

Men's Sunday Night Live
A Study in the Book of Genesis
Where it all Began
Introduction

Setting the Stage

Have you ever been to a play that opened with a general introduction? Maybe one of the characters addressed the audience before the drama began, giving background information so that the words and actions about to take place would make more sense. Genesis is like an introduction to the rest of the Bible. It sets the stage for everything that follows by taking us back to the beginning, the very beginning of everything.

Chronologically, the first three chapters of Genesis tell at least one-third of the story of the Bible, and then chapters 4–11 present the drama of human history up to about 1800 A.D. Genesis begins at the beginning. You probably wouldn't read a novel by starting in the middle. Yet readers of the Bible sometimes begin there. That's unfortunate, because even though the Bible is made up of 66 books, it is actually one book, the greatest book ever written. It tells a complete story, the greatest story ever told. By reading Genesis, you are starting that story at the correct place.

Author

It is generally agreed that Moses is the author of the first five books of the Bible, called the Pentateuch. Moses was the great leader who led Israel from Egyptian bondage and through the wilderness wanderings. Moses' authorship is questioned by some commentators. It is true that Genesis is silent: the book does not name an author. But the evidence is very strong that Moses is the author.

Date

Probably between 1450-1406 B.C.

To Who it is Written

Israel in particular and the human race in general. God is a God of love and truth. His unconditional love is bound to lead Him to reveal the truth to all people everywhere:

- 1. The truth of their origin:** where they have come from
- 2. The truth of their purpose:** why they are on the earth
- 3. The truth of their end and destiny:** where they are going

Genesis was written to both Israel and the human race, to reveal the truth of their origin, purpose, and destiny. God's very purpose in creating man is for all people to know these three great truths.

What you will find in Genesis

Gen. 1-2 (God creates the universe)

Gen. 3:14-19 (God pronounces the Curse after Adam and Eve's sin)

Gen. 4:1-15 (Cain murders Abel)

Gen. 6-9 (Noah builds an ark to save his family and the animals from the flood)

Gen. 11:1-9 (The Tower of Babel is built)

Gen. 18-19 (Sodom and Gomorrah are destroyed)

Gen. 22 (Abraham is told to sacrifice his only son Isaac)

Gen. 28:10-17 (Jacob dreams and sees a ladder to heaven)

Gen. 37:1-4 (Joseph's father gives him a coat of many colors)

Gen. 39-45 (Joseph and his brothers)

Gen. 46-50 (Jacob's journey to Egypt)

Purpose

Unfortunately, many Christians avoid the Old Testament, thinking it has no message for them or that it is too difficult to understand. Realize that the Old Testament was the only Bible that Jesus, the apostles, and the early church possessed. When Paul referred to “Scripture” he was thinking of Old Testament books.

Three purposes can be gleaned from Genesis: 1. Historical, 2. Spiritual, and 3. Christ Centered.

Interesting Facts

Author: Moses

Date Written: 1446-1406 B.C.

Time Period Covered: 4004-1650 B.C.

Number of Chapters: 50

Number of Verses: 1,533

Number of Words: 32,046

Some People We Will Meet in Genesis

Adam: The world's first man (Gen. 2:19). His name means "Red" or "Soil," which might suggest blood or the earthy origin of the human race.

Eve: The world's first woman (Gen. 3:20). Her name means "Life Giving." Was the wife of Adam, mother of Cain, Abel, and Seth, as well as many unnamed sons and daughters.

Noah: A farmer, at least after the flood (Gen. 9:20). He built an ark large enough to float with many pairs of animals and his family for 150 days.

Abraham (Abram): A childless man who was given a name meaning "Father of multitudes" (Gen. 12:1). He came from a major city that was the site of a shrine to a pagan moon-god. Yet Scripture remembers him as a man of great faith in the one true God.

Hagar: Her name means "Flight." A slave whose mistress compelled her to provide her husband with an heir (Gen. 16:1). The son that she bore did not become the primary heir, yet nevertheless received a blessing from his father.

Laban: His name means "White." A man who "outschemed" his son-in-law, who had a reputation for devious tactics (Gen. 29:5). For this man, life revolved around deals, from marriage and dowry arrangements to labor and management negotiations.

Rachel: Her name means "Ewe." A woman who used pregnancy to compete with her sister (Gen. 29:17). Though deeply loved by her husband, she could not conceive, a condition considered a curse in that day, yet also an opportunity to show the power of prayer.

Joseph: Name means "May God add." A man whose management skills were used by God to save many nations from ruin (Gen. 37:3). This man serves as an excellent example for God's people in the workplace today.

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 1 - Genesis 1:1-31
Where it All Began
How it All Began

Chapter One

No scientist or historian can improve upon, "*In the beginning God.*" That simple statement refutes the atheist, who says there is no God; the agnostic, who claims we cannot know God; the polytheist, who worships many gods; the pantheist, who says that "all nature is God"; the materialist, who claims that matter is eternal and not created; and the fatalist, who teaches that there is no divine plan behind creation and history. God's personality is seen in this chapter, for He speaks, sees, names, and blesses. The Hebrew name for God in Genesis 1 is "Elohim," the name of God that links Him with creation. Jehovah is the covenant name of God and links Him to His people. This is the name He gave when He spoke to Moses: "***I AM WHO I AM.***" It means that He is the self-existing, unchanging God.

The earth was formless; so in the first six days, God formed what He wanted. The earth was empty, so God filled up what He had formed. He made the expanse of the heavens and filled it with stars and planets. He made the land and filled it with plants and animals. He made the seas and filled them with fish and mammals. God brought light into being before He placed the lights in the heavens. Next, He molded the first man "*in His image,*" referring to man's personality, mind, will, emotions, and freedom, rather than his physical appearance. Man was given the place of dominion over the earth, the highest position in Creation.

Man was created perfect but was ruined through sin. He's born a sinner, "*without form and void*"; his life is purposeless, empty, and dark. The Holy Spirit begins His work of conviction "moving" in men's hearts. Like the created beings in Genesis, believers have the responsibility of being fruitful and multiplying "*after their kind.*" Just as Adam was the head of the old creation, so Jesus is the Head of the new creation; He is the Last Adam. The Old Testament is the "*book of the generations of Adam,*" and it ends by speaking of a curse. The New Testament is the "*book of the generation of Jesus Christ,*" and ends with "*no more curse.*"

Read Genesis 1:1-31 and Answer the Following Questions

1. What is the first thing we learn about God?
2. How did God create the world? What does this tell you about God?
3. God's Word carries absolute authority. "For He spoke it and it was done." What does this mean for you in your relationship with God?
4. After God creates, what does Moses keep saying that God saw about creation? What does that tell you about God's original plan for this world?
5. What is meant by the phrase "*according to its kind*"? Explain the importance of this idea in Scripture. (See Gen. 1:12, 21-25)
6. What is the main difference between the creation of animals and people? (See Gen. 1:26)
7. What are some ways that God has set people apart from the rest of creation?

8. Explain what it means to subdue (overcome, bring under control) the earth and have dominion over the animals?

9. How should the fact that people are made in God's image impact your life personally? How should this also affect the way you treat other people?

10. God's Word carries absolute authority. "For He spoke and it was done." What does this mean for you in your relationship with God?

11. What purposes or commands did God give to:

a. The animals (1:22, 26)?

b. Men and women (1:28)?

c. Plants (1:29-30)?

12. What can we learn about our world from the purposes God assigned to each part of His creation? In what areas do you need to trust God to produce these qualities in your life?

The Sequence of Creation

Once we move past the opening verses of Genesis we begin to get the details of creation itself. The following list shows the main events only, in order as they happened, as detailed in Genesis.

First Day: Gen. 1:3-4 - God created light and divided it from the darkness.
Gen. 1:5 - God called the light day and the darkness night.

Second Day: Gen. 1:6-8 - God made the firmament and separated the waters of the earth from those in the atmosphere.
Gen. 1:8 - God called the firmament heaven.

Third Day: Gen. 1:9 - God gathered the waters of the earth together and commanded dry land to appear.
Gen. 1:10 - God called the dry land earth, and called the waters seas.
Gen. 1:11-12 - God created grass, herbs, and fruit.

Fourth Day: Gen. 1:14-17 - God created the sun, the moon, and the stars, and set them in the heavens.

Fifth Day: Gen. 1:20-21 - God created all sea creatures and birds.
Gen. 1:22 - God blessed all the above and told them to be fruitful and multiply.

Sixth Day: Gen. 1:24-25 - God created the beasts of the earth.
Gen. 1:26-27 - God created man in His own image, then gave him dominion over the fish, birds, and living things on earth.
Gen. 1:28 - God blessed man and told him to be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it, having dominion over all living things as described above.
Gen. 1:29-30 - God said that He had given man every seed-yielding herb and every seed-yielding fruit as food.

Seventh Day: Gen. 2:1-3 - On the seventh day God ended His work, rested, and both blessed and sanctified that day.

The creation account reveals that God brings order, beauty, and harmony out of an originally chaotic situation. In what areas do you need to trust God to produce these qualities in your life?

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 2 - Genesis 2:1-17
Where it All Began
First Things First

If you could have been present to witness any event in Bible history, which event would you choose? Several popular Christian leaders were asked this question, and the answers varied: the crucifixion of Jesus, the Flood, Israel crossing the Red Sea, David slaying Goliath. One of them even said, "I would like to have been present when God finished His creation." Genesis 2 introduces us to a series of "firsts" that are important to us if we want to build our lives according to God's divine plan.

The word "Sabbath" simply means "to cease." God did not "rest" because He was tired, since God does not become weary (Ps. 121:4). Rather, He ceased from His creative works, the task was now finished. Now He blessed the Sabbath by setting it apart as a special day. The Sabbath does not appear again in the Old Testament until Ex. 20:11, where God gave the Sabbath to Israel as His special covenant sign. There is no evidence in Scripture that God ever told the Gentiles to observe the Sabbath. In fact, Ps. 147:19-20 makes it clear that the Old Testament Mosaic Law was given to Israel. The Sabbath Day relates to the old creation and was given specifically to Israel. The Lord's Day relates to the new creation and belongs especially to the church. The Sabbath speaks of the law as six days of labor which are followed by rest, but the Lord's Day speaks of grace, for we begin the week with rest that is followed by works.

Now we see that Adam was a perfect creature, one having never sinned, but he had the ability to sin. God made him a king with dominion. But a ruler can only rule others if he can rule himself, so it was necessary for Adam to be tempted. God has always wanted His creatures to love and obey Him of their own free will and not out of compulsion or because of reward. This test was perfectly fair and just. Adam and Eve enjoyed liberty and abundant provision in the Garden and did not need the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Read Genesis 2:1-3 and Answer the Following Questions

1. How is the seventh day uniquely different from the other six?
2. Why do you think an all-powerful God chose to “rest” on the seventh day?
3. What did God instruct the Jewish people to do on the seventh day according to Exodus 23:12?
4. What are some ways in which you could make your Sabbath day a day of rest, worship, and time with your family?

Read Genesis 2:4-7. Pray and answer the following questions:

5. When and how did God create man?
6. How is it significant that God created man and "*breathed into him the breath of life*"?

7. How is the creation of man in verse 7 unique in comparison with the rest of God's creation?

8. God created us to have fellowship with Him. As we read His Word, pray and fellowship daily, the Lord will guide us continually. Read Isaiah 58:11 and put the thoughts in this verse in your own words.

9. What does 2 Timothy 1:9-10 say concerning what the Lord has done for those who place their faith in Him?

Read Genesis 2:8-17. Pray and answer the following questions:

10. Where did God put man after He created him? What was man's job to do in the garden?

11. What do you believe the work is that God has planned for you in your world and your church?

12. Note the responsibility and instructions given to Adam in verses 15-17. What do these reveal about the life God originally intended for us?

Personal Profile: Adam

Gen. 2:19 Name means: “Red” or “soil,” which might suggest blood or the earthy origin of the human race.

Home: Originally the Garden of Eden.

Family: Was the husband of Eve; father of three known sons, Cain, Abel, and Seth, as well as many unnamed sons and daughters.

Occupation: Probably a gardener or farmer, given the fact that God placed him in the garden “to tend and keep it” (Gen. 2:15). Also, something of a zoologist, having named the animals (2:19–20).

Best known today as: The first man, created in God’s image, but also the first man to sin, bringing about God’s judgment on humanity and the penalty of death (3:17–19; Rom. 5:12).

Personal Profile: Eve

Gen. 3:20 Name means: “Life-giving.”

Also known as: Woman (Gen. 2:23).

Home: Originally the Garden of Eden, from which she and Adam were expelled after they disobeyed God’s command.

Family: Was the wife of Adam; mother of three known sons, Cain, Abel, and Seth, as well as many unnamed sons and daughters.

Occupation: Originally tended the Garden of Eden with Adam.

Best known today as: The first woman, and the person who first tasted of the forbidden fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (3:1–6).

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 3 - Genesis 2:18-25
Where it All Began
This is My Father's World

Everything in creation was “*very good*” except the loneliness of man. “*It is not good to live alone*” points to the basis of marriage: 1. To provide companionship, 2. To carry on the race, 3. To help one another and bring out the best. The word “helper” in verse 18 refers to one that meets his needs. This companion was not found anywhere in animal creation, showing the great gulf that is fixed between animals and human beings made in the image of God. God made the first woman out of the flesh and bone of the first man, and He “*closed up the flesh in its place.*” It has been said that Eve was made, not from Adams feet to be trampled by him, or from his head to rule over him, but from his side, to be near his heart and loved by him.

Adam had named all the animals that God had brought him, showing that the first man had intelligence, language, and speech. Now he named his bride “woman.” Eve was the object of Adam’s love and concern, just as the church receives Christ’s love and His ministry. 1 Tim. 2:11-15 points out that Adam willingly ate of the forbidden fruit and was not deceived as was Eve.

Marriage is a civil relationship, regulated by law, and should be a spiritual relationship with a heart relationship, governed by the Word of God and motivated by love. The phrase “one flesh” means that anything that breaks the physical bond in marriage can also break the marriage itself. One such thing is death, for when one dies, the other is free to remarry because the marriage bond has been broken. In Matthew 19:1-9, Jesus teaches that adultery can also break the marriage bond. Under the Old Testament Law, anybody that committed adultery was stoned to death, leaving the innocent person free to remarry, but this law wasn’t given to the New Testament church.

We live in a world created by God, we are creatures made in the image of God, and enjoy multiplied blessings from the hand of God. How tragic that so many people leave God out of their lives and become lost in an unfriendly world, when they could be children resting in His arms.

Read Gen. 2:18-25 and Answer the Following Questions

1. What does verse 18 show us about the depth of God's concern and love for His human creation?
2. What does the fact "*that it is not good for man to be alone*" tell us about the importance of relationships?
3. How do you see God's fellowship and love for Adam expressed in verse 19?
4. In verses 19-20 how is man's relationship to the beasts and the birds demonstrated? For what purpose were animals inadequate?
5. What reasons could God have for making woman from man and not from the earth?
6. How did God create woman, and what was Adam's response to her?

7. How does Adam's statement in verse 23 reflect his appreciation of his new partner?

8. What do we learn about the woman from this account of her creation?

9. How do you respond to the idea that God has made you unique and different from any other part of His creation?

10. Gen. 2:24 stresses that a man must leave his parents but does not mention a woman leaving. Why is it so important to remind husbands to leave parents emotionally? Is this important for wives? Why or why not?

11. What does Eph. 5:25 say concerning the husband's love for his wife?

12. The greatest of all contracts is marriage. Today many who wouldn't think of dishonoring a contract in business are dishonoring their marriage contract which unites the man to the wife by the Lord. What does Malachi 2:13-16 say concerning this subject?

F.Y.I. Marriage is God's Idea

We can learn important principles about marriage from the relationship between Adam and Eve that God structured:

Marriage is a divinely designed relationship

It was instituted by God as His idea from the outset. (It was also an arranged marriage, but that point is a bit irrelevant since neither Adam or Eve had other options.)

Marriage is a monogamous relationship

God selected one wife for Adam, not several of them. Furthermore, God expected sexual fidelity in marriage. The “united as one” reference in Gen 2:24 is more than just a figurative phrase to be used at weddings.

Marriage is a heterosexual relationship

The first marriage set the pattern. While friendship and loyalty can exist between people of the same gender, God designed marriage between a man and a woman.

Marriage is a unified relationship

The husband and wife are connected to each other emotionally, physically, and spiritually. By these bonds, they are “one.”

Marriage is a permanent relationship

The unity of marriage implies the permanency of marriage. Divorce is not part of God's ideal plan.

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 4 – Genesis 3:1-24
Where it All Began
The Fall of Man

If Genesis 3 were not in the Bible, there would be no Bible as we know it. Why? Because the rest of Scripture documents the sad consequences of Adam's sin and explains what God has done in His grace to rescue us. The record in Genesis 3 is not a myth. If the fall of man didn't actually occur, then the Christian faith is built on fables, not fact, and Jesus suffered needlessly on the cross. From Genesis 3 to Revelation 21, the Bible records the conflict between God and Satan, sin and righteousness, and pleads with sinners to repent and trust God.

God is not the author of sin, nor does He tempt people to sin; this is the work of Satan. We have already seen that he fell into sin prior to the work of Gen. 1:3. He was a beautiful angel originally, rejoicing at God's Creation, but he sinned and was judged by God. Note that Satan came to Eve in the disguise of a serpent, for he is a masquerader and appears to people in his true character. In Gen. 3 Satan is the serpent who deceives, in Gen. 4, he is the liar that murders. We must take care to avoid his deceptive ways.

Next, there came a loss of innocence and glory and a sense of guilt. They tried to cover their nakedness with their own works, garments that God did not accept. We also see a loss of desire for fellowship with God. When they heard God approaching, they hid! Guilt, fear, and shame broke the fellowship with God that they had enjoyed before their disobedience. Note too that there was a growing attitude of the "blame game." The man blamed the woman and the woman blamed the serpent.

The coats of skins in verse 21 are pictures of the salvation we have in Christ. There must be the shedding of blood, the offering of innocent life for the guilty. Adam and Eve had tried to cover their sin and shame with leaves, but these good works were not accepted by God. Nor does He accept such works today.

Verses 22-24 show a strange action of the grace of God. He drove the man and woman out of the garden! They had forfeited their right to the tree of life by disobeying God. If they had eaten of that tree, they would have lived forever in their sinful state. The sword that God placed at the garden blocked the way.

Daily life would now become a struggle for the man and woman outside the garden as they toiled for their bread and raised their family. They could still have fellowship with God, but they would daily suffer the consequences of their sin, and so would their descendants after them. The law of sin and death would now operate in the human family until the end of time, but the death and resurrection of the Savior would introduce a new principle: That of the New Covenant.

Read Gen. 3:1-24 and Answer the Following Questions

1. Satan brought temptation into the Garden of Eden. But his evil existed before Adam and Eve. In chapter 14 of Isaiah, we see a “behind the scenes” view of Satan’s removal from heaven. What are some similarities between Satan’s attitudes in Isaiah 14:12-14 and his approach to Eve in the Garden?
2. The temptation of Eve gives us insight into some of the schemes with which the enemy also attacks us. What was the serpent trying to achieve by asking Eve: “*Has God indeed said?*”
3. Eve’s reply in 3:3 shows that Satan’s first scheme worked. Note his next words in 3:4-5, and describe his second plan to separate Eve from God.
4. Why did Eve choose to eat the fruit? (See Gen. 3:6)

5. What was the result of Adam and Eve's disobedience to God? (See Gen. 3:7-11)

6. Who did Adam blame for His sin? Who did Eve blame?

7. What are some of the consequences of rejecting God's truth?

8. Why did God ask Adam and Eve questions after their sin? What is the difference between an excuse and a confession?

9. Describe in your own words the punishments the Lord pronounces on the serpent, the woman and the man (See Gen. 3:14-19)

10. What did God clothe Adam and Eve in? What immediate death occurred to Adam and Eve as a result of their disobedience?

11. Who chose to die for us in order that our sins could be "washed away" and forgiven? Why would He do this?

12. Where did God put Adam and Eve after their disobedience, and how did He guard the Garden of Eden?

What the Curse Tells us About God Genesis 3:14-19

A snake made to crawl on its belly. A woman whose birth pangs will be multiplied. A man whose work will turn into toil. These curses would be a blast of bitter retaliation from the mouth of someone less than God. But when God pronounces these words, He reveals something important about His character: He is a God of justice who takes seriously matters of right and wrong. As sinful humans we may look the other way when moral issues are at stake. But God is holy and righteous. He does not wink at sin. In the curse He shows us that sin has consequences. Those consequences are a sad outcome for what was declared at least seven times to be a good creation. However, God did set limits on the effects of the curse. For example, after Cain killed Abel, God marked him for protection and set up a restriction against anyone killing him. Later, Christ established final and absolute limits on sin's consequences by taking the curse and its penalties on Himself. Eventually, after its purposes are complete, the curse will be removed from the earth and lifted from God's people forever. God doesn't enjoy the curse any more than those of us who suffer under it. In fact, from the outset, He knew that His judgment would ultimately fall on His own Son. Yet His very character demanded that justice be satisfied. We may grieve over the outcome of Adam and Eve's disobedience. But we can also be thankful that their sentence was set by a God of justice who is also a God of love.

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 5 – Genesis 4:1-24
Where it all Began
On Center Stage
(Cain & Abel)

“All the world's a stage, and all the men and women are merely players,” wrote Shakespeare. “They all have their exits and their entrances, and one man in his time plays many parts.” The important thing to remember, is that we let God write the script, choose the cast, and direct the action. If we disregard Him and try to produce the drama ourselves, the story will have a tragic ending. That's what ruined Cain, the first human baby born on the stage of Planet Earth: He ignored God's script, “did his own thing,” and made a mess out of it. Genesis 4 focuses the spotlight on Cain. He's mentioned thirteen times, while his brother Abel, is mentioned seven times.

James 1:15 warns us that sin begins in a small way, but grows and leads to death. In Cain's life we see disappointment, anger, jealousy, and finally murder. The hatred in his heart led to murder. Cain invited his brother to talk to him, and then killed him in cold blood.

How important are these first two questions in the Bible. 1. “*Adam, where are you?*” 2. “*Where is Able your brother?*” This is a reminder that Sin always finds us out. Abel's blood cried out for vengeance, Christ's blood cries out peace and forgiveness. What a picture of humankind today: restless, hopeless, wandering, defeated.

The word “Nod” means “to stray or wander.” The very land of Cain's choice speaks of his wandering away from God. He went away from the presence of God, and had no need for the religion of blood. Cain's family tree ends with the family of Lamech, an arrogant murderer whose three sons manufactured things for this world. In this chapter, watch for the repeating cycle of sin, judgment, and mercy.

Read Genesis Chapter 4 and Answer the Following Questions

1. God asked both Cain and Abel for a sacrifice. What did each of them give to God? How did the Lord react to these offerings?

2. What was Cain's response to God's rejecting his offering?

3. Read the following verses to discover what the Bible says about man's anger. Psalm 37:8; Proverbs 14:17; 16:32; James 1:19. How do these verses relate to us today?

4. What do we learn about Cain's character from the way he treated and spoke of his brother? Did he repent of his sin? How can you tell?

5. What does God promise that He will do if we confess our sin to Him?
(See 1 John 1:9)

6. What was the result of Cain's sin according to Genesis 4:11-12?

7. What did God say concerning Cain's fear, and what did He do about it?

8. Why do you think God chose to protect Cain, even after what he did?

9. What choice do people deliberately make today which separates them from God? (See John 14:6)

10. What were some things Cain's descendants began to develop?

11. How does this chapter help you understand the characteristics and consequences of sin?

Summary of the First Four Chapters of Genesis

- God created the first man, Adam, out of the dust of the earth.
- God created the first woman, Eve, from the rib taken from man.
- God established a home, first for Adam by himself and then Eve as well, in the Garden of Eden. Its probable location was somewhere northwest of the Persian Gulf.
- Sin then entered the world when Satan disguised himself as a serpent and tricked Eve into defying a specific commandment from God Himself. But Adam did the same, at her urging, and thus shared in her guilt. It was Adam to whom God directed His initial inquiry into what had happened.
- Adam and Eve were thus driven from the Garden and condemned to lives of pain, suffering, and eventual physical death, none of which were part of God's original plan for humanity.
- Cain committed the first murder by killing his brother, Abel. Not long afterward, Lamech killed a man for "wounding" him, and thus the cycle of physical violence, one man or woman against another, began to spread throughout the world.

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 6 – Genesis 4:25-6:7
Where it All Began
When Life Seems Impossible, Look Up

Genesis 4:25-5:32

How different the world became as a result of Adam and Eve's sin, "The Fall." Animals became ferocious and men were fearful of them. Thorns and thistles grew. Men became giants on the earth. The civilization that Adam and Eve tried to set up was doomed from the very beginning because sin was at work in it. We see man's selfishness bearing its deadly fruit. All sin has its roots in and grows up out of unbelief. Man became self-centered instead of God-centered. Self is in the heart of all sin.

Genesis 5 continues on and records the first genealogy in Scripture and introduces "the book of the generations of Adam." Ten generations are listed here, from Adam to Noah, just as ten generations are listed from Shem to Abraham in "the generations of Shem."

The only ray of hope in these challenging times was God's promise that a redeemer would one day be born of a woman and conquer the serpent. Abel was dead, so he couldn't produce a child, and Cain, the unbelieving murderer, had wandered off and built a city in the Land of Nod, east of Eden. The Lord enabled Eve to conceive and bear a son whom she named Seth because God had appointed him to replace Abel.

Seth was 105 years old when his son Enosh was born. While the worldly Canaanites were boasting of their strength and valor, the godly Sethites were giving glory to the name of the Lord. Throughout history, it has been the godly remnant that has kept the work of the Lord going in this world. Time after time, the nation of Israel drifted into idolatry and spiritual dullness, but a believing remnant was raised up to keep the light burning.

When Enoch was sixty-five years old, his wife gave birth to a son named Methuselah. This was a turning point in Enoch's life, because he then began to walk with the Lord. The meaning of Methuselah's name isn't significant, but his long life of 969 years is. In the year that Methuselah died, the flood

came. Enoch is one of two men in Scripture that never died. Both Enoch and Elijah were taken to heaven alive.

The genealogies of the Bible help to show that faith in God is a historically based fact. On the other hand, genealogies help to remind us that genuine faith involves human beings who are linked together by blood. History is a living story (His Story). It is handed down from parents to children, generation after generation, until it reaches its dramatic conclusion in God's good time.

Genesis 6:1-7

The human race began to multiply upon earth. This, of course, refers to both the godly and ungodly families upon earth. But note: when the ungodly increase, so do sin and evil. More and more children were being born into ungodly families, families that stressed the outward and worldly rather than the inward and spiritual. This meant a terrible thing, for the ungodly always outnumber the godly. There are always more people who follow their own way in life than those who follow God. Consequently, sin and evil were increasing at a far more rapid rate than righteousness and godliness. Eventually, the godly were bound to be contaminated and corrupted unless they guarded and attached themselves ever so closely to God. The point is this: when the ungodly increase, so do sin and evil. The more sinners increase upon earth, the more sin there will be upon the earth. This was exactly what was happening in the early stages of man's history. The population was increasing ever so rapidly and so were sin and evil. Sin and evil were increasing at a far greater pace than were righteousness and godliness.

Read Gen. 4:25-5:32. Pray and answer the Following Questions

1. What did Eve name her third son and why? What did this son of Adam and Eve in turn name his son? What did people begin to do in those days? (See Gen. 4:25-26)

2. What is Gen. 5:1-32 all about?

3. What did Seth name the son who was born to him?

4. How old was Adam when Seth was born? How do you explain the long lives of people before the flood?

5. How did Moses summarize God's creation of people?

6. What happened to Enoch? (See Gen 5:24; Heb. 11:5; Jude 1:14-15). What does the statement “walk with God” mean to you? (See Gen. 5:22)

7. Of all the descendants listed here, who lived the longest?

8. According to Genesis 5, what did all of Adam’s descendants (except for Enoch) do at the end of their lifetime?

9. What were the names of Noah’s sons? How old was Noah before they were born? (See Gen. 5:32)

Read Gen. 6:1-7. Pray and Answer the Following Questions:

10. What were the unique physical characteristics of some people in Noah's time? Describe what people were like spiritually. (See Gen. 6:4-5)

11. Explain Gen. 6:6 in light of 1 Samuel 15:28-29, 35. What does Gen. 6:6 reveal about God?

12. What did God determine to do about the conditions on earth? (See Gen. 6:7)

Enoch Walked With God Gen. 5:21-24

Scripture declares twice that "Enoch walked with God" (Gen. 5:22, 24). Walking means forward movement, steady progress. Enoch did not walk a little and then stop or turn aside, backsliding. He walked with God consistently, growing and growing more and more. What does it mean "to walk with God"? The life of Enoch shows us: To "walk with God" means that Enoch had a conversion experience. Enoch was born to sinful parents in a sinful world just like all other persons. From all indications Enoch had been living a sinful, wicked life, running around with the ungodly crowd of his day. But something happened in his life that changed him, that caused him to confess and repent of his sin, something so convicting that it drew him to turn back to God. Something happened that stirred him to begin to live a life of self-control and self-denial. What was it?

Scripture says this: "Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah" (Gen. 5:22). Note the word "after." Scripture seems to be saying that it was after his son's birth that Enoch began to walk with God. Apparently, the birth of his first son struck Enoch, struck him with a deep, intense sense of responsibility for the child.

- To "walk with God" means to believe God and to be diligent in seeking after God's promises.
- To "walk with God" means to develop an unbroken communion and fellowship with God. The phrase means to walk about with God, to live with God, to have the most intimate fellowship and communion with God.
- To "walk with God" means to live a holy and godly life, a life of separation, a life that is completely different from the sinful lives of others. It means that Enoch began to live a life of self-control.

Note what Scripture has to say about the believer's walk:

1. Noah walked with God. (Gen. 6:9)
2. Abraham was required to walk before God. (Gen. 17:1)
3. We are all required to walk with God. (Micah 6:8)
4. We are to walk before God. (Psalm 116:9)
5. We are to walk after God. (Deut. 13:4)
6. We are to follow God and walk in love. (Eph. 5:1-2)
7. We are to walk in Christ. (Col. 2:6)
8. We are to walk by faith, not by sight. (2 Cor. 5:7)
9. We are to walk in the light. (1 John 1:7)
10. We are to walk in truth. (Ps. 26:3; 27:11)
11. We are to walk in newness of life. (Rom. 6:4)
12. We are to walk in the Spirit. (Gal. 5:16)
13. We are to walk worthy of our calling and vocation. (Eph. 4:1)
14. We are to walk carefully. (Eph. 5:15)
15. We are to pray for God to keep us from stumbling and falling that we may walk before Him. (Ps. 56:13)
16. We are to walk as Christ walked. (1 John 2:6)
17. We shall walk with Christ in heaven and be clothed in white (purity, perfection). (Rev. 3:4)

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 7 – Genesis 6:8-7:24
Where it All Began
Noah and His Family

Except for the increase in violence and crime, the times were pretty good. People were “*eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage,*” and life was going as usual. When friends met at the market or at wedding feasts, they laughed about Noah and his family (Imagine building that big boat on dry land!) or discussed Methuselah, the world’s oldest man (He’ll die one of these days, mark my word!), or talked about Enoch, the man who suddenly disappeared (Strangest thing I ever heard!). For over a century, Noah had been warning people about a coming judgment, but only his own family had believed him and trusted the Lord. When Methuselah died things began to happen. One day, Noah and his family entered their “boat” and the rains came. But it rained forty days and forty nights, and subterranean explosions discharged more water on the earth. Even after the rain stopped, the water continued to rise, and within five months, the whole earth was under water and everything that breathed was dead. Everything that is except Noah and his family, the eight people everybody laughed at. Because people had become corrupt, and the earth was filled with violence, God sent the flood in order to destroy humankind. There must always be judgment and death before there can be a new beginning. What kind of a person was Noah? He was the kind of person you and I should be and can be as we live in our world today.

The Ark was not a boat, but was rather a “floating box” made of cypress wood and pitched with bitumen. If we use 18” as a cubit, the size becomes 450 x 75 x 45 feet. It was large enough to hold the collection of animals, the food needed, and the members of Noah’s family. There were three levels to the ark, with a window either in the roof of the top level or running all around the top level, there was also a door.

The flood was caused by rain falling and water erupting from underground. You can imagine the tremendous effects this would have on the surface of the earth, as well as on the climate. Gigantic tidal waves followed these eruptions. Genesis 2:5-6 suggests that the falling of rain was something new on the earth in Noah’s time, which made the faith of Noah even more amazing.

The ark is an illuminating picture of our salvation in Christ. The salvation and the ark were planned by God, not invented by man. There was only one way to salvation and there was only one door in the ark. God invited Noah and his family into the ark, then, once they were in, God shut them in so that they were secure. Christ teaches that the days before the rapture and the tribulation would be like the days of Noah.

We are living in the “*days of Noah*” today. We see such parallels as the multiplication of people in the “population explosion,” moral corruption of every kind, violence, the expansion of arts and industry, lack of conscience, even for murder, and true believers being in the minority. God warns that judgment is coming, but few listen, and even fewer believe.

Read Gen. 6:8-7:24 and Answer the Following Questions

1. How is Noah described in Genesis 6:8-9?
2. What did God instruct Noah to do?
3. What people were to go into the ark with Noah? What other living creatures were to be taken into the ark and why? (See Gen. 6:18-21)
4. How was Noah to prepare for the journey on the ark according to Genesis 6:21? Describe Noah’s response to God’s instruction. (See Gen. 6:22)
5. Why did God spare Noah?

6. How long did God say it would rain? What is meant by “*the fountains of the great deep*” and the “*windows of Heaven*”? (See Gen. 7:4, 11)

7. What was Noah’s attitude toward God? (See Gen. 7:5)

8. How can we be encouraged and challenged by Noah’s example?

9. Who shut the door of the ark when the loading was complete? What comfort do you find in knowing that it was God who shut the door? (See Gen. 7:16)

10. What information is given that tells how high the water got? (See 7:17-20)

11. Name the things that were destroyed by the flood because of God’s judgment on Man’s sin. (See Gen. 7:21-23)

12. What does the New Testament say about the penalty for sin in Rom. 6:23? What wonderful gift is also mentioned in Rom. 6:23?

How Big Was the Flood?

The story of the flood has captured the curiosity of people throughout history. Many questions about the flood persist to this day. Is it a myth or a historical fact?

Some things are certain:

1. The New Testament considers the flood to be an actual event.
2. The occurrence of a single catastrophic flood is the most commonly repeated story in the traditions of ancient people.
3. The ancient written historical accounts of the people from the Mesopotamian valley (where the Bible places Noah) all include references to such a flood.
4. Genesis 7:19-20 says that the tips of the tallest mountains were covered by the flood by at least 22 feet of water.
5. The flood waters prevailed for five months, and Noah didn't disembark for seven more months. Noah and his family were shut up in the ark for 371 days. A flood that took a full year to subside must have been far-reaching.
6. Genesis 7:11 refers to underground waters bursting forth in addition to the rain. That didn't happen on just one day. It continued for a long time, perhaps up to 150 days.
7. An ark with deck space of 95,700 square feet was designed for a rather large flood.
8. If the flood wasn't worldwide, Noah and his family could have avoided a regional flood by moving to another part of the world. Traveling any distance would have been easier than spending 120 years building the ark.

Men's Sunday Night live
Lesson 8 - Genesis 8:1-22
Where it All Began
The God of New Beginnings

When you are going through a storm, it's easy to feel abandoned, "I think the Lord has forgotten me." The word "*remembered*" in Genesis 8:1 doesn't mean to call something to mind that may have been forgotten. God can't forget anything because He knows the end from the beginning.

According to Genesis 7:24, the flood reached its peak in 150 days. On the seventeenth day of the seventh month, the ark rested on a peak in the mountains of Ararat, located in modern day Turkey. He waited forty days and then sent out the unclean eating raven. After waiting another week, he sent out a clean bird (dove), which after finding no place to land returned to the ark. A week after that Noah sent the dove out again, and when it returned with a fresh olive leaf, Noah knew the plants were growing and fresh life had returned to the earth. A week later, Noah sent the dove out for a third time, it didn't return, so he knew the water had dried up. Noah had built a window in the upper deck of the ark. After being in the ark one year Noah opens the window and looked around. He saw that the ground was dry, but He didn't make a move out of the ark until the Lord told him to leave. Twenty-six days later, the order came and he obeyed.

After he stepped out of the ark and stood on the renewed land, Noah was so filled with gratitude that his first act was to lead his family in worship. He built an altar and offered some of the clean animals as sacrifices to the Lord. Noah was a balanced believer. He walked with the Lord in loving communion and enjoyed His presence. He worked for the Lord in building the ark, and he witnessed for the Lord as "a preacher of righteousness." While in the ark, he waited on the Lord for instructions concerning his leaving, and once he was standing on the earth, he worshipped the Lord. Like Abel, he brought God his very best, and like the Sethite remnant, he called on the name of the Lord. The true worship of the Lord had been restored on the earth.

Read Gen. 8:1-22 And Answer the Following Questions:

1. How did God remember Noah's faith and deliver him safety? (See Gen. 8:1-3)
2. Assuming that a month had approximately 30 days, about how many months did the flood last? (See Gen. 7:24; 8:3).
3. What two birds did Noah send out from the ark? Which one returned with something, and what did God show Noah by this?
4. What happened after the Flood ended but before Noah and his family got off the ark?
5. In 8:15-19 how does God's instruction show His continuing concern for Noah and his family?
6. Did Noah obey God's word? What are you doing personally to hear God's Word and be obedient to its call on your life?
7. What was the first thing Noah did when he and his family left the ark? What does this tell you about his character? (See Gen. 8:20)

8. Do you think that all of Noah's family took part in this "thank you service" to God? Give some of the reasons why.

9. Genesis 8:21 says that God "smelled a soothing (sweet) aroma" of the sacrifice. This means that He was pleased with the worship which took place at this altar that Noah built. Read 2 Corinthians 2:14-15 and answer the following questions:

a. Who is it that causes a Christian to triumph in any difficult situation?

b. What "sweet aroma" is a Christian to share or reflect wherever they go?

c. What is the only sweet, wholesome aroma in our lives that makes us acceptable to God?

d. If we depended on our own goodness and kindness, this would not be a sweet aroma to God. What would our own goodness and kindness "smell like" and "look like," if they were as described in Isaiah 64:6?

10. Noah led his family in a worship experience. Are you helping anyone to worship the Lord, in your home, at your work, or in your community? Explain how the Lord by the Holy Spirit has led you and what methods you have found to be successful.

11. What promise did God make to Noah at this time? (See Gen. 8:21-22)

F.Y.I.
The Flood Chronology

- In the six hundredth year of Noah (second month, tenth day) Noah entered the ark (7:4 7:7, 10-11).
- Seven days later, the flood began (7:10-11)
- The waters flooded the earth for one hundred fifty days, including the forty days and forty nights of rain (7:12, 17, 24).
- In the six hundredth year of Noah (seventh month, seventeenth day), the waters began to recede (Gen. 7:24; 8:1).
- Next the waters receded to the point that the ark rested on Mount Ararat (8:3-4).
- Seventy-four days later, the waters continued to recede so the tops of the mountains were visible (8:5)
- Forty days later Noah sent out a raven and also a dove (8:6-8). Over the next fourteen days, Noah sent the dove out two more times (8:10, 12). In all, this took sixty-one days.
- By Noah's six hundred and first year on the first month, the first day, the water had dried up (8:13).
- Noah waited one month and twenty-six days before he disembarked. From the beginning to end, the flood lasted one year ten days (7:11-8:14).

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 9 – Genesis 9:1-17
Where it All Began
God's Covenant with Noah

In this section, God addresses the eight survivors of the Flood and gives them instructions concerning their future. Though given initially to Noah and his family, these instructions apply to all people in all ages and all places. They are permanent ordinances from God for all humanity, and they must not be ignored or altered. Life is precious, and must be handled with care.

The word covenant means “to cut,” referring to the cutting of the sacrifices which was a part of making an agreement. Through Noah, God made an agreement with all mankind, and its terms still stand today. The basis of the covenant was the shed blood of the sacrifice, just as the basis of the New Covenant is the shed blood of Jesus.

God set apart the rainbow as the token and pledge of this covenant. To help His people remember His covenant, God would give them a visible sign. Whenever people saw the rainbow, they would remember God's promise that no future storm would ever result in a world-wide flood that would destroy mankind again. The personal lesson for God's people is simply this: in the storms of life, always look for the rainbow of God's covenant promise. Like John, you may see the rainbow before the storm, like Ezekiel, you may see it in the midst of the storm, or like Noah, you may have to wait until after the storm. But you will always see the rainbow of God's promise if you look by faith.

We must remember, Noah and his small family “only eight persons” were the only people left upon earth. They stood as the representatives of the whole human race. Noah was a second Adam, the head of the human race just as Adam had been the head at creation. Whatever God established with Noah applied to the whole human race. The great problem is this: too many of us do not receive the great mercy and grace of God. Too many of us walk through life without God, ignoring, neglecting, even denying Him, never allowing God to have mercy and present His grace upon us. We never allow God to bless us, to look after and care for us. The great need of man today is to receive the mercy and grace of God, the blessings of God, which He has poured out upon the earth through His Son.

Read Gen. 9:1-7. Pray and answer the following questions:

1. What commission does God give to Noah and his family?
2. What did God give to Noah and his sons?
3. In ancient times, blood was a potent symbol and embodiment of life, and God affirmed that “*the life of every creature is in the blood*” (Lev. 17:14). Pagans drank blood to acquire its life-force and used blood in magical rites to sustain life and fertility. What is wrong with eating blood to acquire its life-force for oneself? How does this offend God?
4. What kinds of food were men instructed to eat, and what were they not to eat? What new thing did God allow man to eat after the flood? (Gen. 9:2-4)
5. Why did God say a man or an animal must die for the crime of killing a man?

Read Gen. 9:8-17. Pray and answer the following questions:

6. What was the covenant that God established with Noah?

7. Who was this covenant given too?

8. What is the sign of that covenant? (Gen. 9:12-17)

9. How is the sign of the rainbow especially appropriate to God's promise?

10. In what ways has God's grace been evident throughout this section?

11. How have you seen His grace at work in your life?

F.Y.I.

COVENANT

A covenant is defined as: An agreement between two people or two groups that involves promises on the part of each to the other. The concept of covenant between God and His people is one of the most important theological truths of the Bible. By making a covenant with Abraham, God promised to bless His descendants and to make them His special people. Abraham, in return, was to remain faithful to God and to serve as a channel through which God's blessings could flow to the rest of the world (Gen. 12:1-3).

Even before Abraham's time, God also made a covenant with Noah, assuring Noah that He would not again destroy the world by flood (Gen. 9). Another famous covenant was between God and David, in which David and his descendants were established as the royal heirs to the throne of the nation of Israel (2 Sam. 7:12; 22:51). This covenant agreement reached its highest fulfillment when Jesus the Messiah, a descendant of the line of David, was born in Bethlehem about a thousand years after God made this promise to David the king.

A covenant, in the biblical sense, implies much more than a contract or simple agreement. A contract always has an end date, while a covenant is a permanent arrangement. Another difference is that a contract generally involves only one part of a person, such as a skill, while a covenant covers a person's total being.

The word for covenant in the Old Testament also provides additional insight into the meaning of this important idea. It comes from a Hebrew root word which means "to cut." This explains the strange custom of two people passing through the cut bodies of slain animals after making an agreement with each other (Jer. 34:18). A ritual or ceremony such as this always accompanied the making of a covenant in the Old Testament. Sometimes those entering into a covenant shared a holy meal (Gen. 31:54). Abraham and his children were commanded to be circumcised as a sign of their covenant with God (Gen. 17:10-11). Moses sprinkled the blood of animals on the altar and upon the people who entered into covenant with God at Mount Sinai (Exo. 24:3-8).

The Old Testament contains many examples of covenants between people who related to each other as equals. For example, David and Jonathan entered into a covenant because of their love for each other. This agreement bound each of them to certain responsibilities (1 Sam. 18:3). But the striking thing about God's covenant with His people is that God is holy, all-knowing, and all powerful; but He consents to enter into covenant with man, who is weak, sinful, and imperfect.

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 10 - Genesis 9:18-10:32
Where it All Began
The Rest of the Story

Genesis 9:18-29

It was a seasoned saint, over 600 years old, and not a young prodigal, that fell into this sin and shame. The Hebrew text suggests that Noah deliberately uncovered himself in a shameful manner. This is the third failure on the part of man. He had disobeyed in Eden, resulting in his expulsion, he had corrupted the earth, resulting in the flood, and now he became a shameful drunk! To make matters worse, Ham did not respect his father, instead, he “told his two brothers outside” what Noah had done. Noah learned what Ham had done and pronounced his famous curse. Noah now blessed the Jews and gave the Canaanites to them as their servants. He promised that the Gentiles would be spread throughout the lands.

Genesis 10:1-32

This chapter is known as “The Table of Nations” and is unique in the records of ancient history. Its purpose is to explain how the earth was repopulated after the flood by the descendants of the three sons of Noah.

Seven sons are named and seven grandsons from only two of the sons. Japheth is the ancestor of the Gentile nations who located north and west of the land of Canaan. These would be the distant nations, the countries that represented the “outer limits” of civilization for the average Old Testament Jew.

Finally, what's written in Genesis 9-10 must have been an encouragement to the people of Israel when they conquered Canaan. They knew that they were the chosen people of God and that the Canaanites would be their servants. The conquest of Canaan was a victory of faith in God's promises, which explains why God advised Joshua to meditate on the Word of God. Noah's three sons left a mixed legacy to the world, but the Lord of the nations was still in charge, and history is still **HIS STORY!**

Read Genesis 9:18-29 and Answer the Following Questions:

1. We have seen that Noah's new commission from God is similar to the one given to Adam. Now we see how sin again spreads from father to son in both private and public. What did Noah do in 9:20-21 which emphasized what God taught in Romans 3:23?

2. Even Noah was not perfect, though he walked with God. Who was the only perfect one who walked on this planet? (See Hebrews 4:14-15; 1 Peter 2:21-22; 1 John 3:5).

3. What kindness did Shem and Japheth show their father in his humiliation?

4. Ham had discovered the nakedness of his father, but what did he do instead of covering him up in his humiliation?

5. What was the result of Ham's lack of love and consideration for his father?

6. How do you react when you discover that a person has done something which is displeasing to God? (See Proverbs for wisdom on this: 10:12; 17:9; 21:23, and 1 John 4:10-11).

Read Gen 10:1-32. Pray and answer the following questions:

7. Whose family tree does this record?

8. Who was the mighty hunter mentioned in this chapter? Where was the beginning of his kingdom? (See Gen. 10:9)

9. What interesting thing happened during the lifetime of Peleg?

10. What interesting similar developments do you find among the sons of Japheth, Ham and Shem in verses 5, 20 and 31?

11. Summarize in your words what chapter 10 is all about. Why is it important to our study?

The Birth of the Nations

Genesis 10

The flood reduced the world's population to one family. Noah, his wife, his three sons, and their wives (Gen. 7:13, 20–23; 8:18). In a sense, God was starting over, repopulating the world from one righteous man's family. Genesis gives a summary of the nations that were born from that family.

Modern Bible readers might be tempted to skip over this chapter as just another list of obscure names and long-forgotten places. But Gen. 10 is a key to the rest of the biblical account. It is like the cast of characters given in the preface of a play so that the audience will understand who the players are, how they stand in relation to each other, and which ones have the main roles.

Reading the Bible with Gen. 10 in mind helps us realize that God is working out a plan that includes all the peoples of the world. First, He scatters them abroad by confusing their languages at Babel (11:1–9). Then He chooses one family, the family of Abraham, through which to bless all the families of the earth (12:1–3). Ultimately that blessing comes through Jesus Christ, whose work is described in the New Testament.

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 11 - Genesis 11:1-26
Where it All Began
“Caution - God at Work!”

What the foundation is to the house, what the Constitution is to the United States law, and what the periodic table of elements is to chemistry, the Book of Genesis is to the Bible. Few chapters in the Bible illustrate this truth better than Genesis 11. When you read about Babel and then read the genealogies that follow, your immediate impression is that God is at work in His world and is accomplishing His purposes in spite of the plans and projects of sinful people.

After the flood, the descendants of Noah's three sons repopulated the earth. But the new beginning with Noah eventually led to one of the most arrogant revolts against God recorded anywhere in Scripture. God had commanded the peoples to be fruitful and multiply and to scatter across the earth, but they decided to move to Nimrod's city of Babylon and settle there. Nimrod wanted them in his cities and under his control. In their arrogance, a tower was built called the tower of Babel. At the top was a special shrine dedicated to a god or goddess. The word “Babel” means “the gate of the gods.” This project was a declaration of war against the Lord. God promised that He would send a Redeemer, “*the seed of the woman,*” who would defeat Satan and bring salvation. Noah's prophecy revealed that God would bless the world through the line of Shem.

It was God's purpose to call a man and his wife and from them, build a family. From that family He would build a nation, and from that nation, God would bless all the nations of the earth. From start to finish, it was the work of God's grace, for when He called Abraham and Sarah, they belonged to a family that worshiped idols.

There's quite a difference between man's ways at Babel and God's way in calling Abraham and Sarah. Babel was built by the energy of the flesh and the motivation of pride, but the nation of Israel was built by the grace and power of God in spite of human weakness. Today, we still live in a confused world and Babel is still with us. But God still has His faithful remnant that follows Him by faith and keeps their eyes on the heavenly city. The question is: **“Are you a part of that remnant?”**

Read Genesis 11:1-9 and Answer the Following Questions

1. What did the whole earth have after the flood? (See Gen. 11:1) Was this a good or bad thing?
2. God had commanded Noah's sons to "Fill the earth." But what do Noah's descendants do when they reach the land of Shinar? (See Gen. 11:2-4)
3. The first "come let us" at Babel was spoken by the people in Gen. 11:3. What was wrong with their purposes for building the city and tower?
4. What were the reasons why the people decided to build the Tower of Babel?
5. How did God stop these people from carrying out their plans?
6. What word in Gen. 11:7 points out that God is a Trinity?

7. What name was given to the city? What was appropriate about naming the city with this name? (See Gen. 11:9)

8. In what ways are modern people like the ones who built the tower of Babel?

Read Genesis 11:10-26 and Answer the Following Questions

9. What steps in your own lives personally, should be taken to avoid the errors of Babel?

10. Tell us a little bit about Shem's life? (See Gen. 11:10-11)

11. List the descendants of Noah from Shem to Abram. What trend do you see in the ages of the men in this genealogy?

God Focuses His Plan

Gen. 11:10

A major turning point in the Book of Genesis occurs in chapter 11. For the second time, a new beginning is called for in the aftermath of God's judgment on a sinful humanity. Notice the two cycles of Gen. 1–11:

First Cycle

- * God creates the world and its people (1:1–2:25).
- * Sin enters the world, and people become increasingly wicked; finally God destroys them through the flood (3:1–7:24).

Second Cycle

- * God starts over again with Noah and his family (9:1–19); Noah's descendants multiply (10:1–32).
- * Eventually they resist God's mandate to "fill the earth" (1:28; 9:7). Finally, God forces them to scatter abroad through the confusion of languages at Babel (11:1–9).

What will God do next? Once again, He singles out one man and his family to accomplish His purposes. The family of Abram (later renamed Abraham), a descendant of Shem. This call of Abram narrows the focus of the Old Testament to one family, but through them, all the families of the earth will be blessed. Nevertheless, God's long-term strategy to bring blessing on the entire world goes forward.

God's intention has always been to bring people into right relationship with Him. Ultimately that plan was fulfilled in Abram's descendant, Jesus Christ. Through Him, anyone can start over again in knowing God and living as He originally intended (2 Cor. 5:17).

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 12 - Genesis 11:27-12:9
Where it all Began
A New Beginning

If other planets are inhabited, stated George Bernard Shaw, “they must be using the earth for their insane asylum.” We may laugh at that statement, but it reminds us of a sad fact: The world is in a mess, and it does not seem to be getting any better. What is wrong? It all goes back to events recorded in the Book of Genesis. Except for the account in chapters 1 and 2, the first eleven chapters of Genesis record one failure of man after another, failures that are being repeated today.

Genesis 11:27-32

Genesis 12:1 indicates that the Lord had said to Abraham “*get out.*” But 11:31-32 states that Abraham did not fully obey. It must be remembered that God did not call Abraham because of his own accomplishments he had made. He was a citizen of an idolatrous city, Ur of the Chaldeans. Had God not revealed Himself to him, he would have died an unbeliever. From a human view point, God's choice of Abraham and Sarah, was a foolish one. But ultimately it brought great glory to God and great blessing to the world.

Genesis 12

This chapter begins the account of Abraham's walk of faith. The flood had destroyed a corrupt civilization, but another sinful society soon took its place. God called one man to begin the fulfillment of His promise in Gen. 3:15, to send a Savior to the world.

Obedience always leads to blessing. After Abraham arrived in Canaan, the Lord appeared to Abraham to further assure him. Abraham did not hesitate to confess his faith before the heathen in the land. Wherever he went, he pitched his tent and built his altar.

Abraham is now in the place of God's appointment, doing what God told him to do. But this is not the end, it is the beginning! Even in the place of obedience we will face tests and trials, for that is how faith grows. But the same Lord who brought us out, brought us in, and brought us on in our journey, will also bring us through if we follow Him by faith.

Read Gen. 11:27-32 and Answer the Following Questions

1. What was the name of the area where Abram and his family originally lived, and where did they move to?
2. How does a person's place of origin, affect the course of that person's personal life?
3. How does a person's family of origin, affect that person's life?
4. Name Abram's and Nahor's wife, and note what problem Abram's wife had.

Read Gen. 12:1-3 and Answer the Following Questions

5. God gave Abram a command and a promise before he left for Haran (Acts 7:2). What was the command? (See Gen. 12:1)
6. The people destroyed in the flood were noted chiefly as "men of renown" (6:4), and the people of Babel were scattered for trying to "make a name for ourselves" (11:4). According to God's promise, how was Abram going to be different? What else did God promise Abram?

Read Gen. 12:4-9. Pray and Answer the Following Questions:

7. When Abram arrived in Canaan to whom did God promise this land?

8. How did Abram express his complete faith in God's promise to him even though he had no children?

9. Think of how hard it must have been for Abram to leave his home for a strange new land. Read Mark 8:34-36 and use these verses to help you describe how a Christian today should just be willing to follow what Jesus asks of him.

10. What can we learn about Abram's character from his actions in 12:4-9? List the qualities you observe and how he shows them.

11. Write down all you learn about faith from Abram and Sarai (Sarah). (See Hebrews 11:6, 8-12).

12. Jesus promises many wonderful things to those who will receive Him by faith. Read the following verses to discover some of these promises and note your favorite. (Matthew 4:18-19; John 14:27; Romans 8:35, 37-39)

Here's a Great Word from Jon Courson

*“So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.”
Gen. 12:4*

Abram was fifty years old when he initially heard God's call. But he didn't leave Haran until he was seventy five. Obviously, Abram faltered in his obedience. But guess what? God didn't give up on Abram. Rather He waited for Abram. “Lord, why aren't You directing me?” we cry. “I already did,” He answers. Twenty five years ago, I told you what to do. And I won't give you more to do until you do what I've already told you.

Many people are confused about God's will because, like Abram, they've delayed doing what He already asked of them. It might concern intercessory prayer, witnessing, or Bible study. I encourage people to keep journals, to write things down that God lays upon their hearts because we so often ask, “What's going on?” when, if we would just look back at what God had told us previously, we could see the problem.

God wasn't mad at Abram, and He's not mad at you. When your kids take their first steps, you don't yell at them when they fall down. You celebrate their steps rather than rebuke their stumbling. God is the same way. He knows this is how we learn to walk by faith. Take hope, stumbling saint, Abram was in a twenty five year slump, and God didn't give up on him. God gives us a second chance, and a third, and a ninety-ninth. His mercy is new every morning. His grace is limitless.

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 13 - Genesis 12:10 – 13:18
Where it All Began
Following God into the Unknown

“Life can be difficult,” wrote Amy Carmichael, missionary to India. “Sometimes the enemy comes in like a flood. But then in the time to prove our faith and live our songs.” A faith that can't be tested can't be trusted. God's purpose in allowing trials is not only to verify our faith but also to purify it and remove the waste.

In leaving his family and traveling to an unknown land, Abraham took a great step of faith. Abraham and Sarah probably expected to settle down and enjoy their new home, but God would not let them. Instead, He permitted a famine to come to the land. There is no record that Abraham ever faced a famine in Ur or Haran, but now that he was in God's land, he had to find food for a large company of people, plus flocks and herds. Why did God allow a famine? To teach Abraham and Sarah a basic lesson in the “school of faith,” a lesson we must also learn. Tests often follow triumphs.

When circumstances become difficult and you are in the furnace of testing, remain where God has put you until He tells you to move. It has been well said, “The will of God will never lead you where the grace of God cannot keep you.” The practical lesson from all this is to simply stay in fellowship with the Lord no matter what the circumstances may be. If you have disobeyed and God is disciplining you, go right back to the place where you left Him and make things right.

Abraham may have failed the first two tests, but he passed the third test with great success. The test was not an easy one, for it involved land and wealth; but Abraham is the example of what every believer should do when there are disputes about material things. He determined to be a peacemaker not a troublemaker.

Abraham lived by faith, not by sight. No matter what Lot did, Abraham was not worried about his future, for he knew that everything was in the hands of the Lord. Abraham had never read Ps. 47:4 or Matt. 6:33, but he was putting both into practice by faith. When God is first in your life, it makes no difference who is second or last.

Read Gen. 12:10-20 And Answer The Following Questions:

1. Why did Abram have to leave Canaan and where did he go?
2. In verses 10-16 how does Abram's scheming show a lack of faith?
3. A great truth to be reminded of is that sin not only affects the sinner, but also those around them. Who suffered because of Abram's sin?
4. Do you believe that when a person sins today others are hurt by their disobedience to God? Think of some situations where sin not only hurts the person who sins, but also the person's family, friends, and associates.
5. What wonderful promise does God make to us in 1 John 1:9? Write it down.

Read Gen. 13:1-9 And Answer The Following Questions:

6. What place did Abram revisit and what did he do there?

7. What problem arises between Abram and Lot in 13:1-7?

8. Do you believe that Abram confessed his sin to God at this time and asked for forgiveness? What words in 13:4 would suggest this?

9. How did God lead Abram to solve the problem and settle the quarrel?

Read Gen. 13:10-18 And Answer The Following Questions:

10. Abram looked up only when God commanded, and he saw the promise land, less fertile, but promised by God. Lot chose to settle in the rich cities of the plain, but Abram chose to wander in the hills. What does this tell you about Abram? (Also see Heb. 11:9-10, 13-16).

11. What expanded promise does the Lord give to Abram? (See 13:14-17)

12. What lessons can be learned from the way Abram resolved his conflict with Lot? How do our choices in life reflect our values and character?

13. Where did Abram go to live and what was the first thing recorded for us that he did?

Here's a Great Word from Jon Courson

Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to dwell there, for the famine was severe in the land. And it came to pass, when he was close to entering Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife, "Indeed I know that you are a woman of beautiful countenance. Therefore it will happen, when the Egyptians see you, that they will say, 'This is his wife'; and they will kill me, but they will let you live. Gen. 12:10-12

Throughout Scripture, whenever people go to Egypt they always go “**down**” to Egypt because Egypt is a type or symbol of the world. Abram was doing well, but now he falls again because he didn't remain in the land God showed him. A famine made him think he had to take matters into his own hands; this always is a dangerous thing to do. Here's the father of faith faltering in the arena of faith because man always struggles in his area of strength:

- Righteous Noah fell when he got drunk in his tent (Gen. 9:21)
- Moses, the meekest man on the face of the earth, struck his rod against a rock and said, “*You rebels, must we fetch water for you?*” (Numbers 20:10)
- Unsheathing his sword, Peter was ready to take on a whole army in order to defend Jesus in Gethsemane. Yet, only hours later, he faltered when a young girl asked him, “*Aren't you one of His?*” (Mark 14:67)

The area in which you think you're strongest is the area you'll be more vulnerable because you'll depend upon your own strength. At that point you say, “That's not a problem for me; I'll never fall there,” watch out because that's the very area in which you'll experience difficulty. “*Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall*” Proverbs 16:18. Where you know you're weak, you rely on God. So consider yourself weak in all areas, and instead, rely solely on His strength.

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 14 – Genesis 14:1-24
Where it All Began
Faith in The Victory

When you enroll in the “school of faith” you never know what may happen next. Visit Abraham one day and you see him settling in a land dispute. Visit another day and you see him gearing up for a battle. Why is this so? Well for one thing, God wants us to mature in every area of life, but maturity doesn't come easily. There can be no growth without a challenge, and there can be no challenge without change. If circumstances never changed, everything would be predictable. The life of faith presents us challenges which keeps us going and growing!

Archaeologists have confirmed the historical accuracy of this account of the first war in the Bible. When Lot moved into Sodom, he lost the protection of “*the Judge of all the earth*” (Gen. 18:25) and had to suffer the consequences. Lot followed the path of friendship with the world. He thought that Sodom was a place of peace and protection; however it turned out to be a place of warfare and danger.

Godly Abraham was in a place of safety, even though he lived in a tent. Hearing of Lot's predicament, Uncle Abraham did a generous thing and went to rescue him. In this chapter, Abraham delivers Lot by his sword. By faith, he overcomes the enemy, and travels over 120 miles in doing so. Following the victory, Abraham faced a greater temptation as he met the king of Sodom. What a reminder that Satan tempts us immediately after a great spiritual victory. Abraham ignored the king of Sodom, but he honored the king of Salem. Hebrews 5-7 makes it clear that Melchizedek (king of righteousness) is a type of Christ, our heavenly high priest.

Abraham honored Melchizedek by paying him tithes of all. This is the first instance of tithing in the Bible, and it happens years before the giving of the Mosaic Law. Hebrews 7:4-10 indicates that these tithes were paid to Christ, suggesting that believers today are following Abraham's example as they bring tithes to the Lord. Abraham refused the riches of the world but shared his wealth with the Lord, and God richly blessed him.

Did this battle and night of danger bring Lot to his senses? No! In Gen. 19:1 we see him right back in Sodom. Lot's heart was in Sodom, so that's where his body followed.

Read Gen. 14:1-12. Pray and Answer the Following Questions

1. In what ways does the political and military situation described in 14:1-4 resemble hostilities we see in the world today?

2. According to Gen. 14:4, how many years did the kings mentioned in Gen. 14:1 serve their conquerors from the East?

3. What was the outcome of this battle, and how did it affect Lot? (See Gen. 14:8-12)

4. The Valley of Siddim (near the Dead Sea) where they fought was full of what?

5. What did the conquering kings and their troops take after they won the battle at the Valley of Siddim?

Read Gen. 14:13-16. Pray and Answer the Following Questions

6. An escaped soldier told Abram about Lot's capture. What action did Abram take to help Lot? Was Lot rescued? What else was rescued?

7. God used Abram to rescue Lot in this battle. Who then strengthened Abram and enabled him to win this battle? (See Psalm 24:8; 50:15)

8. Just as Abram triumphed in the battle, we are promised victory through the Lord. What do you find most helpful or challenging about the promise in 2 Cor. 2:14-15?

Read Gen. 14:17-24. Pray and Answer the Following Questions

9. What two kings honored Abram after his victory in battle, and what did one king bring to him?

10. According to Hebrews 7:4 and Genesis 14:20, what did Abram give Melchizedek?

11. Read Hebrews 7:22-27 which describes Jesus as our High Priest. List the blessings we have from Jesus as our High Priest.

12. If you are discouraged, tempted by sin, fearful of some situation, or feel in need of Jesus' help in some other way, what does Hebrews 4:14-16 say that encourages your heart today?

Here's a Great Word from Jon Courson Gen. 14:19-20

And he blessed him and said: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And he gave him a tithe of all.

From cover to cover the Bible calls us to set our hearts on things above and not on things of this world. Jesus put it this way: *"Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added onto you"* (Matt. 6:33).

How do you practically seek first the kingdom and set your heart on heaven? Jesus told us when He said, *"Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also"* (Matt. 6:21). If your treasure is on earth, that's where your heart will be. So God in His wisdom, kindness, and love for you and me says: *"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal."*(Matt. 6:19-20). If your treasure is in your house, your retirement account, or your Mercedes, that's where your heart will be. Knowing this, the Lord demands that the first tenth of whatever we make on any given day or in any given week be given to Him in order that our hearts will be set on our heavenly destination.

Jesus, talked more about money than He did about heaven. He talked more about money than He did about hell. In fact, he talked more about money than He did about heaven and hell combined. Why? Because He knows it's a huge issue for you and me, and it speaks of larger principles. One of the things Jesus said about money was this: *"And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon (money), that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home."* (Luke 16:9). In other words, the money you have "made friends of," that you have used rightly, will greet you when you die. Now, the old adage is true: you can't take it with you. But you can send it ahead! And what you send ahead through the tithe that God demands, and through the offering which He deserves will meet you there.

"But I don't make much money, so there won't be much to greet me," you say. Consider this: When Jesus saw a widow giving two mites, (less than a penny) He told His disciples that she had given more than they who, out of their abundance, had given much, because she gave all that she had. Jesus acknowledged just two mites, given by a woman who will receive a "mite-y" big welcome in heaven!

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 15 – Genesis 15:1-21
Where it All Began
How to Overcome Fear and Disappointment

Abram had just defeated the kings and overcame a great temptation from the king of Sodom. Now God stepped in to encourage him. God is our protection and provision, and we need not fear. Abram did not need the protection of the king of Sodom or the treasures he offered. Abram had all he needed in God.

Abram did not want a reward, he wanted an heir. He was now 85 years old, and for 10 years he had been waiting for the promised son to be born. If he had no son, all his inheritance would fall to Eliezer, his steward. Had God not promised in 12:2, "*I will make you a great nation*"? Than why was He not fulfilling His promise? How was Abram saved? Not by keeping the Law, for the Law had not yet been given, or by circumcision, for that was not established until he was ninety-nine years old. He was saved by faith in God's Word.

Salvation is based on sacrifice, for the covenant requires the shedding of blood. It was customary in that day for the contracting parties in an agreement to walk between the pieces of the slain animals, this sealed the agreement. The sacrifices in verse nine all speak of Christ and the cross. Abram offered the sacrifices and labored to keep Satan away. But nothing really happened until he went to sleep. Abram never did walk between the pieces. It was God alone that went between the pieces; the covenant was all of grace and depended solely on the Lord. Like Adam, Abram was in a deep sleep and could do nothing to help God. When we are helpless God is able to do great things for us.

Abram wanted to know for sure what God would do, and God met his need. Salvation is based on the sacrifice of Christ and the grace of God, assurance comes from the Word of God.

Read Gen. 15:1-6 and Answer the Following Questions:

1. God told Abram not to be afraid. What was Abram tempted to be afraid of?

2. Why did the Lord tell Abram not to be afraid?

3. What promises did God make, and to whom did He make them?

4. In what ways would the Lord's message renew Abram's confidence?

5. What do Romans 4:22 and Genesis 15:6 say about Abram?

6. Verse 6 is the first time we read that Abram believed the Lord. Explain in your own words what it means that the Lord "*accounted it to him for righteousness.*"

7. How is Gen. 15:1-6 a model for us today?

Read Gen. 15:7-21 and Answer the Following Questions:

8. What new promises by the Lord are given in the covenant he now makes?

9. If you have ever had to wait a long time for God to fulfill a promise, what did you learn in the process about yourself and the Lord and His way of working?

10. What did God warn Abram that “his seed” would suffer? How would He rescue “his seed” from their difficult circumstances? (See Gen. 15:13-14).

11. God planned to postpone the fulfillment of His promise for seven hundred years. Three hundred from the promise until Jacob entered Egypt and four hundred more until Moses led Israel out of Egypt. What purpose did this postponement serve for Abram and his descendants? (See Heb. 11:13-16, 20-22).

12. In a similar way, God is waiting to fulfill the promise of His Kingdom. Why is He waiting? (See 2 Peter 3:9).

13. God’s will must be fulfilled in God’s way and in God’s time. Why is this sometimes a difficult concept for Christians to accept?

God's Purpose for the Amorites

Genesis 15:16

In making promises to Abraham and foretelling his descendant's destiny, God was mindful to mention the Amorites. The Amorites were a nomadic, barbarous people living in Canaan (10:16; Deut. 1:27), or what is now Palestine, western Saudi Arabia, and southern Syria. Shortly before 2000 A.D., their ancestors migrated from the west (Amorites means "westerners") and overran the kingdoms and cities of the Fertile Crescent, as far as Mesopotamia. They dominated the region until about 1850 A.D., when they were brought under Babylonian control.

Throughout Old Testament times, Amorites remained in Syria, Phoenicia, and the desert regions to the south (Josh. 13:4). A significant number, however, settled in Palestine (Judg. 11:19–22). They spoke a language that was closely related to Canaanite and Hebrew. The Old Testament frequently uses "Amorites" as a synonym for Canaanites in general, as is the case here in Genesis 15. Canaan, the grandson of Noah, was the father of the Amorites (Gen. 10:16).

God allowed the Amorites, or Canaanites, to live in the Promised Land for many years despite their idolatry and immorality. But His patience was not limitless. He would soon cast them out, as His promise to Abraham indicated. Many Amorite cities would be conquered under Joshua. In fact, the first Israelite victories came against the Amorite kings Sihon and Og, who ruled much of the promised land east of the Jordan River (Josh. 12:1–6). The survivors became servants to the Israelites (1 Kin. 9:20–21). Thus Noah's curse of Canaan was fulfilled (Gen. 9:25–27), as well as God's promise to Abraham (15:16). The Lord's message here indicates that He was guiding Israel and the Amorites toward a goal. God was fitting the nations of the ancient Near East into His master plan.

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 16 – Genesis 16:1-16
Where it all Began
The Terrible Wrong of Impatience

Genesis 16 records a painful detour that Abram and Sarai made in their pilgrim walk, a detour that brought conflict not only to their home but into the world. What today's media calls "the Arab-Israel conflict" begins right here. This account is much more than ancient history with modern consequences. It's a good lesson for God's people about walking by faith and waiting for God to fulfill His promises in His way and in His time. As we study the stages in the experience of Abram and Sarai, we will see how dangerous it is to depend on your own wisdom.

God had made the covenant, and He would fulfill it. All Abram and Sarai had to do is wait by faith. In chapter 15 Abram listened to God and exercised faith, but here he listened to his wife and revealed his unbelief. He stopped walking in the Spirit and began to walk in the flesh. At this point both of them were trying to help God accomplish His plan. In verse two Sarai blames God for her barren condition and hints that He is not good to them. She turns to the world for help, (to Hagar the Egyptian) but the whole scheme fails.

God did not recognize the marriage. He called Hagar "Sarai's maid." God did care for Hagar, instructed her to submit to Sarai, and promised that her son, Ishmael, would be a great, but a wild man. When Isaac, Sarai's son, entered the family, there was no room for Ishmael and he was cast out. Eventually, Ishmael fathered twelve sons, and their descendants have been enemies of the Jews ever since. Galatians 4:21-31 teaches us that Sarai pictures the New Covenant and Hagar the Old Covenant. Hagar was a slave, and the Old Covenant enslaved people, Sarai was a free woman and Christ makes us free. Ishmael was born of the flesh and could not be controlled. Likewise, the law appeals to the flesh but cannot change it or control it. Isaac was born of the Spirit, a child of promise who enjoyed liberty.

What a great reminder for us that whenever we run ahead of God, there is trouble. The flesh loves to help God, but true faith is shown in patience. We cannot mix faith and flesh, law and grace, promise and self-effort.

Read Genesis 16:1-6 and Answer the Following Questions

1. It has been ten years since Abram and Sarai entered Canaan. What action does Sarai now suggest?
2. What do you think this indicates about their trust in God?
3. How can our impatience with God's timetable lead us into unbelief and even disobedience?
4. After Hagar conceives, how do the relationships between Abram, Sarai, and Hagar change?
5. Can you think of any ways that you or someone you know has tried to "help God" fulfill His promises, rather than completely trusting God to work out His promise and His plan in His way and His time? What were the results of these attempts?

Read Genesis 16:7-12 and Answer the Following Questions:

6. After Sarai had dealt harshly with Hagar, where did Hagar go and who came to her?

7. What did Hagar lose by running away from a difficult situation? Has this personally ever happen to you? Explain the results.

8. What name was given to Hager's child? What did the angel predict about the child's nature and future? (See Gen. 16:12)

9. Ask yourself the two following questions concerning any problems you have today. 1. What have I done to cause this problem to be more difficult than it needs to be? 2. Am I trying to run away from the situation like Hagar, and in doing so, what am I losing by running away from my troubles?

10. What could a person do if he is part of the cause of his own difficulty? What would be better than running away from the problem? (See Col. 3:13-14; Matt. 5:23-24)

Read Genesis 16:13-16 and Answer the Following Questions:

11. What does Hagar call the Lord in 16:13?

12. What name was given to the place where God gave His promise? This means: "Well of the one who lives and sees me" What personal lessons can we learn from this meaning?

13. Hagar returned to Abram's household as the angel of the Lord told her to do. How old was Abram when Ishmael was born?

The Solution to Impatience

The following Scriptures gives us very clear answers to the subject of impatience. If you have been impatient and running ahead of God in your life note these two points:

1. We must go before God and repent of the wrong we have done.

(Psalm 34:18; Isaiah 55:7, 66:2; 2 Chronicles 7:1; Acts 8:22)

2. We must obey God by being patient. *(Exodus 19:5; Psalm 40:1;*

Isaiah 25:9, 26:8, 33:2; Ezekiel 18:21; 1 Peter 2:20)

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 17 - Genesis 17:1-27
Where it all Began
What's in a Name

In past biblical times if you would ask the question, "What's in a name?" the person would reply: "Everything! Our names are very important!" Names might record something significant about one's birth or about some life changing experience. Jacob was renamed Israel after a night of wrestling with God, and Simon received the name Peter (rock) when he met Jesus. The names assigned to unborn babies even carried messages (See Gen. 16:11).

There are thirteen years of silence between Ishmael's birth and the events of this chapter. God had to wait for Abraham and Sarah to die to self so that His resurrection power might be displayed in their lives. God revealed Himself as "God Almighty," the all sufficient One.

Abram means "high father"; Abraham means "father of a multitude." Sarai is said to mean "contentious" but Sarah means "a princess." Their new names were preparation for the new blessing about to enter their home. Only the grace of God could take two idol worshiping heathens and make godly kings and queens out of them.

This is the first mention of circumcision in the Bible. Nowhere does the Old Testament teach that circumcision saves a man. It is but the outward symbol of the covenant between God and man. It was to remind them of the inward circumcision of the heart that accompanies true salvation. The ritual was to be performed on the eighth day, and significantly, eight is the number of resurrection or new beginnings. Sad to say, that the Jews depended on the fleshly ritual and not the inner reality. Believers today are in the New Covenant and are the true circumcision, which is experienced spiritually through the death of Christ. The entire body of sin (the old nature) has been put off, that we may live in the Spirit, not in the flesh.

Read Genesis 17:1-14 and Answer the Following Questions:

1. When Abram was 99 years old the Lord appeared to him. What did He tell Abram to do? What does it mean to “*walk before Me and be blameless*”?
2. According to the following verses, who can make us and present us as “perfect to God”? (Philippians 2:13; Colossians 1:27-28; Revelation 1:5)
3. What does God again promise Abram in Gen. 17, which He has already promised in Gen. 12, 13, and 15?
4. What is Abram’s new name given by God?
5. What was to be the “outward sign” of the covenant promise which God has made to Abraham?
6. The failure to be circumcised separated the general Philistine population from the children of Israel. Not only was it a hygienic rite, but it also symbolized that the children of Israel were cutting off the sins of the flesh which their ungodly neighbors practiced. It symbolized their sincere devotion and mature faith in God. When Jesus came, God no longer required His people to be circumcised. What does He still require? (See Gen. 15:6, 17:1; Galatians 5:6)

Read Genesis 17:15-21 and Answer the Following Questions:

7. What new name did God give Sarai?

8. What promise did God give Sarah?

9. What lessons do you learn about God's character in chapter 17 as He responds to Sarah and Abraham's mixture of disbelief and faith in His promise of a son to them?

10. Put yourself in Abraham's place. For thirteen years you have set your hope on Ishmael. Now everything is changing. How does Abraham react? How would you react? How should you react when God suddenly changes a situation you thought was secure?

Read Genesis 17:22-27 and Answer the Following Questions:

11. After God finished talking, what did Abraham do to show his faith and obedience to God?

12. What action is the Lord leading you to take this week to show your faith and obedience to Him? Does He want you to “cut off” some activity so that you can spend more time in fellowship with Him through prayer and Bible study? Is there something else “of the flesh” that the Holy Spirit has been speaking to you about?

Almighty God **Genesis 17:1**

The Hebrew word “El Shaddai” means God Almighty or Almighty God. This name for God is used forty-eight times in the Old Testament, thirty-one times in the book of Job alone, and seventeen times in the rest of the Old Testament. The name Almighty “Shaddai” stresses both the power of God and the sufficiency of God. The Almighty God has the power to meet the needs of His people, no matter how great the needs may be, and the Almighty God is sufficient to meet the needs of His people. He is sufficient both in power and in possessions. He has enough sufficiency, enough power, and enough blessings to take care of His people and His creation. It should be noted that the Hebrew word "Shaddai" is sometimes traced back to a Hebrew root that means breast but later came to mean mountain. Other meanings have even been suggested for Shaddai, but the strongest evidence by far is that El Shaddai means God Almighty or Almighty God.

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 18 – Genesis 18-19
Where it all Began
Sodom & Gomorrah

Throughout Scripture and in countless extra biblical works, Sodom and Gomorrah and the other surrounding cities stand as a symbol of divine judgment for collective wickedness. What was once a well-watered, fertile region is today barren, full of tar pits, mounds of asphalt, and marsh. These heathen cities remind us that wickedness will not go unpunished. They also show that God not only judges sinful individuals, such as Lot's wife, but also entire cities and their surroundings. However, the story is not all bad news. After the tragic end of Sodom and Gomorrah, "*God remembered Abraham.*"

In Genesis 18:22-33 Abraham shows us that it is justifiable to pray for cities. We may not always be able to go to a city, but we can still pray for it. Abraham prayed more for a place than for individual people. He prayed for an entire city, specifically for peace and salvation, believing that nothing was too hard for the Lord. Even though Sodom was filled with wickedness, ten believing persons living in Sodom could have saved it. In other words, the presence of righteous persons acting as salt and light can preserve places where evil runs rampant. Even though Sodom was filled with wickedness, God would have saved it if He had found even a handful of righteous people.

We are told in Proverbs 16:18 "*Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.*" Sodom was destroyed not only because of sexual sin, but because it had pride and a surplus of wealth, yet failed to care for its poor and needy. Its example challenges us: What are we doing with the resources God has put under our control?

The behavior of Lot and his daughters after fleeing from Sodom shows that sin is not confined to the city. They exported Sodom-like immorality to the rural areas. We might ask our own selves this question: Are we running from the city in order to "escape" its problems and evils? Is it possible that God wants us to stay and live as His representatives of righteousness?

Read Genesis 18:1-15 and Answer the Following Questions:

1. Who visited Abraham, and how did Abraham respond to their visit?
2. What did Abraham's visitors tell him, and how did Sarah respond to their message?
3. How did Sarah respond when the Lord confronted her?
4. Why did the Lord rebuke Sarah's laughter but not Abraham's? What must have been different about the spirit behind Sarah and Abraham's laugh?
(See Gen. 17:17-22, 18:12-14)

Read Genesis 18:16-33 and Answer the Following Questions:

5. Why does the Lord decide to tell Abraham His plans? (Gen. 18:16-19)
6. How would you describe the Lord's attitude toward Sodom and Gomorrah and His relationship with Abraham?

7. In what ways can we intercede with God for our city, our state and our country because of its sin?

8. How might this kind of prayer affect our attitudes and actions toward those around us?

Read Genesis 19:1-38 and Answer the Following Questions:

9. How do the actions of the people of Sodom help us see why they are under God's judgment? (See Gen. 19:1-9).

10. What effects does life in Sodom seem to have had on Lot and his family?

11. How is the Lord's mercy seen in His treatment of Lot and his family?

12. Describe the result of God's judgment in Lot's family and in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

13. Living in the middle of a sinful society, what is a warning for us today? What is an encouragement?

Intercession

Nelson's Bible Dictionary defines intercession as "The act of petitioning God or praying on behalf of another person or group." How does a person become an intercessor, a prayer warrior? By yearning to walk with God step by step, longing for His presence. Remember, the Lord and the two angels that appeared to Abraham at the door of his tent? Now the Lord and the two angels arose, looked down toward Sodom, and began to walk toward the city. Note that Abraham joined them. He did not have to follow them, he could have stayed behind at his tent. Abraham joined the Lord as He walked away to begin the journey toward Sodom. Why? Because Abraham just did not want to leave the Lord's presence. He had experienced the closest bond of friendship imaginable with the Lord.

The deep sense of friendship, fellowship, and assurance of God's power all swelled up within Abraham's heart, and he just did not want the experience to end. He wanted to spend as much time as he could in God's presence so he walked along with the Lord step by step.

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 19 – Genesis 20
Where it All Began
Abraham the Neighbor

We usually think of Abraham as a man who was always performing great exploits of faith, and we forget that his daily life was somewhat routine. He had to take care of a pregnant wife and a young son, and he needed to manage great flocks and herds and handle the business affairs of the camp. Abraham and his chief steward were responsible for settling the daily disputes and making important decisions.

This chapter would be an embarrassment to us except for one thing: The Bible tells the truth about all people, and that includes God's people. It does not hide the fact that Noah got drunk and exposed himself, or that Moses lost his temper, or that David committed adultery and plotted the death of Uriah, or that Peter denied the Lord three times, and Barnabas lapsed into false doctrine. These things are recorded, not to encourage us to sin, but to warn us to beware of sin.

What did one lie cost Abraham? To begin with, it cost him character. Abraham stopped asking: "What is right?" and began asking "What is safe?" and this led to his downfall. He also lost his testimony. How could Abraham talk to his neighbors about the God of truth when he himself had told a lie? He lost his ministry, instead of being a source of blessing he was a cause of judgment. One of the saddest consequences of Abraham's sin was Isaac's repetitive action of it years later. It is sad when our sins affect outsiders, but it is sadder still when our sins are duplicated in our own families.

God does not reject His children when they sin any more than a parent rejects a disobedient son or daughter. We are accepted in Jesus no matter what we are in ourselves. The fact that we are justified before God means there will be a change in our lives, "*faith without works is dead.*" The important thing is that we deal with our sins humbly and honestly, confess them to God, and claim His promises of forgiveness. Abraham and Sarah made a new beginning and so can you.

Read Genesis 20:1-7 and Answer the Following Questions

1. What did Abraham say about Sarah, and what happened as a result?
2. Where else in Genesis did Abraham do a similar thing?
3. How did God speak to Abimelech, and what did He tell him?
4. What does verse 20:6 teach us about God and what does it tell us about Abimelech?

Read Genesis 20:8-13 and Answer the Following Questions

5. What did Abimelech do in response to what God told him?
6. What explanation did Abraham give for what he did?
7. Was it acceptable for a godly man to deceive pagans because they did not fear God? Why or why not?
8. How does this truth apply to our behavior today among unbelievers?

Read Genesis 20:14-18 and Answer the Following Questions

9. What did Abimelech give Abraham, and what was Abraham's response?

10. Why do you believe God didn't just abandon Abraham and choose a more honorable father for the Hebrew nation?

11. Why does the Bible describe the sins and failures of the people used by God? What can we learn from them?

God's Grace in Action

God secured the believer by working all things out for good. Note how clearly all things worked out for good for Abraham and Sarah. Despite their terrible sin and all the harm they had done, God took care of Abraham and Sarah. Note that all the blessings did not occur until Abraham first repented and confessed his sin. Then and only then could God work things out for good to richly bless his life:

1. The family was restored. In addition, the king gave Abraham several herds of animals, including the workers to tend them (Genesis 20:14).
2. The repentant believer, Abraham, was also given the right to settle wherever he wished in the land of the Philistines (Genesis 20:15). This was a new land opened up to Abraham, a new opportunity for ministry and worship of the true God before a lost people.
3. The sinning companion, Sarah, was saved from some of the shame and embarrassment (Genesis 20:16). The king gave Abraham a thousand pieces of silver as restitution for Sarah. That is, the silver was payment for

whatever harm, embarrassment, shame and fear Sarah suffered through the shameful affair. She, too, was guilty of lying, but not as much as Abraham. Therefore, the king was trying to ease her pain and suffering by showing the high esteem in which he held her.

4. The backslider, Abraham, prayed, and once again God heard him (Genesis 20:17). No doubt, Abraham did what any genuine believer would do: prayed for forgiveness and then asked God to heal Abimelech and his household. Note that God healed them all.

5. The unsaved king was, most likely, saved (Genesis 20:17). Note Genesis 20:7 where God promised to give life to the king if he would return Sarah, and this verse where God heals him (Genesis 20:17). It is most unlikely that God would give the promise of life and heal a person and the promise not include eternal life. Abimelech seems to progressively recognize who God is (Genesis 20:3-7). He certainly believed God and even did more than what God asked him to do (Genesis 20:14-18).

6. The converted king and his household were blessed (Genesis 20:18). They were healed by the miraculous power of God. This is the first healing miracle mentioned in the Bible.

God will do whatever is necessary to save and keep His dear follower, the true believer. Even when the believer caves in to the pressure of the world and its attractions, God will twist, turn, and maneuver to work all things out for good. God will save and deliver the believer from afflictions, pressures, trials, temptations, and sins of this earth.

See Verses: Romans 8:28; 2 Corinthians 4:17, 12:9; Psalms 30:5, 34:19; Isaiah 43:2.

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 20 – Genesis 21
Where it All Began
A Time to Weep,
A Time to Laugh

King Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes 3:4 that "*There is a time to weep, and a time to laugh, a time to mourn, and a time to dance.*" Heaven is a place of unending joy; hell is a place of unending suffering; but while we are here on earth, we must expect both joy and sorrow, laughter and tears. You cannot have hills without valleys. This is especially true of family life, for the same people who bring us joy can also bring us sorrow. Abraham had already been tested in his family by his father, by his nephew Lot, and by his wife.

Here we see conflict between the two sons, Ishmael, and Isaac. At first, Isaac's birth brought joy and laughter. But soon there was conflict as Ishmael constantly persecuted his younger brother. Ishmael was a child of the flesh, while Isaac was a child of promise. There is always conflict between the flesh and the Spirit, the old nature and the new.

God's way, is always the right way. The best way to solve any problem is always His way. Hagar had forgotten God's promise in Genesis 16:10, otherwise she would not have lost heart. God did sustain them and keep His Word. If we obey Him, He will always open the way and solve the problem.

Believers must be careful in the relationship to "*those who are outside.*" Abraham had a good testimony before his unsaved neighbors, and the conflict over the well could have ruined it for good. Note that Abraham agreed to settle the problem in a businesslike way, "*Let all things be done decently and in order.*" Abraham and his neighbors exchanged the proper gifts and made the proper sacrifices for sealing a covenant. The place where the covenant was made was called Beersheba, "*the well of the oath,*" and it became a place of prayer and communion for Abraham. It is important that the tests that we face in the neighborhood or business be settled in a Christian way.

Read Genesis 21:1-7 and Answer the Following Questions:

1. How was the Lord gracious to Sarah, and how did she respond?
2. How is Isaac a type of all Christians? (See John 1:12-13; Galatians 4:21-31)
3. How should we live if we are “free” as Isaac, not a “slave” as Ishmael? (See Galatians 5:1-6, 13-26)
4. How has God been gracious to you?

Read Genesis 21:8-21 and Answer the Following Questions:

5. Why was Sarah upset with Hagar and her son, and what did she tell Abraham to do?
6. How did Abraham respond to Sarah's request?
7. From God's point of view, why was it necessary that Hagar and Ishmael leave Abraham's house?
8. What happened to Hagar and her son?

9. The Apostle Paul later used this story to explain why many Israelites had rejected Jesus and the company of believers. What truth about God and His chosen people do Isaac and Ishmael illustrate? (See Romans 9:6-9)

10. What does Genesis 21:12-21 show us about God's nature?

Read Genesis 21:22-34 and Answer the Following Questions:

11. What did king Abimelech and the commander say to Abraham?

12. Recall what God promised in 15:1 and what Abimelech observes in 21:22. Has God kept His promise? How?

13. What happened between Abraham and Abimelech?

**Promises of God
Genesis 21:1-2**

God keeps His Word, His promises, but God sometimes delays His promises just as He did with Abraham. We often need to grow in our faith:
a. To learn more endurance and hardness. b. To become stronger and more determined. c. To learn to trust and hope more in God. d. To pray and fellowship more with God.

There are a multitude of reasons why God may not immediately fulfill His promises in our lives. But two facts are always true:

1. God is faithful to His promises. God will always do exactly what He promises. He may delay for a while in order to strengthen us or to teach us some lesson. But God is faithful; He will prove Himself and fulfill His promises to us every time.

“God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.” 1 Cor. 1:9

“But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one.” 2 Thess. 3:3

“If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.” 2 Tim. 2:13

“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.” Heb. 10:23

2. God is powerful enough to keep His promises. He has the power to do exactly what He says He will do, that of fulfilling His promises in our lives.

“But Jesus looked at them and said to them, “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.” Matt. 19:26

“For with God nothing will be impossible.” Luke 1:37

“Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began” Rom. 16:25

“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,” Eph. 3:20

“Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.” Gen. 18:14

“I know that You can do everything, and that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You.” Job 42:2

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 21 - Genesis 22:1-24
Where it All Began
The Greatest Test of All

At the age of 75, Abraham enrolled in the "School of Faith." Now he was over 100, and he was still having soul-stretching experiences. We are never too old to face new challenges, fight new battles, and learn new truths.

Genesis 22 records the greatest test that Abraham ever faced. True, it also presents a beautiful picture of our Lord's sacrifice at Calvary; but the main lesson is obedient faith that overcomes in the trials of life. Abraham teaches us how to face and handle the tests of life to the glory of God.

True faith is always tested. Isaac was dear to Abraham, and God wanted to be sure that Isaac was not an idol standing between Him and Abraham. How did Abraham go through this test? For one thing, he rested on God's promises. God had promised Abraham many descendants, and this promise could not be fulfilled unless Isaac lived or God raised him from the dead. Abraham knew that God would not lie, so he rested in His unchanging Word. If we do the one thing God tells us to do, He will reveal the next step when the right time comes. I've heard it said: God is seldom early, but never late. God's answers never arrive a minute too late! God supplied a ram just when one was needed.

This event in Genesis 22:2 took place on Mt. Moriah. Isaac had asked, "*Where is the lamb?*" but God had supplied a ram. The answer to his question came in the Person of Christ: "*Behold! The Lamb of God!*" Abraham had said, "*In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen,*" Christ was seen in the temple, and then slain on Mt. Calvary.

James 2:14-26 discusses the relationship between faith and works, and James uses this event to illustrate his main point: true faith is always proved by obedience. Abraham was not saved when he offered Isaac, for he had been saved years before when he trusted God's promise. James is not telling us that we are saved by works or by sacrifices, but that the proof of saving faith is an obedient life.

Read Gen. 22:1-8 Pray and Answer the Following Questions:

1. God commanded Abram to sacrifice his son. How did Abram respond to God's command?
2. How do you think Abram felt when God told him to offer his son as a sacrifice?
3. What does Abram's willingness to sacrifice his son reveal about his commitment to God?
4. Why would God ask Abram to perform such a sacrifice?
5. What is revealed about Isaac by this event?

Read Gen. 22:9-14 Pray and Answer the Following Questions:

6. What four things did Abraham do in preparation to offer his son as a sacrifice?

7. Isaac was old enough to resist his father's attempt to bind him, but the record says nothing of resistance (22:9). What convictions and qualities might lead a young man to allow his father to sacrifice him?

8. How did Jesus show a similar attitude? (See Mark 14:36; Luke 23:46)

9. How is this an example for us today?

10. God provided a ram in place of Isaac. How is Jesus like that ram? (See John 1:13-14, 29; 11:49-52).

Read Gen. 22:15-24 Pray and Answer the Following Questions:

11. According to James 2:20-24, what is one lesson we should draw from Abraham's experience?

12. How is Jesus like Isaac in this story? (See Gen. 22:2-9; Mark 1:11, 14:36)

13. How is Abraham like God? (See Gen. 22:2; John 3:16)

“Testing” Genesis 22:1-24

"In the 'School of Faith' we must have occasional tests, or we will never know where we are spiritually. Abraham had his share of tests right from the beginning. First was the **“family test”** when he had to leave his loved ones and step out by faith to go to a new land (Genesis 11:27-12:5). This was followed by the **“famine test”** which Abraham failed because he doubted God and went down to Egypt for help (Genesis 12:10-13:4).

Once back in the land, Abraham passed the **“fellowship test”** when he gave Lot first choice in using the pastureland (Genesis 13:5-18). He also passed the **“fight test”** when he defeated the kings (Genesis 14:1-16) and the **“fortune test”** when he said no to Sodom's wealth (Genesis 14:17-24). But he failed the **“fatherhood test”** when Sarah got impatient with God and suggested that Abraham have a child by Hagar (Genesis 16). When the time came to send Ishmael away, Abraham passed the **“farewell test”** even though it broke his heart (Genesis 21:14-21).

Not every difficult experience in life is necessarily a personal test from God. Sometimes our own disobedience causes the pain or disappointment, as when Abraham went to Egypt (Genesis 12:10). Sometimes our hurts are simply a part of normal human life. As we grow older, friends and loved ones relocate or even die, life changes around us, and we must make painful adjustments. "Learn to distinguish between trials and temptations." Temptations come from our desires within us, while trials come from the Lord who has a special purpose to fulfill. Temptations are used by Satan to bring out the worst in us, but trials are used by the Holy Spirit to bring out the best in us. Temptations seem logical while trials seem very unreasonable. Why would God give Abraham a son and then ask Abraham to kill him?

God's testing's are tailor-made for each child of God, and each experience is unique. God never asked Lot to face the tests that Abraham faced. Why? Because Lot was being tempted by the world and the flesh and never grew to the place of maturity that Abraham reached. God never sends a test until He knows you are ready for it. Expect trials from God, because the Christian life is not easy.

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 22 – Genesis 23:1-20; 25:1-11
Where it All Began
A Time to Die

We are now at the end of Sarah's and Abraham's life journey on this planet and we are not surprised to see them die. Now God does not simply record their death, but gives us additional information about the events surrounding their deaths and interesting, encouraging, and comforting insights about death, burial, grieving and hope.

It seems that the Lord wants us to know that we can receive comfort in the fact that we who are believers are going to heaven to be with Jesus. And at the rapture, those who are alive and remain will meet their previously passed away loved ones in a great big reunion in the air! What a glorious day that will be for all of us! We can be comforted by this knowledge and it is good to be reminded of this truth. As God told us, "*We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.*" (2 Cor. 5:8) What a GREAT PROMISE! There is a certainty about where every believer is going.

Our passages this week focus on the survivor, the ones that remain and how it affects them, what they do and how they deal with the sudden loss in their lives. I believe we can see some things in these two sections of Scripture that will give us some insight into how Abraham and Isaac dealt with their losses, and some ideas for us to consider and pray about when these same things occur in our lives.

In most marriages, one of the spouses dies first and the one remaining must face this situation that Abraham faced. For most people, their parents will precede them to death, and they will need to deal with the things Isaac dealt with, along with his estranged half-brother Ishmael. Let's ask the Lord to show us His heart in these things, as well as to instruct us, guide us, give us ideas to consider in prayer. Also, to allow His Holy Spirit to comfort us and remind us that He is with us through all these things, and one day, we will be reunited with our loved ones in heaven as we all rejoice in Eternal Life.

Read Gen. 23:1-2 Pray and Answer the Following Questions:

1. How old was Sarah when she died? (It is interesting to note she is the only woman in the whole Bible whose age at death is given)
2. In verse 2 do you think Abraham was with her when she died or not? Why or why not?
3. What was Abraham's emotional reaction to Sarah's death?

Read Gen. 23:3-20 Pray and Answer the Following Questions:

4. What significance is it that Abraham chose to bury his wife in Canaan and not the land they came from?
5. Without getting lost in the lengthy dialogue about purchasing a piece of land, what characteristics of this godly man Abraham do you see through this situation?
6. Did Abraham have a good reputation "with those outside" as we are supposed to? What evidence do you have for your conclusion?

Read Gen. 25:1-6 Pray and Answer the Following Questions:

7. Why do you suppose Abraham remarried after Sarah died?

8. What did Abraham do in chapter 24 before we read of his remarriage?

9. Who received Abraham's inheritance? What about his other sons?

Read Gen. 25:7-11 Pray and Answer the Following Questions:

10. How old was Abraham when he died? Who buried him and where? (See Gen. 25:7-10)

11. What do you suppose it means, "*and was gathered to his people?*"

12. Sometimes the death of a parent allows for a time of reconciliation of estranged siblings. Is there evidence of that taking place in this story?

13. Now who is the sole surviving ancestor of Jesus? What evidence do you see of God's special care for him?

Sarah's Death

Genesis 23:1-20

The Hittite empire in Asia Minor was as great as Egypt or Babylonia in Abraham's day. At the time, the Hittites has apparently took control of Canaan from Egypt, (Canaan has been a disputed area throughout its history).

Genesis 23 reflects many Hittite laws and customs. Legal business was conducted at the city gate (23:10, 18). People preferred an alien (23:4) to remain landless and dependent on local good will. The Hittites flattered Abraham as a "mighty prince" (23:6) and tried to give him a tomb that they would continue to own (23:6). Abraham's strategy was to appeal to one individual's profit motive. However, he wanted to just buy the cave and just part of the field (23:7-9) because if he bought the whole field, Hittite law would require him to pay taxes and social obligations to the local king.

Unfortunately, Ephron knew he had the upper hand. He pretended to be generous (23:10-15), but in fact four hundred shekels was several times the going rate for the field. He also made Abraham buy the whole tract and so take over the outdated duties.

Why all this detail about the purchase of Sarah's tomb? First, of all the land God granted Abraham in the royal covenant of 15:9-21, Abraham actually took title to only this one field, and he paid dearly for even this. Still, the site was going to be an important memorial for the Israelites invading Canaan after Moses' death.

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 23 - Genesis 24
Where it all Began
A Bride for Isaac

“God had promised Abraham that, *“I will make you a great nation.”* Even though there was a previous son, Ishmael through Hagar the Egyptian slave girl, he was not to be part of the promised line. So we have Isaac, he is of age to become a father and have children, but there is a problem, he has no wife. Now how do you suppose God wants to do this? This story is a fantastic example of the way that God provides a wife for a man, and from the woman's point of view, the way God selects just the right man and brings her to him.

Marriages were arranged in those days, just as they still are in many parts of the world today. Parents get involved with the selection process and whole families interact and discuss the possible marriage to see if this seems to be a good fit. What a contrast to the way it often happens today in Western cultures! Interesting, that the divorce rate was almost nonexistent in those places where marriages were arranged. There is something to be said for all the relatives on both sides agreeing and assisting the young couple. There are some things we can learn from such an arranged situation.

Also, this is an amazing story of faith. The faith Abraham had in his servant to do the right thing, as well of the faith of Isaac that this was going to be the one, and for Rebekah as she left her family to go with a perfect stranger to become the wife of a man she had never met. There is enough faith shown by many people in this story to give us inspiration to step out by faith in whatever the Lord is calling us to do.

Lastly, there is a huge message of the faithfulness of God. God comes through with a bride for Isaac and the Messianic line continues, and there is a continuation of descendants after Abraham so God could fulfill His promise to make a great nation of Abraham. Our God is faithful. *“He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.”*

Read Gen. 24:1-9 Pray and Answer the Following Questions

1. What did Abraham ask the oldest servant in his house to do?
2. Was the servant willing to do this? How do you know?
3. What was the servant's concern in obeying his master Abraham?
4. Would Abraham allow him to pick any woman he wanted for Isaac and what was his reasoning?

Read Gen. 24:10-28 Pray and Answer the Following Questions:

5. How long do you suppose Eliezer (Abraham's servant) waited before he obeyed his master Abraham? What evidence do you see that Eliezer trusted God?
6. What was Rebekah's response to Eliezer's request? What evidence do you see that Rebekah was enthusiastic about all these things?

Read Gen. 24:29-61 Pray and Answer the Following Questions:

7. Was Laban hospitable to Eliezer? What evidence do you see in the passage?

8. Do you see evidence that Eliezer is excited to carry out to full completion the command Abraham gave him?

9. Summarize below what Eliezer relates to Laban. Who was listening also as Eliezer was relating the story to Laban and what is his relationship to Abraham.

Read Gen. 24:62-67 Pray and Answer the Following Questions:

10. What was Isaac doing when Eliezer shows up with his wife?

11. What was Rebekah doing while she awaited a husband?

12. What evidence do you have that Isaac accepted Rebekah and that she was indeed a crown to her husband?

Praying for Success

Genesis 24:12

How many young people have prayed a prayer similar to that of Abraham's servant, for the Lord to give them success in finding the right spouse? (Gen. 24:12) In fact, from finding a partner to finding a job, from building a business to building a life, people frequently pray for God to bless their efforts with success. Is that prayer legitimate for God's people in today's world?

In a success driven society, people of faith often struggle with the place and pursuit of success. Some believe that material success by its nature represents a compromise of spiritual convictions. Others, however, feel that success is actually a sign that God is pleased with them. Still others say that they are not interested in success, yet their claim seems to be an excuse for poor performance in the marketplace. What does success mean for people who want to honor God in their lives?

There are no simple answers to these questions. The issue with success is complex and charged with emotion. But perhaps the following three observations will prove helpful as you devote thoughtful consideration and public discussion to the subject:

1. Success always implies striving to meet some set of standards established by some person or group.
2. The pursuit of success is always a personal choice. No one can make someone else pursue success.
3. Obtaining success always exacts a cost, it takes our time, ability, and resources. In light of these principles, ask yourself these three questions as you pursue or refrain from pursuing success: Who is determining what success means for me? What am I choosing by my pursuit of success? What price am I willing to pay to achieve success?

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 24 - Genesis 25:12-34 & Genesis 26:1-35
Where it All Began
Like Father, Like Son "Almost"

Chapter 25:12-34

Up to this point in our study of Genesis, chapters 12 through 24 have revealed a lot of wonderful facts and details about the person of Abraham. Beginning with chapters 25 through 50 the bible is going to focus on the lives of Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, the descendants of Abraham. But before looking into the lives and background of these men, chapter 25 will show us some interesting facts regarding Abraham's son Ishmael.

The fulfillment of God's covenant promise demanded that Isaac and Rebekah have a son, yet for the first twenty years of their married life, she was barren. The struggle of the unborn children perplexed Rebekah, so she asked God for wisdom. His choice was not based on the deeds of the boys, for they were unborn and had done neither good nor evil. As far as character is concerned, Esau was the more acceptable of the two, yet Jacob was the one chosen by God. The twin boys were opposite each other in appearance and temperament. The first boy was hairy and was named "Esau" (hairy). Jacob's laying hold of Esau's heel (as though to catch him and trip him) gave him the name "Jacob," the "heel-gripper." Jacob was a quiet man who stayed at home; Esau was a man of the world, full of vigor and adventure. He would rather feed his body than enjoy the promises of God.

Chapter 26

Isaac now started toward Egypt, but God in His grace interrupted the trip and stopped him. Human nature does not improve from generation to generation. Isaac dwelt at Gerar which is on the borderline. Likewise, we have many "borderline Christians" today. Isaac had material blessings there, but not the spiritual blessings God gave him later when he left that place. As long as he was away from Canaan, Isaac would have conflict, but when he went back to Beersheba "the well of the oath" or "well of se, God met him and gave him peace with the enemy.

Read Genesis 25:12-24 Pray and Answer the Following Questions:

1. How many sons did Ishmael have? According with verse 16, what became of the sons of Ishmael?
2. What interesting fact about Ishmael's sons and the tribes they led do we learn from verse 18?
3. Our passage tells us that Rebekah was barren. What did Isaac do when faced with his wife's condition? In contrast, what did Abraham do when Sarah was barren?
4. Do you think Isaac's own birth experience strengthened his belief in God for the impossible? Have you experienced events from God that now have strengthened your faith as you are facing difficult times? Share your thoughts.
5. God answered Isaac's prayer and Rebekah conceived. Why did she have some trouble or discomfort in her pregnancy? (See Gen. 26:22-23)

Read Genesis 25:25-34 Pray and Answer the Following Questions:

6. Our text reveals some important differences between Esau and Jacob. Examine the passage and record the differences between these twin brothers.

7. Why do you think Jacob was interested in the birthright of the first-born son?

8. According to verse 32 & 34, what was Esau's attitude towards spiritual things? Esau was preoccupied with the cares of today and how to satisfy his flesh. What was Jacob's focus even though he was not totally walking right with God?

Read Genesis 26:1-11 Pray and Answer the Following Questions:

9. What common events can we find between Abraham and his son Isaac in Gen. 12:10-20 and Gen. 26:1-11?

10. Proverbs 29:25 says "*The fear of man brings a snare: but whoever puts his trust in the LORD shall be safe.*" Isaac reacted to the fear of man in the same manner his father reacted many years before. How important do you think our example and behavior is today in the lives of our children or those close to us?

Read Genesis 26:12-35 Pray and Answer the Following Questions:

11. God prospered Isaac in many ways that caused the Philistines to envy him. Describe the problems Isaac had with them as a result. How did he deal with it? (See Gen. 26:15-22)

12. Life is not easy. We face daily struggles and blessings. Our struggles today are the preparation for other events in our future. In verses 18-21 what did Isaac's servants do in the valley even in the midst of contention and strife? What should we do when we find ourselves in a spiritual valley?

13. Where did Isaac move next? Describe how Isaac and Abimelech made peace. (See Gen. 26:26-31)

Birthrights Genesis 25:31

When Jacob asked Esau to sell his birthright, he was looking to obtain a position that had both legal and spiritual benefits. In Bible times, the firstborn son enjoyed a favored position which was his by right of birth. He was privileged to inherit a double portion of his father's assets and could expect to receive a special blessing before the father died. After his father's death, a firstborn son became the head of the family, carrying on the family name and even acting as the family priest.

The inheritance rights of the firstborn were protected by law. A father could not give his benefits to a younger son. However, the firstborn himself could lose, forfeit or sell his birthright. Jacob's son Reuben lost his favored position because he committed incest with his father's concubine. Likewise, Esau sold his birthright for a stew of lentils or "one morsel of food." In doing so, Esau committed a grave sin. It was bad enough to squander his inheritance for a single meal. Far worse, he was throwing away the blessing of God, who he knew had promised to make a great nation of Abraham.

In this way, Esau serves as an example to believers today to hold on to what God has promised. Nothing is more important.

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 25 – Genesis 27-28
Where it All Began
“A Masterpiece in Pieces”

Chapter 27

Our story picks up when Isaac was about 137 years old, yet he acted as though he would die very soon. Actually, he lived to be 180. His impatience to give Esau the blessing suggests that he was following his own carnal plans, not God's will. Rebekah had been told by God that Jacob would receive God's blessing. Instead of going to God in prayer as she had years before, she depended on her own plans, a practice that would be characteristic of Jacob in later years. Certainly, Jacob knew God's promise for his life, yet he listened to his mother instead of to God. Rebekah must have been a good cook to be able to make goat's meat taste like venison.

Hebrews 12:17 indicates that Esau sought the blessing with tears, yet found no place for real repentance for his sins. Remorse, yes, but not sincere repentance. He was sorry for what he had lost, not sorry for what he had done. In vs. 33, Isaac trembled when he realized that God had overruled his plans. Esau retaliated by plotting to murder his brother. The grace of God did not fail, but Esau failed the grace of God.

Chapter 28

We can accurately say that the rest of Genesis presents the life of Jacob. It is wonderful when a son can leave home with his father's blessing. He had to meet God and make some decisions of his own. Unfortunately, it took more than twenty years for Jacob to come to a place of real surrender.

Jacob is an illustration of the conflict between the two natures, for he was always battling the flesh and trying to depend on his own abilities and plans. Though in the hard years ahead Jacob had to reap the consequences of his sins, God was still with him to protect him and bless him. How good to know that God watches over His disobedient children.

Read Gen. 27:1-46 Pray and Answer the Following Questions:

1. According with verses 1-4, what kind of relationship might Isaac had with his son Esau? What kind of activity might have Isaac enjoyed partaking with Esau?

2. Isaac insisted on giving the blessing to Esau, the one who despised his birthright, and who had married pagan wives. It seems Isaac plainly operated in the flesh here. What do you think might have influenced him to want to give the blessing to Esau instead of Jacob whom God had chosen?

3. Describe Rebekah's plot? (See Gen. 27:5-10)

4. Describe Jacob's objection and Rebekah's response (See Gen. 27:11-13). What further arrangements did Rebekah make and what questions did Isaac ask of Jacob? (See Gen. 27:15-25).

5. Although God has already told her that Jacob would become the family leader (Gen. 25:23-26), Rebekah took matters into her own hands. She resorted to doing something wrong to try to bring about what God said would happen. In the process, she influenced her son Jacob to lie and even to include God in his deceit. Jacob probably used the promise and calling of God as an excuse for sin; he justified it to himself by saying his sinful conduct was fulfilling the promise of God. Do Christians behave like Jacob today? How?

6. In verse 33 we are told that after discovering it was Jacob who had received the blessing that Isaac trembled exceedingly. Why do you think Isaac was troubled?

7. In verses 38-46 we are told that Esau was angry with Jacob and wanted to kill him after the death of their father Isaac. What was Rebekah's plan for Jacob to flee?

Read Gen. 28:1-22 Pray and Answer the Following Questions:

8. What blessing did Isaac pronounce on Jacob? What effect did this have on Esau, and what did he do about it?

9. Not having truly repented, what did Esau do in verses 8-9 without thinking about the consequences of his choice to find favor with his parents? What does Esau's actions indicate happens to those who do not truly repent from their sins and turn from their old ways?

10. Describe Jacob's dream (See Gen. 28:12-15).

11. What promise did God make to Jacob? Why is this important?

12. What vow did Jacob make? What is a vow?

Bethel - Sacred Space

Genesis 28:22

Perhaps for most people, Bethel sounds like a quaint spot on a faded map of biblical history. Yet the site connected with “Jacob’s ladder” offers an important lesson for today’s believers, especially those who live in urban settings: it teaches us about something called sacred space.

Whenever God touches the world, the place becomes a sacred place. That was the experience of Jacob. Waking from a dream in which he saw and heard the Lord, he cried, “*Surely the Lord is in this place*” (Gen. 28:16). He immediately built an altar and changed the name of the spot from Luz to Bethel, “House of God.” It was sacred because God had been there. Likewise, Abraham had previously build an altar near Bethel to remember that God was also very present to him there.

The Old Testament concept of sacred space takes on even greater meaning in the New Testament. There we read that God Himself “*became flesh and dwelt among us,*” literally, “*pitched His tent*” among us. In other words, He not only touched the earth, He came to live on it for a while in the person of Jesus.

Jesus alluded to this Bethel-like visitation as He spoke with Nathanael, a man whom He recruited as one of His followers. Just as Jacob had seen angels ascending and descending on a ladder between heaven and earth, so Nathanael would see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man. In a way of speaking, Bethel, the “House of God” had now become Jesus, the Son of God. Jesus was more than a sacred space, He was the Sacred Person.

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 26 – Genesis 29-31
Where it All Began
“Disciplines and Decisions”

From the spiritual mountaintop of Bethel, Jacob descended into everyday life at Haran, and here he “met his match” in scheming Laban, his uncle. Jacob spent about 20 years with Laban. During this time he reaped the sad consequences of his own sins, but, at the same time, God was disciplining him and preparing him for future service.

God now directs Jacob to the house of Laban, but note that Jacob did not pause to pray, as did Abraham's servant when he was on his important errand. Jacob encouraged the other shepherds to go back to the pastures because he wanted to greet Rachel in private. He was still the schemer. This account covers fourteen years in Jacob's life that were full of toil, trial, and testing. God used Laban and the difficult circumstances of life to discipline Jacob and prepare him for the tasks that lay ahead. Jacob had served for fourteen years, and he realized that he must strike out on his own and provide for his large family. He asked Laban to send him away; however, the crafty Syrian was not about to lose so valuable a son-in-law. Jacob had worked fourteen years for his two wives; now he could work for the cattle he would need in order to get established on his own.

But the schemer went to work. Instead of trusting God to meet the need, Jacob used his own plan. The special rods and sticks at the troughs probably did not influence the sheep; it was God who determined what kind of sheep and goats would be conceived. However, Jacob did use “selective breeding” so that only the stronger cattle conceived. We learn from 31:7-8 that Laban changed the terms of the contract several times as he saw Jacob's flocks increasing, but God overruled Laban and made Jacob a wealthy man.

God had reminded Jacob of his Bethel vow. The backslider now had to return and fulfill his promises to the Lord who had blessed him. Rachel and Leah agreed to go, but their decision was based on material considerations, not the will of the Lord. Jacob's twenty years of servitude were over, but he needed still to go back to Bethel and make things right with God.

Read Gen. 29:1-35 Pray and Answer the Following Questions:

1. Abraham's faithful servant Eliezer had found a wife for Isaac as he was led by the foresight of God, but Jacob had to find his own wife. What does this fact reveal about the will of God for each individual believer? What does the following scripture reveal about the will and foresight of God in our lives?
Philippians 2:13

2. God's foresight had brought Jacob to the well just as Rachel was arriving. True to his scheming nature what did Jacob try to do with the shepherds in verses 4-8 so he could have Rachel all to himself?

3. How did Jacob decide to pay for his engagement to Rachel? What seemed to make Jacob's time at work easier and lighter for the first seven years?

4. In hindsight, we can see that working for Laban for a minimum of seven years was not the most exciting thing for Jacob, let alone working for a total of fourteen years. No doubt this was a trying time for Jacob. Based on our text, what important things did Jacob learn from his fourteen-year experience? What attributes did Jacob exhibit that are part of what defines love in 1 Cor. 13?

5. When the wedding occurred, how did Laban deceive Jacob? How did Laban explain his conduct? Was this a good answer? (See 29:21-27)

Read Gen. 30:1-43 Pray and Answer the Following Questions:

6. Despite Rachel's great beauty, she also was near despair. No doubt, Leah often said, "If I only had my sister's beauty and the love of my husband as she does." And, no doubt, Rachel often said, "If I only had sons like my sister." Beautiful or plain, we all have our problems. By this time Leah had four children by Jacob and Rachel had none. Today God deals differently with each individual. What do you think Rachel should have done instead of focusing on what her sister had?

7. Rachel had given Bilhah her maidservant as a surrogate-mother arrangement to Jacob and she became pregnant and bore Jacob a son named Dan. According with verse 6, Rachel had asked the Lord for a son. How did the Lord answer her request? Compare the manner in which God answered her prayer in verse 6 with verses 22-24.

8. Many years had passed and Jacob's family and fortune became great. At the same time Laban became very prosperous. What did Laban attribute his success to in verses 27-30? Do you think that our employers benefit from the Lord as the result of us believers?

Read Gen. 31:1-55 Pray and Answer the Following Questions:

9. Jacob was aware of God's presence in his life. Jacob could see daily how the Lord was blessing and protecting him. What were some things Jacob noticed that he attributed to God's hand in his life? Gen. 31:3-13

10. The passage tells us that Rachel was not happy with her father Laban. Verse 19 says that Rachel stole her father's household gods. We know from the scriptures that Laban practiced fortune telling and probably used these idols to do so. What might have been the reasons why Rachel took her father's idols?

11. When did Laban learn that Jacob had left? What did he do? What did he say he would have done, had he known they were leaving? (See Gen. 31:22-28)

12. Summarize Jacob's speech in 31:36-42

13. What proposal did Laban make, and what happened as a result? What was the significance of the stones? What names were they given? (See Gen. 31:43-55)

14. What can we learn from this story?

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 27 - Genesis 32-34
Where it All Began
“Jacob Meets Esau”

These three chapters record several crucial experiences in Jacob's life as he made his way from Laban's house to Bethel.

Chapter 32

Esau was coming and Jacob was about to meet up with his forgotten past. Would Esau forgive him or fight him? Would Jacob lose everything he had schemed to acquire? How tragic it is when the past catches up with sinners. Geography could not erase Jacob's past nor could twenty years of history change it. But before Jacob met Esau, he experienced three other meetings: **1. He met God's angels.** He had first seen these angels at Bethel, and they should have been a reminder to Jacob that God was in control. He named the place “the two camps” (his own camp and the camp or army of angels), but he failed to put his faith in God who had promised years before to protect him. **2. He met the Lord.** It is when we get alone with God that good things begin to happen. Christ came to wrestle with Jacob, and the struggle lasted all night. Keep in mind that Jacob was not wrestling to get a blessing from God; rather, he was defending himself and refusing to yield. Now instead of scheming for a blessing or bargaining for a blessing, he asked God for the blessing and he received it. **3. He met himself.** We don't truly see ourselves until first we see the Lord. “*What is your name?*” was the question that forced Jacob to confess his true self. Once he faced himself and confessed his sin, Jacob could be changed. God gave him a new name, from “Jacob the schemer” to “Israel, a God-governed man.”

Chapter 33-34

It would have been wonderful had Jacob lived up to his new name and new position with God, but he did not. The chapter begins with “Jacob” the old name, not “Israel” the new name, and we see him “lifting up his eyes,” walking by sight, not by faith. Jacob's blessings are lost, because he did not claim his spiritual privileges.

When did all of this begin? When Jacob failed to live up to his new standing with God. Old habits may be hard to throw off, but we must put off the old man and put on the new man in Christ. Put off the grave clothes, and put on the Grace clothes.

Read Genesis 32:1-21 Pray and Answer the Following Questions:

1. Did Jacob have any past experiences that might have given him confidence when his meeting with Esau grew near?
2. Did God do anything to reassure Jacob that He would take care of and protect him? What did Jacob do?
3. Did his behavior show trust in God, or trust in his own ability to “work things out”?
4. How do you respond to an uncertain and threatening (and possibly dangerous) future?

Read Genesis 32:22-32 Pray and Answer the Following Questions:

5. Who was the “Man” with whom Jacob wrestled? Was the “Man” able to defeat Jacob? Why or why not?
6. In verse 26 Jacob says, *“I will not let You go unless You bless me!”* In light of Hosea 12:4 do you think it was a demand, or perhaps a desperate plea for mercy?

7. How did the “Man” respond? That is, He was looking for a certain thing from Jacob. What was it?

8. What did the “Man” do once Jacob dropped all his acting and openly admitted who and what he was?

Read Genesis 33-34 Pray and Answer the Following Questions:

9. Jacob finally meets Esau face-to-face. What conclusions can be reached and what lessons learned?

10. Think of a time when you feared the worst. Was God there to help?

11. Moving on to Chapter 34, do you think that Jacob’s son’s actions resulted from Jacob’s inaction?

12. When Jacob confronts his sons, is it on the basis of “right and wrong” or merely fear of the reaction of the surrounding people?

13. It seems Jacob's actions are more of a reaction to what others had already done. How might Jacob have handled the whole situation differently?

Genesis 32:27-29

Jacob's New Name "Israel"

What's in a name? Jacob must have felt a sense of shame, admitting his name was "Jacob," meaning "con-man, sneaky, cheater." Yet, this was who he was, and Jacob had to admit to it. We all want to name ourselves favorably. We say, "I am firm; you are obstinate; they are stubborn fools." God wouldn't allow Jacob to cover up his name.

You should no longer be called Jacob: The name Israel is a compound of two words: Sarah (meaning, "fight," "struggle," or "rule") and el (meaning, "God"). Some take the name Israel to mean, "He who struggles with God" or "He who rules with God." But in Hebrew names, sometimes God is not the object of the verb but the subject. Daniel means "God judges" not "he judges God." So, this principle shows us Israel means, "**God rules.**" From this point on, he will be called Jacob twice as often as he is called Israel. Apparently, there was still plenty of the "old man" left in Jacob.

For you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed: Jacob prevailed in the sense that he endured through his struggle until God thoroughly conquered him. When you battle with God, you only win by losing and by not giving up until you know you have lost. This is how Jacob prevailed.

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 28 – Genesis 35-36
Where it All Began
“You Can Go Home Again”

Here we see Jacob once again “acting like Jacob” instead of living up to his new name that had been given to him by God, Israel. Remember that on the night he wrestled with God he had been told to go to Bethel. So, what is he doing in Shechem ten years later? It seems that he had found a comfortable place to live and stayed there. In short, he was backslidden. But now with the events recorded in Genesis 34 Shechem was no longer a comfortable place to stay. Jacob was no doubt trying to figure out his next move in what had become a dangerous situation, falling back on his old habits.

God chooses to interrupt Jacob at this point. He does this by calling him back to the place he had first been told to go when he returned to the land of Canaan. He must return to Bethel where he had his first personal encounter with God. Just like now, when Jacob had his first encounter with God at Bethel, he was running for his life. Then, it had been from Esau, now he was preparing to flee from the area of Shechem to avoid the vengeance of the surrounding people after the slaughter carried out by Simeon and Levi.

Jacob prepared for his return by purging his family of the wrong things he had been allowing to continue during the time in Shechem. They buried the idols and changed their garments. Notice that God protected Jacob from any attacks by the surrounding people just as he had protected him from Laban's attack earlier. While at Bethel, God once again restates that Jacob will “no longer” be called Jacob but rather Israel, “Governed by God.” The Lord also reminded him of His promises concerning the land and his descendants. During this time, Deborah, Rachel and Isaac die and are buried. Benjamin is also born.

Chapter 36 details the rapid growth of Esau's family and descendants. It's worth noting that early on, Esau's family and wealth were apparently greater than Jacob's although in the end, Jacob was the greater and through him came Jesus the Messiah, King of kings and Lord of lords.

Read Genesis 35:1-8 Pray and Answer the Following Questions:

1. Why was God once again calling “Israel” “Jacob”?
2. What danger did Jacob face that made it necessary to leave Shechem? What did God direct Jacob to do?
3. Was Jacob safe during his journey through dangerous and hostile territory? Why?
4. What does this show you about how God might deal with you when you have been “drifting” or disobedient in your walk with Jesus?

Read Genesis 35:9-15 Pray and Answer the Following Questions:

5. What did God call Jacob when He appeared to him at Bethel?
6. Why did God use the name God Almighty before commanding Jacob?

7. What did God tell Jacob to do when he appeared to him at Bethel?

8. What did God promise to Jacob at Bethel? How did Jacob respond to the things that God had said to him?

Read Genesis 35:16-36:43 Pray and Answer the Following Questions:

9. What is the significance of Jacob changing his youngest son's name from Ben-Oni (Son of My Sorrow) to Benjamin (Son of the Right Hand)?

10. What contributed to Rueben's behavior toward his father's concubine? What was the result in Rueben's life? (See Genesis 49:4)

11. At the end of Chapter 35, we see Isaac's two son's together to bury their father. But in 36:6 they parted company and Esau's descendants end up being the enemies of Israel. In addition to material wealth, what other reasons may have contributed to their separation?

12. The descendants of Esau were the Edomites who were later called Idumeans. What Idumean King tried to destroy Jesus? What other nations descended from Esau, later became enemies of Israel?

13. Jacob lived almost to the end of Genesis, and God continued to shape him. What have you learned from his example about how a disciple grows? What is one lesson from Jacob's life that you could apply to your own walk with the Lord?

Interesting Facts about Jacob

- Jacob's grandfather was Abraham, who was known as the "Father of the faithful"
- Jacob and his twin Esau were complete opposites of one another. Esau was comfortable in the outdoors hunting, Jacob was content to stay home. Even in appearance, the two young men were different: Esau was brawny with a thick covering of red hair, where Jacob was smooth skinned.
- Though Jacob was a trickster, God did bless him throughout his life. While Jacob was traveling towards Haran, he laid down to sleep in the desert and dreamt of a staircase that extended up to heaven, on which the angels ascended and descended. God appeared to Jacob as he slept and blessed him and his descendants. This particular story in the Bible is referred to as Jacob's Ladder.
- Jacob was a victim of deceit himself. Firstly, after 7 years of service, Jacob's uncle Laban tricked him into marrying his eldest daughter Leah. Laban then made Jacob work a further 7 years before he could marry his youngest daughter Rachel, who had been Jacob's first choice of the bride. Laban also attempted to cheat Jacob out of his wages.
- Jacob is the patriarch of the 12 tribes of Israel.

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 29 – Genesis 37
Where it All Began
Enter the Hero

We now begin a study of one of the most exciting accounts in the Bible, that of Joseph and his brothers. While Joseph had his faults, he still stands out as a spiritual giant in his own family.

Rachel was Jacob's favorite wife, and Joseph was her firstborn son. It is easy to see why Jacob favored him in his old age. This kind of partiality in a home is bound to cause trouble. Joseph at seventeen was helping with the sheep, but soon Jacob relieved him of that duty and made him an "overseer" by giving him a "tailored coat." Jacob wanted to make Joseph a ruler before he had really learned how to be a servant! This resulted in Joseph's brothers hating and envying him.

There is no question that Joseph's dreams came from God. His first dream had an earthly setting, while the second dream was set in heaven. This suggests Abraham's earthly children (the Jews) and his heavenly seed (the church). Joseph's brothers did one day bow down to him.

We are not told which of the brothers first suggested doing away with Joseph. Possibly it was Simeon. We know from chapter 34 that Simeon was crafty and cruel, and in 42:24, Joseph was rather harsh on Simeon. At any rate, the brothers were back in the region of Shechem (where they had gotten into trouble before), and they plotted to slay Joseph. It is to Reuben's credit that he tried to spare Joseph's life, although he used the wrong method to accomplish a noble deed. God overruled the hatred of the men, and Joseph was sold into slavery instead of slain in cold blood.

Years before, Jacob had slain a kid goat to deceive his father, and now his sons deceived him the same way. We reap what we sow. Jacob spent the next twenty-two years in sorrow, thinking that Joseph was dead. He thought that everything was working against him, when in reality everything was working for him. God had sent Joseph ahead to prepare the way for Israel's preservation as a nation.

Read Gen. 37:1-11 Pray and Answer the Following Questions:

1. How would you describe the family relationships at the beginning of this story?
2. What kind of boy does Joseph seem to be? How did Joseph's family treat him?
3. What kind of dreams did Joseph have, and how did his brothers respond when he told them about them?
4. In verses 5-11 how are the symbols in Joseph's two dreams interpreted by his family?

Read Gen. 37:12-28 Pray and Answer the Following Questions:

5. What did Jacob ask Joseph to do?
6. What are the varied reactions of Joseph's brothers when they see him coming?

7. How does Joseph's brother's hatred of him strike you? Does it seem excessive? How could it be strong enough to make them want to kill him?

8. What did Reuben do, and what did he intend to do? What did Joseph's other brothers do to him?

Read Gen. 37:29-36 Pray and Answer the Following Questions:

9. What did Reuben do when he found out what his brothers had done to Joseph?

10. What did Joseph's brothers do, and what did they tell their father? How did Jacob respond to the news about Joseph?

11. What conclusion did Jacob reach, and how did he react? Where did Joseph end up?

You Can't Stop God's Plans

Genesis 37:18-20

As humans with free will, we can resist God's will and rebel against His ways. But ultimately, we can never stop His plans or purposes. In the end, His will shall be done, as Joseph's brothers found out. The family bitterly resented the implications of Joseph's dreams that they would somehow end up serving him. So, when his brothers noticed him coming out to them, alone and unarmed, they plotted to do away with him. Actually, it was an attempt to stop God's plan, even though they didn't realize it.

Imagine if his brothers had succeeded in disposing of Joseph. Years later, when famine threatened the family, they would have had no inside help in Egypt, and might well have starved, along with countless others. To be sure, God could have appointed other means to preserve the family and continue His covenant promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But Joseph's dreams had revealed God's plan. Therefore, they had to be fulfilled. God's will had to be done. The point is that the brothers, in their anger and bitterness toward Joseph, were actually resisting the will of God. Fortunately, He intervened to stop their plans and accomplish His own, ironically, to their very benefit!

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 30 – Genesis 38:1-30
Where it All Began
Judah & Tamar

The events in this chapter seem to interrupt the story, but actually they take place during the time of the "Joseph story." Joseph was seventeen when he was sold and thirty years old when he was elevated to the throne, which gives us thirteen years. When you add the seven years of plenty and the two years of famine, you have twenty-two years before Joseph was reconciled to his brothers. That's plenty of time for Judah to marry, produce three sons, bury two sons and a wife, and get involved with Tamar.

One of the major purposes of Genesis is to record the origin and development of the family of Jacob, the founder of the twelve tribes of Israel. The Israelites went down to Egypt a large family, and four centuries later they came out of Egypt a large nation. Since the tribe of Judah is the royal tribe from which the Messiah would come, anything related to Judah is important to the story in Genesis.

This chapter has some practical values as well. For one thing, it shows how dangerous it was for God's people to be in the land with the Canaanites. There was always the temptation to live like your neighbors instead of like the people of God. There's also a dramatic contrast between Judah and Joseph. Joseph refused to compromise himself with Potiphar's wife, but Judah casually slept with a strange woman he thought was a prostitute.

Judah got himself into trouble when he separated himself from his brothers and started to make friends with the Canaanites in the land. Like Samson, he saw a woman he liked and took her to be his wife. Both Abraham and Isaac had been careful to see to it that their sons didn't marry women of the land lest the "chosen seed" of Israel be polluted with idolatry and immorality. Jacob's brothers were doing things that their father disapproved of, but Jacob was still safer with them than with the people of the land.

The story of the patriarchs in Genesis reminds us of the grace of God and His sovereignty in human life. The men and women who played a part in this important drama weren't perfect, and some of them were deliberately disobedient; and yet the Lord used them to accomplish His purposes.

Read Gen. 38:1-11 Pray and Answer the Following Questions:

1. When Judah finds his lineage in jeopardy in spite of having three sons, what does he do?

2. How does the killing of Er by God strike you? Does it seem fair? Why would God do such a thing?

3. What did Judah tell Onan to do, what did he do, and what happened to him?

4. In what ways was Judah inconsistent in his morals?

5. How is a person's character revealed in his or her behavior?

Read Gen. 38:12-30 Pray and Answer the Following Questions:

6. What happened to Judah and Tamar in Timnah? Describe Tamar's plan and what she did.

7. What agreement did Judah make with the “harlot”?
8. How did Judah respond when he found out the truth?
9. What punishment did Judah command?
10. How did Tamar respond to the accusation?
11. What conclusion did Judah reach?
12. What makes sexual sin so tempting? What are some of the consequences of sexual immorality?

Sovereignty of God

The conclusion of this chapter is wonderful, for it demonstrates the mercy and sovereignty of God. God overruled the immorality of Judah and Tamar. God gave Tamar two sons who were to eventually become believers, to be a part of the true family of God. One son was named Pharez; the other son was named Zarah.

A marvelous thing was going to happen to Judah and his entire family including Tamar, his surviving son Shelah, and the newly born twins, Pharez and Zarah. What? They were to be saved; they were going to repent, turning their lives over to God to become true followers of Him. In fact, note the following:

- a. Tamar was to be an ancestor of the promised seed, the Savior Himself, the Lord Jesus Christ. She is actually listed in the genealogy of Jesus Christ.
- b. Pharez, Tamar's son, was to be the ancestor of David, which means that he was the direct link to the promised seed, the Lord Jesus Christ.
- c. Zarah was to become one of the prominent families in the tribe of Judah among God's people.
- d. Shelah was also to become one of the prominent families in the tribe of Judah among God's people.

Just when did Judah repent and turn to God? When did he and his family become true followers of God? Obviously, Judah repented along with his brothers when they were all confronted by Joseph and were reconciled to him. All the brothers were forced to face the sinful lives they had been living. It was apparently at that point that they all got right with God and became true followers of Him.

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 31 - Genesis 39-41
Where it all Began
The Lord Makes the Difference

Chapter 39

In chapter 39, we see Joseph exchanged his "coat of many colors" for servant's clothing, as God's plan for him is to learn how to work. This results in him learning humility and the importance of obeying orders. Because Joseph was faithful in the small things, God promoted him to greater things.

Joseph's mother was a beautiful woman, and no doubt the son inherited her features. Egyptian women were known for their unfaithfulness, but Joseph did not yield. God was testing Joseph, for if Joseph could not control himself as a servant, he could never control others as a ruler.

Chapter 40

Joseph was now a servant in the royal prison, faithfully doing his work and waiting for the day when his prophetic dreams would come true. One day two new prisoners were added, the cupbearer to Pharaoh and the chief baker. The two prisoners were in bonds because of something they had done, while Joseph was falsely imprisoned. His interpretation of the dreams came true: the cupbearer was restored, and the baker was hanged. Yet Joseph was left in prison. The butler forgot Joseph, but God did not forget him. Joseph was seventeen years old when he went to Egypt and thirty years old when he was delivered from the prison. He was a faithful servant who ministered to others. Eventually he was exalted to the throne and was responsible for saving the nations.

Chapter 41

Joseph had hoped that the butler would remember him and intercede for him, but the man did not remember Joseph until the day Pharaoh became disturbed because he could not find the meaning of his strange dreams. Note the humility of Joseph as he stood before the mightiest monarch on earth: "*God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace.*" He explained the dream: there would be seven years of plenty followed by seven years of

famine. Then he gave wise counsel: appoint a wise man to administer the food supply. God directed Pharaoh to appoint Joseph, so now he was exalted to the throne. Joseph's marriage to a Gentile bride is a type of Christ's marriage to the church during this age when His brothers after the flesh have rejected Him. God kept His Word to Joseph, and Joseph's predictions came true. The Word of the Lord stands when man's wisdom fails. However, all of this was but a part of a greater plan, a plan to preserve Israel and prepare the way for the birth of Christ.

Read Gen. 39:1-23 Pray and Answer the Following Questions:

1. Describe the treatment Joseph received in Potiphar's house, both by God and by his master? (See Gen. 39:1-6)
2. Who tempted Joseph, and what did she want to do? What can we learn from the way Joseph resists temptation?
3. How did Potiphar's wife react to Joseph's refusal?
4. What did Potiphar do to Joseph, and what happened to him there? What does Joseph's conduct teach us? (See Gen. 39:19-23)

Read Gen. 40:1-23 Pray and Answer the Following Questions:

5. Describe the new situation in which Joseph now finds himself.
6. In 40:9-19 how do the dreams and Joseph's interpretations differ?

7. What are the results for the cupbearer, baker, and Joseph?

8. At this point how do you think Joseph feels? How can Joseph's example encourage us?

Read Gen. 41:1-57 Pray and Answer the Following Questions:

9. What were Pharaoh's dreams, and why did they trouble him?

10. How is Joseph brought into the situation? What impresses you as Joseph comes from prison to the palace?

11. What do Joseph's interpretation of the dreams and his proposal demonstrate?

12. Describe the responsibilities Pharaoh gives Joseph in 41:37-49.

13. In what ways has God prepared Joseph during these twelve years in Egypt?

Excellence is Good Anywhere

Genesis 39:20-23

Many of us will do our best as long as circumstances reward our efforts. But what happens if we work for a less than ideal boss, or if our company seems satisfied with less than our one hundred percent effort, or if we are treated unjustly? Are we as willing to pursue excellence when things aren't going our way?

Joseph is an encouragement to anyone who lives and labors in a less than perfect world. Unjustly jailed because he spurned the advances of his boss's wife (Gen. 39:6–18), he soon became a warden's assistant in the prison to which he was sent (39:21–23). His proven ability was so strong that his keepers did not even bother to check his work. They absolutely trusted him. Joseph maintained such a pursuit of excellence by applying himself to the task at hand rather than focusing on how he had been framed. As a slave he probably had no means of appeal anyway. God honored this attitude with achievements that would be considered amazing under any circumstances. Ultimately, Joseph the minority slave rose to power and status as the nation's second-in-command.

So if you honor God in your work and pursue an attitude of excellence, will God reward you with power and prestige? There is no guarantee of that. However, Scripture does make a promise in Col. 3:23–24: *“And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.”* God will reward you according to how you do your work. He challenges you to excellence!

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 32 – Genesis 42:1-38 & 43:1-34
Where it All Began
When Dreams Come True

Chapter 42

The plan was now set in motion, for Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt and sent his sons to secure food. Consider their two visits to Egypt. Ten of the sons went down to Egypt, and Joseph recognized them even though they did not recognize him. Certainly, his appearance had changed in twenty years, and his Egyptian speech and dress would lead them to believe he was a native. Note that the ten men bowed down, but that Joseph's dreams had predicted that eleven would bow. This explains how Joseph knew the men would return with his brother, Benjamin.

Why was Joseph so hard on his brothers? And why did he wait so long to reveal himself to them? Because he wanted to be sure they had repented of their sins. To excuse people who are not sincerely repentant is to make them a worse sinner. How did Joseph deal with his brothers? He spoke roughly to them and accused them of being spies, he kept them locked up for three days, and then he kept Simeon as hostage and bound him before their eyes. His crowning act was to give them back their money. This rough treatment had its designed result, for the men confessed, "We are guilty!" This statement indicated to Joseph that their hearts were softening. Their report to Jacob back home and their discovery of the money in their sacks only complicated their problem. What would they do? If they stayed home, they were thieves, but if they went back to Egypt, they had to risk taking Benjamin with them.

Chapter 43

God made Jacob's family hungry again, and like the prodigal son of Luke 15, these men had to go back or starve to death. We see here other indications of their change of heart: Judah's willingness to be responsible to bear the blame for young Benjamin; their willingness to return the money; and their confession of the truth to Joseph's steward. However, they were making some mistakes too by taking a present to Joseph and

confessing their sins to the servant instead of to Joseph himself. We cannot help but see in this whole episode the way God deals with the lost sinner. God controls circumstances to bring the sinner to himself and to the end of himself. But, sad to say, too many convicted sinners try to win their salvation by offering a present, or by confessing to a human servant, or by making some great sacrifice (as Judah did when he offered his own life as surety for Benjamin). The only way Joseph could excuse their sins was by receiving their honest confession and repentance.

Read Gen. 42:1-38 Pray and Answer the Following Questions:

1. What did Jacob tell his sons to do, and why? Why didn't Benjamin go? (See Gen. 42:1-4)
2. How did Joseph treat his brothers? What accusations did he make? (See Gen. 42:9-16)
3. Why do you think Joseph accuses his brothers of being spies? What course of action did he finally settle on?
4. Summarize the report Jacob's sons brought to him. What did his brothers discover? How did this affect them and Jacob? (See Gen. 42:29-34)
5. What did Jacob say about the plan to take Benjamin to Egypt?
6. How does God sometimes help us by allowing us to go through difficult circumstances?

Read Gen. 43:1-34 Pray and Answer the Following Questions:

7. What did Jacob request? Why? Who responded, and what did he say?
(See Gen. 43:1-5)

8. What decision did Jacob make, and what advice did he give? What impresses you about Jacob as he sends his sons off? (See Gen. 43:11-15)

9. What did Joseph invite his brothers to do, and what did they think? What did they tell the steward? How did he answer? (See Gen. 43:16-23)

10. Who joined them, and how did they prepare to meet Joseph? What was Joseph's first question, and how did they respond? (See Gen. 43:23-28)

11. What does this response possibly tell us about Joseph?

12. Explain the seating of Joseph's brothers and how this affected them. What are the men amazed about as they sit at this feast? How did Benjamin's meal differ from that of his brothers?

Family Expectations

Genesis 42:36

Perhaps like Jacob's, your family is less than ideal. But where does the ideal for the family come from? Who established the expectations for what a family should be? What are your dreams for your family? Unfortunately, for many people today, family means pain and sorrow, not unlike the bitterness that Jacob experienced when his sons returned from Egypt. Despite the great promises that Jacob had inherited from his parents and grandparents about blessings and land and descendants, Jacob's own family was a disappointment.

In Genesis, the "book of beginnings," we can find God's original intentions for marriage (2:15–25), as well as the painful realities of family life after the first couple chose to sin. The Bible is by far the most reliable source for developing our hopes and expectations about family life. Traditional Christian marriage vows include commitments such as, "for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, till death do us part." The definition above and countless examples in the Bible show why: families are comprised of sinful people. Therefore, as we shape our expectations concerning the family, we need a heavy dose of realism.

The Genesis record is sobering. In light of the families represented, is there any hope? Is it worth it to try to build a healthy, happy, God fearing home? Yes, because the problems of the Genesis families are only part of the story. Family chaos and pain were neither God's original design, nor the final word. With God's help, it is possible to create a home life that approaches God's intentions. That's why Scripture frequently encourages the Lord's people to work toward making their families a community of hope, love, caring, restoration, and blessing. Ultimately, the good news of the gospel of Christ extends the sobering definition of a family to a more hope-filled statement. A family is a union of sinners who will be themselves, but who, in Christ, can respond to sin with forgiveness and change.

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 33 - Genesis 44-45
Where it All Began
Truth and Consequences

For twenty-two years, Joseph's brothers had followed that philosophy and carefully covered their sins. They hadn't told the truth and apparently had reaped no serious consequences. Furthermore, they weren't afraid of being exposed because the only person who could witness against them was Joseph, and they were sure he was dead. But the truth had to come out, both for their good and the success of God's plan of salvation for the world.

Chapter 44

Here in chapter 44 all eleven men fell down before Joseph in true repentance. We cannot help but admire Judah's speech in 44:18-34, not only for its humility and confession but also for the love that it shows toward his father and his youngest brother. He was willing to bear the blame, even though it would cost him his life.

What a beautiful spiritual lesson. Judah thought that Joseph was actually dead, and therefore, that he himself was guilty of murder. What he did not realize was that Joseph was alive and was his savior!

Chapter 45

It was now time for Joseph to reveal himself and the purpose for which God had sent him. Joseph's revelation of himself brought his brothers terror, for they fully expected him to judge them for their past sins. But he had seen their repentance; they had bowed before him; and he knew he could forgive them. He explained that five more years of famine would follow, but that he had prepared a place of refuge for them and their families there in Egypt. God had sent him before to save their lives.

Joseph promised to nourish them and protect them. He wept over them and kissed them, and he sent gifts to his father to assure him of the riches that lay in Egypt. Jacob had said, "*All these things are against me,*" but now he could say, "*All things are working together for good!*"

Read Gen. 44:1-34 Pray and Answer the Following Questions:

1. What happened when Joseph's brothers left Egypt the second time?
2. What final strategy does Joseph devise, and how does it test the brother's character and loyalty?
3. Explain what Joseph was trying to accomplish?
4. Why did Judah feel especially responsible for Benjamin?
5. What does Judah's attitude in 44:18-34 show about the changes that have taken place in him and his brothers since their betrayal of Joseph 23 years earlier?

Read Gen. 45:1-28 Pray and Answer the Following Questions:

6. How does Joseph explain to his brothers the reason for his being sold into Egypt and the purpose of his suffering?
7. What does 45:5-11 say about God's hand in the events?

8. To what extent can Joseph's experience give us greater confidence in God's power over the events of our lives?
9. What is the reaction to the news that Joseph's brothers have arrived?
10. What would this mean to the brothers, in regards to their burden of guilt and fear?
11. Describe Jacob's reaction to the amazing news his sons bring back from Egypt. (See Gen. 45:25-28)
12. What do you imagine that the reunion was like between Joseph and his father?

Celebrating God's Guidance **Gen. 45:5-8**

Modern-day believers are able to examine the Scriptures to understand a host of everyday concerns—work, ethics, the church, marriage and family, decision making, and many others. But what do we do when we face a situation that the Bible doesn't address directly? How can we understand God's ways?

Many people in Scripture faced this very question. For example, the characters of Genesis had to interpret life without the benefit of any of the Old Testament. Likewise, the Jews of David's day had only the five books of the Law and a few other portions of Scripture. In the early church,

believers had only the Old Testament, except where some of the various stories and letters that became the New Testament.

How did these people of faith make sense of their circumstances? Sometimes God spoke directly, but in many cases His purposes were not immediately obvious, but dawned on people only after considerable thought. Today we might call this 20/20 hindsight. But another term would be theological reflection, a somewhat fancy phrase with a simple meaning: to look backward from time to time at how God has worked in one's life.

Joseph's remarks upon revealing himself to his brothers are a good illustration of theological reflection. Joseph had to wrestle with some tough life questions: Why did his life have to be disrupted by his jealous brothers? Why was he removed from his family and sent to Egypt? Why did he have to spend several years in prison on a false charge? Why, after all of that, should he suddenly find himself elevated to a position of amazing power and importance over one of the world's great empires? Where was God in all of these experiences? And why had He allowed any of this to happen? And one other question: Now, as he faced his brothers, why should he show them any mercy? Why should he not avenge himself for the wrongs they had caused him to suffer?

Joseph had no biblical passages to turn to for help with these matters. Nor did he have any wise, godly counselors that we know of. He was on his own to sort it all out. So, he took what he knew of God and used it to interpret his experience of people and the world. His conclusion? *"You meant evil against me; but God meant it for good."* To some, that might sound like a pat answer or a simplistic attempt to "make lemons into lemonade." But it was not. Joseph never denied reality. He knew better than anyone that his enslavement and imprisonment had been brought about by wicked schemes. *"You sold me here,"* he reminded his brothers. Joseph also had to cope with his sufferings somehow, and he did so by discerning God's purposes in them: *"But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. For these two years the famine has been in the land, and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting. And God sent me before you to preserve posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance."* (Gen. 45:5-7). In effect, Joseph incorporated his pain into God's divine plan.

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 34 - Genesis 46-48
Where it All Began
Grandfather Knows Best

Jacob was now 130 years old; and during those years, he had learned many important lessons about God, himself, and other people, especially his sons. Some of those lessons in the school of life had been difficult to learn, and Jacob hadn't always passed every test successfully. But now, thanks to God's goodness and Joseph's faithfulness, Jacob would reap a rich harvest in Egypt during the next seventeen years.

Chapter 46-47

By faith, Jacob left Hebron and started for Egypt, and God honored his faith by revealing Himself again and renewing His promises. Jacob no doubt remembered that Abraham had sinned in going to Egypt, and that Isaac had been forbidden to go there, so he was reassured by God's Word. Instead of being a place of defeat, Egypt would be a place of blessing, for the nation would increase in spite of suffering. Since Egypt is a picture of this present world system, it does not surprise us that shepherds were an abomination to the unsaved people. Our Lord is the Good Shepherd, and the world will have nothing to do with Him!

Chapter 48

Jacob spent the last 17 of his 147 years with Joseph in Egypt, so he had his favorite son the first 17 years of Joseph's life and then the last 17 years of his own life. Knowing that he was to die, the aged patriarch called Joseph to his bed that he might bless his two sons. Jacob claimed the boys as his own, comparing them in status with his firstborn, Reuben and Simeon. Knowing that Manasseh was the firstborn, Joseph put the boy at Jacob's right, with Ephraim on the left, but Jacob crossed his arms and gave the blessing of the firstborn to Ephraim. This displeased Joseph, but Jacob was guided by God, for God was going to give the greater blessing to Ephraim. We saw this before in Seth and Cain, Isaac and Ishmael, and Jacob and Esau. This was a token of the total inheritance they were yet to receive.

Read Gen. 46:1-34 Pray and Answer the Following Questions:

1. How does God encourage Jacob in the present and in the future? What did He promise him?

2. When has God allowed you to see how seemingly unrelated events fit into the master plan of His will for your life?

3. How does 46:5-27 point out God's faithfulness to the promises he made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob?

4. In what ways does Joseph's skill as a planner and administrator continue to be demonstrated as he arranges for his father's family? (See Gen. 46:28-34).

Read Gen. 47:1-31 Pray and Answer the Following Questions:

5. What did Joseph ask Pharaoh, and what was Pharaoh's response?

6. What impresses you about Jacob, so recently in despair and ready to die, in his interview with Pharaoh?

7. What did Joseph do for Egypt during his career? (See Gen. 47:13-26)

8. What promise did Jacob require Joseph to make? (See Gen. 47:29-31)

9. In what ways does Jacob's last request of Joseph show his faith in God's promise regarding his descendants and their own land?

Read Gen. 48:1-22 Pray and Answer the Following Questions:

10. What promise did Jacob say God had given him? In what ways is Jacob's faith evident as he blesses Ephraim and Manasseh?

11. What did Jacob do to Joseph's sons? What blessing did Jacob pronounce on them? (See Gen. 48:8-16)

12. What was the significance of where Jacob placed his hands on the sons? What were the consequences to them?

13. What assurance did Jacob have regarding his family after he died?

Ministry Opportunities

Genesis 47:11-27

What happens when we do God's will? We have opportunity to minister and serve others. Joseph had given his heart to the Lord. He had committed himself to follow the Lord, to live for Him and to obey Him. Now, God had raised him up for a day such as this, a day of desperate need. Joseph was now able to minister both to his family and to the world.

1. Joseph ministered to his family by providing a place for them to live: He had just secured permission from Pharaoh to settle his family in Goshen. Now, he took them and gave them the very best land in Goshen, the land of Rameses.

2. Joseph ministered to others: He devised six plans to meet the desperate needs of the Egyptian people (See Gen. 47:13-27)

- a. Plan one was to allow the people to purchase grain with money.
- b. Plan two was to allow the people to purchase grain with their livestock.
- c. Plan three was to allow the people to swap their land and personal labor for grain.
- d. Plan four was to move the people into the cities for easier and more economical distribution of the food to them.
- e. Plan five was to leave the priests alone, to let them keep possession of their land.
- f. Plan six was to make a contract with the people that involved a generous tenant system. The people were given seed to plant and harvest.

3. The result of Joseph's ministry upon Israel, those who followed the true and living God, was that they prospered and grew: The point is this: Joseph had the privilege of helping and ministering to the people of his day because he had followed God. God was, therefore, able to use Joseph to help both his family and the people of his day. Note the following scriptures: Gal. 6:9-10; Matt. 5:16; Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:43-45; Heb. 13:16; James 4:17; Psalm 37:3; 1 Tim. 6:18.

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 35 – Genesis 49:1-33
Where it all Began
Jacob's Last Words

In this final message to his sons, Jacob revealed their character and predicted their history. Reuben was the firstborn and should have inherited might and glory, but because of his sin, he lost the blessings of his birth. Simeon and Levi both were sons of Leah and both were cruel and self-willed as seen in their crime of murdering the men of Shechem. Simeon's descendants were later absorbed into the tribe of Judah, and Levi became the priestly tribe having no inheritance of their own.

Judah is identified with the lion, the kingly beast; for out of Judah, Christ would come, as would all the rightful kings of Israel. Jesus is the Lion of the tribe of Judah. Verse 10 predicts that Shiloh would not come until Judah had lost his rule, and certainly this was true when Jesus was born. Verses 11-12 promise great material blessings to Judah. Zebulun would stretch from the Sea of Galilee to the Mediterranean Sea, therefore confirming its connection with ships. Issachar is pictured as a humble servant to others, willing to bear their burdens that they might enjoy rest, rather than resisting and having liberty. Dan is connected with the serpent and deceit. It is no surprise that idolatry in Israel started with Dan. Gad means "a riches, especially the kind that would please a king." Naphtali is compared to a beautiful deer let loose, and it is promised that he will know how to use powerful language.

The blessing on Joseph is longest. He is a fruitful branch, attacked by his brothers, but victorious in the end. Jacob gives Joseph a variety of blessings, material and spiritual, and he assures Joseph of ultimate victory through the God of Israel. Joseph is a "prince among his brethren." Benjamin is compared to a wolf catching the game he pursues and then enjoying his prey at night. King Saul came from this tribe and was a conqueror; Saul of Tarsus, who became Paul the apostle, also came from Benjamin.

It is difficult to press all the details of this amazing prophecy. History has shown that Jacob's words came true. Certainly, there is a lesson here of personal responsibility, for some of the tribes lost their blessings because of the sins of their founders. Joseph suffered the most during his early life, yet he received the greatest blessings.

Read Gen. 49:1-7 Pray and Answer the Following Questions:

1. What did Jacob do before he died?
2. How are the blessing given to Reuben, Simeon and Levi related to their past actions?
3. Although our past failures and sins affect our future, how can God's forgiveness and grace help us triumph over these consequences?

Read Gen. 49:8-12 Pray and Answer the Following Questions:

4. What future does Jacob see for Judah?
5. What characteristics for the Messiah's reign does Jacob predict?
6. What do these verses tell us about the consequences that result from the choices we make?

Read Gen. 49:13-33 Pray and Answer the Following Questions:

7. After Jacob blesses six of his other sons in 49:13-21, how does the blessing he gives to Joseph show record of all Joseph has been through? (See Gen. 49:22-26)

8. As you look at the names given to God in 49:24-25, which have special meaning to you?

9. Explain how 49:28 shows the importance of all Jacob had just said. How do these statements relate to God's promises to Abraham?

10. Where did Jacob want to be buried? Describe his death. (See Gen. 49:29-33)

11. How do Jacob's last words demonstrate the faith and hope with which he finishes the course of his life?

12. Looking back over Jacob's life, what element provides an encouragement or challenge for you?

The Blessing Genesis 49:28

Can you recall a time in your life when your parents told you how special you were to them? Were you ever handed down a family treasure that had special significance and value? Has someone ever praised you and wished you a prosperous future? Gifts of goodness like these are examples of a blessing, not unlike the blessings that the elderly Jacob gave to his twelve sons (Gen. 49:28).

In Old Testament times, it was common for an Israelite father to pronounce a formal blessing on his children, and especially on the firstborn son. The pronouncement was intended to give goodwill, and sometimes carried prophetic significance and the weight of responsibility. Jacob himself had received his father Isaac's blessing on the firstborn (27:26–29). Jacob also gave a blessing to two of his grandsons, Ephraim and Manasseh (48:8–20). Centuries later, the baby Jesus and His earthly parents received a blessing from an aged man named Simeon (Luke 2:25–35). The blessing was a cultural rite rather than a religious obligation. The Law did not command that parents pronounce a blessing. Yet there was great value in doing so, and believers today do well to continue this ancient custom. Our children and other loved ones will benefit from hearing formal declarations of their value and receiving formal statements wishing them well in life. A blessing can be a great way to pass on a godly heritage, because it reminds a young person of his connections to family and to God. Can you think of ways to give your children the gift of a blessing?

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 36 – Genesis 50
Where it all Began
Three Coffins

Warren Wiersbe once asked a friend what the death rate was in his city, and he replied quietly, "One apiece." That's the ratio everywhere. Death isn't an accident, it's an appointment. "It's not that I'm afraid to die," wrote Woody Allen. "I just don't want to be there when it happens." But he'll be there, and you and I will be there when it happens to us. Nobody has yet figured out how to peek into God's appointment book and erase the date.

In Gen. 49:29-33, Jacob had asked to be buried with his family in the cave of Machpelah. Already Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, and Leah were there, and Jacob's body would be the seventh. When Jacob died, his sons mourned for him and gave him an honorable burial. Apparently, the entire land mourned for him for seventy days, and during forty of these days, the embalmers were preparing his body. This is the first case of an embalmed body and an elaborate funeral in the Bible. Why did Jacob (and Joseph after him), want to be buried in Canaan? This was the land God had given him; he did not belong to the world.

It is unfortunate that Joseph's brothers did not believe his words when he told them years before that he had forgiven them! In fact, their unbelief and fear caused him to weep. They illustrate weak Christians today who cannot accept God's Word, and, as a consequence, live in fear and doubt. "*Fear not!*" is Christ's Word to us just as it was Joseph's word to his brothers. In their blindness, they wanted to work for his forgiveness, but he gave them full pardon through grace.

Genesis begins with a garden and ends with a coffin. What a commentary on the results of sin in this world! But the Bible ends with a description of a beautiful "garden city" (Rev. 21-22), the home of all who put their trust in Jesus Christ.

**Read Gen. 50:1-14 Pray and Answer the Following Questions:
(A Coffin for a Beloved Father)**

1. What did Joseph do when his father died?
2. What did the physicians do with Jacob's body? How long did it take?
How long did the Egyptians mourn for him?
3. What light does this ceremony show on Joseph's authority and presence in Egypt?
4. What did the sons do with Jacob's body? What promise did this fulfill?
5. How are Joseph's love and respect for his father made evident?

**Read Gen. 50:15-21 Pray and Answer the Following Questions:
(A Coffin for a Painful Past)**

6. Describe the reaction of the brothers after their father's burial, and the strategy they devised to protect themselves. (See Gen. 50:15-18)

7. How did Joseph respond to his brothers?

8. How does Joseph show his brothers that he not only forgives but genuinely loves them?

9. If you have been wronged by someone, what action may God want you to take, beyond the usual “forgive and forget” attitude, to demonstrate a loving concern for that person’s future?

**Read Gen. 50:22-26 Pray and Answer the Following Questions:
(A Coffin for a Special Brother)**

10. What are we told about the rest of Joseph’s life? (See Gen. 50:22-23)

11. What did Joseph do when he was about to die? How old was Joseph when he died, and how was he buried?

12. In the Genesis story we have seen that Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph died in faith, looking forward to promises they did not see fulfilled in their lifetime. How does their example provide a model for our hope as Christians?

Many People Genesis 50:20

Who were the “*to save many people alive*” mentioned by Joseph’s statement in Gen. 50:20? Certainly, they included Jacob’s family, said to be at least 70 persons. Joseph’s position in Egypt enabled him to save this group from starvation. (Gen. 45:5–8) Yet many more people than just Joseph’s family benefited from his presence in Egypt. God used Joseph to rescue Pharaoh and the Egyptians from the famine. In fact, as a result of Joseph’s wise planning and management, people from all countries in that part of the world were able to find food in Egypt.

But God’s goodness through Joseph did not stop there. Because the Israelites were preserved in Egypt, they eventually became a great nation, in fulfillment of God’s promise to Abraham (Gen. 12:2; 15:5). In turn, it was through the Israelites that God brought Jesus into the world, and through Him made salvation available to every person and nation.

Given this perspective, we can see that the “*many people*” far exceeded even those that Joseph probably had in mind. In fact, Christians today are among the “many” who have benefited from the good purposes carried out by Joseph. This suggests that the Old Testament is not only about God’s dealings with the Israelites, but about God’s plan to reach the entire world through the Israelites. God’s purpose has always been to “save alive” as many people as possible by bringing them into a right relationship with Him.