in the language of Romans 11).

<sup>16</sup> For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. <sup>17</sup> For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.” -- **Romans 1:16-17**

## Questions

When did God choose Jacob to be master over his brethren?

Who else had been chosen so early?

**(From Romans 9)** Because Jacob was chosen so early, what can we learn about the basis for God's election?

And, we learn that God will have mercy on whom?

Tell an instance (other than Jacob) of God accomplishing His will in spite of people's plans to the contrary.

When did Isaac bless Jacob?

- a.
- b.

**(From Exodus 5:2-8)** How did Pharaoh respond when first asked to allow the Israelites to feast in the wilderness?

From the other passages cited in Exodus, who hardened Pharaoh's heart? (2 answers)

- a.
- b.

**(For thought and discussion)** What might God have done to *soften* Pharaoh's heart?

**(From Romans 9)** The Gentiles attained to "the righteousness \_\_\_\_\_." (verse \_\_\_\_\_)

**(From Ephesians 1:4)** When did God predestine Christians to adoption?

And, on what basis did he make the choice?

**(From Ephesians 1:12)** We "who \_\_\_\_\_" should be to the praise of His glory.

Which passage in Genesis tells of "Jacob's Ladder"?

Describe the dream.

What promises did God make to Jacob in the dream?

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.

Tell how Jacob responded to God's promises:

- a. The thing he set up -
- b. The name of the place -
- c. The vow he made -

Tell an instance of Jacob's enemies being cursed.

Tell an instance of someone being blessed because of his association with Jacob.

## **Joseph the Chosen**

### **Genesis 37, 39 - 45**

The story of Joseph is fairly long and contains too many details for one lesson. The main facts and events regarding his life through chapter 41 (before he was reconciled with his brothers) are covered in the questions on the following two pages. His reconciliation (chapters 42-45) is summarized under the fourth point below. Notice the emphasis on Joseph's character, faith and righteousness in spite of the consequences.

#### **Joseph Wore His Father's Coat (37:2-4)**

Joseph could've refused it out of a desire not to stand out, but he accepted his father's honor.

*Where did this get Joseph?* In a pit and sold into slavery. (37:18-28) In reaction to these consequences,

Joseph could've resented his father. ("I never wanted your stupid coat, anyway!")

Joseph could've hated his brothers.

And Joseph could've doubted God. ("Yeah, like I'm really gonna rule over my family *now*.")

But he didn't. So the Lord stayed with him and prospered him. (39:1-4 )

#### **Joseph Remained a Virgin 'til He Married (39:5-12)**

Joseph could've rationalized sinning, but he kept himself pure.

*Where did this get Joseph?* Prison. (39:13-20) In reaction to these consequences,

Joseph could've given up and forsaken God.

But he didn't. So the Lord stayed with him and prospered him. (39:21-23)

#### **Joseph Spoke Up**

1) Telling his 1st dream of greatness (37:5-8)

*What did this get Joseph?* His brothers "hated him even more for his dreams and for his words." (37:8)

2) Telling his 2nd dream of greatness (37:9-11)

*What did this get Joseph?* Rebuke from his father (37:10) and envy from his brothers. (37:11)

3) Interpreting the prisoners' dreams (chapter 40)

*What did this get Joseph?* He was forgotten by his friends (40:23) for two full years. (41:1)

Joseph could've reacted poorly to these circumstances.

But he didn't. So the Lord stayed with him and prospered him. (41:39-45)

#### **Joseph Buried the Hatchet (42:1 - 45:14)**

It took some time to get the whole family together in Egypt because Jacob initially had stayed back with Benjamin. During this time, Joseph tested them and ensured their reunion and safety.

1) He kept one brother a prisoner. (42:6-24) [Reuben was the oldest, but had tried to save Joseph. (37:21-22) Perhaps for this reason Joseph imprisoned the next oldest, Simeon.] This made sure he would see Benjamin.

2) He returned the money they had spent on food twice, the first time along with provisions for their journey. (42:25) [The brother's guilt was surely partially responsible for their interpreting all of Joseph's actions out of fear. (42:28; 43:18)] If this was a test of their greed, the brothers passed the test well. (43:15, 19-22)

3) He framed Benjamin regarding the "theft" of Joseph's silver cup. (chapter 44) This was apparently a test of the brothers' loyalty to each other. Judah showed a change of heart from his earlier days (compare Genesis 37:26-27 and 44:18-34) and offered to be a slave in Benjamin's place. Needless to say, he passed the test well.

The brothers had carried their guilt from how they had treated Joseph for many years (42:21) -- 22 years, to be precise. [Joseph was 17 when he was sold (37:1); he was exalted at age 30 (41:46); seven good years passed, plus 2 years of famine. (45:6)] But the emotions Joseph carried inside him all those years were not hatred or bitterness. (42:24; 43:40) Joseph had seen all his circumstances through the eye of faith (45:4-9), and forgave his brothers (perhaps surprisingly) even before they asked for forgiveness. (They *had* shown remorse and repentance.)

Joseph could've taken vengeance.

But he didn't. So his family was reunited and healed, and went on to be blessed by God.

## Questions

**(From Genesis 37)** Describe Joseph's dream about his future, and how he was sold into slavery.

### **(From Genesis 39) "Mistreated by Men; Loved by the Lord"**

What job in what country did Potiphar have?

What position did Joseph have under him?

Who lusted after Joseph?

What did she do to try to seduce Joseph? **(Choose all the true answers.)**

- a. Say, "Lie with me."    b. Tempt him verbally on a daily basis.    c. Send him gifts.    d. Grab his clothes.

How did Joseph respond? **(Choose all the true answers.)**

- a. Refuse her verbally.    b. Try to reason with her.    c. Remind her who she was.    d. Tell her he couldn't sin like that.  
e. Refuse even to be with her.    f. Report it to Potiphar.    g. Flee from her.

How did this scorned woman react?

How did Joseph show that he appreciated his position in Potiphar's house?

Find at least *four* verses in this chapter which plainly state that the Lord was with Joseph.

What special blessing did the Lord grant Potiphar for Joseph's sake?

What freedom did Joseph have under both Potiphar and the prison keeper?

### **(From Genesis 40) "Two Very Different Dreams"**

What had Joseph done to deserve being jailed (or for that matter, being sold into slavery in the first place)?

Find an example of Joseph's bitterness or hatred or bad attitude toward *anyone* who had mistreated him.

From verse 8, how did Joseph approach the task of interpreting dreams?

Verses 9-11 tell the \_\_\_\_\_'s dream. Summarize it.

How was it fulfilled, on what special day?

What did Joseph ask of him when he interpreted his dream?

Verses 16-17 tell the \_\_\_\_\_'s dream. Summarize it.

How was it fulfilled (on that same special day)?

### **(From Genesis 41) "Two Dreams Are One"**

For how long had Joseph been in jail?

How old was he now?

**Bonus question:** What other Bible character was left in jail, basically forgotten, for that long?

Verses 1-4 tell \_\_\_\_\_'s first dream. Summarize it.

### **(From Genesis 41) "Two Dreams Are One" (continued)**

Verses 5-7 tell his second dream. Summarize it.

Who could *not* interpret the dream?

Who finally remembered Joseph?

Who *could* interpret the dream? (Be careful!)

Why had the dream been repeated?

a.

b.

What would be the dreams' fulfillment?

What plan did Joseph suggest?

Who liked the plan?

Whom did Pharaoh credit for the interpretation?

Does this seem to match how Joseph would have given credit?

What did Pharaoh do for Joseph in terms of . . . ?

a. (Rank)

\_\_\_\_\_

b. (Ring)

\_\_\_\_\_

c. (Clothes)

\_\_\_\_\_

d. (Other jewelry)

\_\_\_\_\_

e. (Chariot)

\_\_\_\_\_

f. (Honor)

\_\_\_\_\_

g. (New name)

\_\_\_\_\_

h. (Wife)

\_\_\_\_\_

Exactly how much grain did Joseph accumulate in the seven good years?

Tell the name of Joseph's firstborn son: \_\_\_\_\_

What did it mean?

Why had Joseph picked that name?

Tell the name of Joseph's second son: \_\_\_\_\_

What did it mean?

Why had Joseph picked that name?

What countries experienced famine?

Where (and to whom) did they go to buy grain?

## Jesus and the Patriarchs

An exercise in comparing and contrasting the patriarchs with Jesus can be an effective review, and this lesson also allows us to bring out some important points that may not have been covered in previous lessons.

### Adam

The New Testament teaches that Adam is a “type” of Jesus. (Romans 5:14) We would usually expect a “type” to be very *similar* to its “antitype” (as with Noah’s salvation through water and ours, 1 Peter 3:20-21), but in Romans 5:12-21, we see that Adam is just the *opposite* of Jesus in many respects. The contrast might be summed up in this way:

Through Adam, sin and death entered the world; one man’s disobedience made many sinners.

One offense resulted in judgment and condemnation; death reigned through one man’s sin.

Through Jesus, righteousness and life entered; His obedience makes many righteous.

Many offenses resulted in grace, a free gift and justification; we can reign in life through Jesus.

Paul also mentions this contrast briefly to the Corinthians:

As in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. -- **1 Corinthians 15:22**

### Others

While Adam stands out in Scripture more for his *contrast* to Jesus, the other patriarchs have quite a lot in common with Jesus in various details of their lives. Some comparisons can be made between Jesus and *all* the patriarchs as a group. For example, 1) God revealed His will to them and through them; 2) they were men of faith; 3) most of them lived most of their lives in Canaan, etc. Obviously, the first two are much more significant than the third. And the second one can be applied to so many other Bible characters that it’s not particularly useful by way of comparison to the patriarchs.

Perhaps the most useful comparisons are seen when we examine each patriarch individually, but we don’t get any extra “brownie points” for stretching the stories to fit, simply in order to generate a larger number of parallels. Some parallels may be so trivial or inconsequential that they’re just not worth mentioning.

On the following page, you are asked to think of the parallels for yourself, and the class time will be spent sharing each other’s thoughts and comments. The number by each patriarch’s name is usually one or two *less* than the number of comparisons that I found, because some of my ideas admittedly may be a bit of a stretch. So the target number should be reasonable, and I know you’ll be blessed by your continued studies of these great men of faith.

## Questions

List as many solid comparisons as you can between these patriarchs and Jesus.

**Noah** (2-3)

---

---

---

---

**Abraham** (3-4)

---

---

---

---

---

**Isaac** (5)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Jacob** (1?)

---

**Joseph** (7-8)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---