

## Genesis April 3, 2017

How does the Bible as a whole fit together? The Bible is unified and is one book from Genesis to Revelations. Jesus is the subject of the entire Bible.

One unifying thread in the Bible is the authorship of God. Every word of the Bible is God's word. The Bible contains all that God wants us to know about Him. Every word written is for our instruction, Romans 15:4 For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

The Bible makes it clear that God has a unified plan for all of history.

He has a purpose--a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him (Christ), things in heaven and things on earth.

He has a purpose for doing this—Ephesians says 1:12 so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. God created us for His glory.

This plan He has always had Isaiah 46:9-10, remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose.

This plan is on His time Gal 4:4-5 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

The work of Christ on Earth is the most important event in history. We look back to the cross and also forward to the second coming of Christ to the finish of His work.

2Peter 3:13 but according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

The unity of God's plan causes Him to make predictions of future events and for these promises to be fulfilled such as the coming of the Messiah. Isaiah 9:6-7

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

There is one future prediction still to come see 2 Peter 3:13 above

### Christ in the Old Testament

Since God's plan focuses on Christ and His glory, it is natural that all the Old Testament points toward Jesus 2 Cor. 1:20 "For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory."

Jesus spent time teaching that the O.T. does point to Himself. Luke 24:44 "Then he said to them", "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."

Luke 24:45-48 Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

You are witnesses of these things.

He God opened their mind to understand the Scriptures Luke 24:45. The Old Testament as a whole looks forward to the actual accomplishment of salvation that took place once-for-all in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

### The Promises of God

In what ways does the OT look forward to Christ? There are specific promises in the OT directly pointing forward to the coming of Christ as the Messiah. ( Micah 5:2, Isaiah 7:13-14 & 9:6-7 & 40:3-4 & 53:1-4 & Psalm 45:6-7 & 2:7 & Psalm 22:1-21 & 78:1-2, Jeremiah 31:15, Hosea 11:1, Zechariah 9:19. The whole Bible points to Jesus. The Old Testament points forward and the New Testament points back to Jesus. Study is from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version (ESV) , copyright © 2001 by Crossways Bible, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers used by permission. All rights reserved.

### Genesis

For around 2500 years God's story was an audible story told over and over down through the generations. This was a very reliable way to keep history, and this way still survives in societies without written languages. The first five books of the Bible were written by Moses. They are a section of the Old Testament known as the Pentateuch (five books) or the Torah (law).

Genesis tells how God created everything, and that His creation was very good because there was no sin. Soon Adam and Eve sinned and all the troubles of the world came from that first sin. After the first sin, man could not stop sinning which brought God's punishment on man. We learn that God punishes sin with fierce punishment. We also learn that as soon as man sinned God started the process of saving man from his sins and restoring a good relationship with man. God announces in Genesis 12 that He is going to work His plan of salvation through Abram (Abraham) and his descendants, who include Jesus.

Scientists and many people who call themselves Christian say that some of the Bible, especially the creation story in Genesis is just a myth. We humans are not able to pick and choose what we want to believe from the Bible. We must believe all that the Bible says or we don't need anything from the Bible. The Bible says in 2 Timothy 3:16 that, "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness." We must believe that God created everything.

The beginning of time Genesis chapters 1-11 contain the first two thousand years. There are four main events in these eleven chapters.

I. First is the creation story found in Genesis chapters 1&2. It is very important that we understand this creation story—why? The world teaches evolution which is the idea that everything was created by just happening without God doing the creation. This is clearly wrong. The Bible says God spoke and created everything out of nothing which is correct. John 1:3 tells us that nothing was created without Jesus. He is our creator and also He keeps everything working.

1. There are many lessons from the first verse of the Bible.

A. The Bible begins with the statement, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." The question we should have is what beginning. Where did God come from to create the heavens and the earth?

B. Psalm 90:2 and Revelation 1:4 tell us that God has no beginning and that He has no end; that God is eternal. God has always existed.

C. As a human being we can't fully understand the idea of God always existing and not having a beginning. We can understand that God and we humans have no ending, and we know when we humans had our birthdate. Our brains just don't understand that God has always existed and has no beginning.

i. There are a couple of Bible verses that help us understand that we are not supposed to understand everything in the Bible. These verses are Deuteronomy 29:29 and Isaiah 55:8-9. They explain that God has his secrets and that He thinks differently than we do. The things we don't understand from the Bible are not the important things. The Bible makes the important things such as salvation by faith alone and not by works very easy to understand.

D. Again we ask is the creation account of Genesis fact or fiction?

i. Other parts of the Bible say Genesis is true. Psalm 136:5-9 tell how God created everything.

ii. Jesus showed that he believed the Genesis story of creation by quoting the Genesis account about how God created man and woman. He quoted Genesis 1:2 and 2:24. He also said in Mark 13:19 that God was the creator.

E. The statement that, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" tell us that God created everything at once and he created everything from nothing. In other words, there was nothing and all at once the heavens and the earth were created. It did not take a long time as the evolutionist say it took for life to begin; rather it was done all at once in a few days' time.

F. We must consider how great God's creation is. Remember as Revelation 4:11 says, God created everything by His will; it was easy for God. As you look in the sky at night you see more stars than you can count. The actual number of stars is many billions and they seem to go on forever. We can't even imagine how big the universe is, but yet the bible tells us in Psalm 147:4 that, "He determines the number of the stars; he gives to all of them their names." Just think about how great our God is, He made and named all the stars.

2. Evolution is believed to be how most people think life developed. This theory doesn't believe in God it believes that life just started out of various chemicals, and we humans developed out of lower life forms such as monkeys.

A. There are problems with this evolution fiction.

i. One problem with this idea is where did everything come from if God did not create everything? The evolutionist has no answer for this.

ii. Another problem is that there is no evidence showing how one animal or plant can change into another type of plant or animal.

iii. Another problem is that all life is too complex for it to have just happened.

iv. Why do people believe in evolution? It is because enemies of God want to believe in anything besides God even when it makes no sense, and evolution makes no sense.

3. Genesis 1:3-23 tells the story of the first five days of creation. I will talk about the sixth day of creation separately because it was on the sixth day that He created man. Man is special and I want to separately discuss man's creation. There are three main things I want to point out about creation.

A. First is the point that God stands behind all creation.

i. God is the One through whom all came into existence. In other words, God created everything. In John 1:3 we are again told that God (Jesus) created everything. God without any help made everything. Note that God created everything out of nothing.

ii. It is important to notice that God created everything just by speaking. It was an easy thing for God to make everything and He did this all by Himself.

iii. Knowing that God created everything we should be pleased with creation and we should praise God for His creation. We must be careful to praise God and not creation. We must praise the creator and not what He created. Most pagans worship something which they themselves created which is clearly wrong; this is idolry.

iv. Since God by His will made everything including man we should give God our undivided obedience and devotion. We should give Him all our praise, all our worship, all our service, and all our love. We should be completely devoted to God.

B. The second point about creation is that God created everything in an orderly way over a six day period. God likes order and we should live orderly lives.

C. God announces the judgment about His creation in verses 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, and 31 that His creation is good. We must also acknowledge that His creation is good. We should;

i. We should be thankful for His creation and praise Him for it. We should value creation because God made it.

ii. We should delight in creation. This means we should enjoy His creation. Look around and see the beauty of what he created.

iii. We should act responsibly toward creation. We should try to preserve God's creation. For example, we can cut trees down to use them for building or firewood, but we should replant them. We should never cut them down just to destroy them. We should not throw our trash all around us. We should not kill animals just to kill them. We should not exterminate animals, such as elephants, just to sell their ivory. We should respect the world God created.

iv. Finally, we should look at creation and think about it which should cause us to value it. We should look to God who made everything and trust Him. Trusting God is what Matthew 6:26 & 30 teaches us.

4. The fifth day of creation as reported in Genesis 1; 24-27 is a special day of creation. God created the land animals including man who is the pinnacle or top of God's creation man is different from all the rest of creation. There are two things different in the creation of man from everything else God created.

A. The first difference is listed in verse 26 where God gives all of creation to man to be the ruler of God's creation. God gave man a lot of responsibility when He made man ruler of the earth. Going back to what we said earlier, we should respect and take care of the world God created.

B. Genesis 1:27 Man was created in the image of God. This means that:

i. We have personality just like God has a personality, and nothing else has a personality. Personality means we have knowledge and feelings such as religious feeling. We are able to reason and create things. We have a will which allows us to choose right and wrong behavior. Our personality allows us to worship God which no other animal can do.

ii. All other animals are controlled by instinct and they can't choose to do right; the other animals can only do what their instinct tells them to do. Only man knows the difference between right and wrong.

iii. Being created in the image of God means that humans have spirituality. This means we can have communion or spend time with God because we have a spirit just as God is a spirit. John 4:24 tells us that, "God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." Humans alone out of all creation can worship God. This means that God loves us in a special way that He doesn't love the rest of His creation. Our spirit is eternal unlike animals who die and are totally finished.

5. Genesis 1:26-28 God tells Adam that he is to rule over the earth. 1 Cor. 6:2-3 says the saints will judge the world. We are not just animals; we are rulers because we have a special relationship with God as a result of being made in His image.

A. The passage teaches us that we humans are created special; in the image of God. Because of this, we are given responsibility for ruling the earth. We have already mentioned that man is to rule the earth properly. We are to treat God's creation with respect.

B. The question often asked in Uganda is whether family planning or birth control is wrong because of Genesis 1:28. While this is an important question in Africa, it does not appear to be important in the west. I say this because the commentaries I read about this passage do not mention the part about filling the earth at all. Instead, they stress the role we humans play in ruling over the earth.

i. I think we must interpret this passage as a whole starting in verse 26 and concluding in verse 28.

ii. At the time this order was given, there were only two people on this whole earth, and obviously the earth needed to be filled with people in order for them to rule. Are there now enough people to rule over the earth? Let me share my opinion about this. I say we humans have fulfilled the commandment to fill the earth and that family planning is not a sin because there are enough humans to rule the earth.

Following are some of the reasons that I say this:

1. The population of the earth has increased from the original 2 to over 7,000,000,000 people today.
2. Today, there are more than enough people on earth to rule the earth. We see evidence for this statement by observing how man has caused many animals either to become extinct or almost extinct. Many parts of the earth are ruined because of man's actions such as the earth slides off mountains because of what man has done.
3. Many parts of the world experience hunger and famine because there are more people than food in these areas. The earth has too many people.

While it is not for any of us to say how many children people should produce, I can say, based on 1 Timothy 5:8, that God only wants you to have as many children as you can provide for. You must provide food, shelter, clothing, medical care, parent's time, and education for each child you produce.

Families in most western countries only have two children per family. They have reasons for this such as:

1. There are enough people in their countries.
2. Raising children is expensive and unlike Uganda, western countries will make parents pay for their children. You cannot just abandon the children. Failure to pay to support your children in the United States will result in the parents being put in jail.
3. Christian culture requires that parents provide for their children.

The type of family planning which prevents conception is not a sin. The type of family planning which kills the baby after conception is murder. Because of modern medicine safe and effective birth control is available.

6. Gen 1:31 it was a perfect creation. Why? Because there was no sin just like in heaven.

7. Genesis 2:1-3 God establishes the seventh day as a holy day as a day of rest. During Old Testament time the Law required the Sabbath to be followed. It is still important today to set a day aside for worship and rest from our daily work. Mark 2:27 gives us a good guide about what our heart attitude should be about observing the Sabbath. Mark says, "And he

said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." What should we do about setting a day apart, what should our behavior be?

A. Christians should gather together in corporate worship. We worship on Sunday instead of Saturday like the Jews mostly because it was on Sunday that Jesus rose from the grave.

B. Humans need a day away from work each week. God designed us to need a day to rest and relax and spend time with family. We work much better if we take a day off and we get more total work done if we work six days per week than if we work seven days a week.

C. What is a Christian to do on Sunday?

i. The Christian day of worship is not a day of forced rest like the Sabbath day in the Old Testament. Sunday, for the Christian, is a day of joy. It is a day we rejoice in worship and fellowship with other Christians.

ii. Sunday is a day of activity for the Christian. He goes to worship, he visits the sick and elderly, and he spends time with his family.

iii. Sunday is a good day to tell others about Jesus and about the salvation found through him.

8. Genesis 2: God repeats the creation story to speak more about humans who are the most important part of creation. This is not a separate creation account rather as I said it allows God to tell more about the pinnacle (top) of His creation which is humans.

A. Chapter 2 tells us more about the creation of man.

i. Verse 7 is a detailed report about how man was made by God. This story shows that God was very careful about how He created man. He took the effort to carefully form man. God then breathed life into Adam. This is very intimate. God only did this for man because He loves man so much. Even now our life continues only because God gives us each breath of air we breathe. God thus shows that He has a special interest in man; that he doesn't have for other creatures. We will see in chapter three that God even communicates face to face with man.

B. Chapter 2 also tells us more about how God provided, in a special caring way, for man.

i. Verse 8 reports that God showed His love by preparing a special garden for them to live in. This was a special place to live in where everything man needed was provided for him.

ii. He also gave Adam the special work of naming all the animals. It is a pleasure to do the work assigned by God.

9. Chapter 2:8-17 tells us about Eden which is a real place. Many enemies of the church tell us that Eden is not a real place and that Eden is just a fable and we should not believe the stories the Bible tells us about what happened there. I am a Christian and so I believe that the stories about Eden are true.

A. Moses, who wrote the book of Genesis, even tells us the location of Eden. When Moses wrote the book he was wandering in the Sinai desert and so Moses said in verse 8 that Eden was in the east.

B. Then in verses 10-14 Moses gave us place names such as the names of rivers. Today we don't know where all these places were located but we do know where the Tigris and Euphrates rivers are located today. So it is important to believe that Eden was a real place where the events Moses tells us about such as the fall of man happened.

10. Verses 15-25 tell how God give Adam work to do and a helper. He also tells Adam that he was not allowed any contact with one tree in the garden.

A. God tells Adam the jobs he is to do, and the work is responsible work. He tells Adam to take care of the plants in the garden and to name every animal. It is plain that man is supposed to work. Verse 18 tells that God gave man so much work to do that Adam needs a helper, and so God decided to create a helper.

11. Verses 21-25 talk about the creation of a woman called Eve and tells us about the special relationship man has with woman.

A. Chapter 2 verse 18-24 also gives details about the relationship men and women have through the creation of Eve. Verse 18 teaches us that woman was created to be a helper to man and verse 24 gives us the basis for godly marriage which is that we become one person when we marry and since we would never abuse ourselves we will never abuse our wives.

i. The Bible tells us that woman was made to be a helper and not a slave. Husbands and wives are to work together to raise their children.

ii. We will also never divorce because once we are married we become one person and we can't truly be divided. God hates all divorce.

iii. Also marriage is to be between one man and one woman only.

II. The second main event of the first eleven chapters is the fall of man.

1. Gen. 3:1-6 Sin enters the world—man had free will to choose to obey God or to disobey God; Adam chose to disobey and this is the first sin. Man has been choosing to sin ever since. All the troubles of the world come from this one act. Romans 3:23 says all people sin.

A. Humans like to blame someone else for their sins but who is really guilty? Often, humans try to blame Satan but both Adam and Eve chose to sin. No one made them sin just as we choose to sin each time we sin; no one makes us sin. We must accept responsibility for our own actions.

B. Many people blame Eve because she sinned first, but the Bible says the sin is the responsibility of Adam. Read 1 Corinthians 15:21-22 and Romans 5:12, 17, and 19 to see that the responsibility for the first sin is Adam's. This is because God placed Adam in full charge of the garden. Adam should have stopped Eve from sinning. However, Eve did choose to sin so she is also guilty.

2. The result of this sin is that man becomes separated from God; he lost his close relationship with God and death enters the world. All the troubles of the world such as disease, wars, famine, murder, etc. begin. Genesis 1:31 told us the earth was a good place but with sin this changed. Every bad thing in the world came from this one sin. All life suffers from this sin.

A. We became enemies of God see Romans 5:10. Ephesians 2:1 tells us we are dead to God in our sin. Up until this sin Adam and Eve had a good relationship with God which now ended because of this sin. Romans 5:12 says that death came to all men because of this sin.

3. Now in verses 7 we see that Adam and Eve know they are guilty and their reaction is to try to hide their sin. They look for ways to hide their sin.

A. The first way they tried to hide their sin was that they tried to deny their guilt. They tried to shift the blame away from themselves. Adam tried to blame Eve and Eve tried to blame Satan. This practice of blaming others for our sins continues today; often we blame something else or someone else for our sins.

i. This constant denial of our guilt causes people to do worse and worse sins as time goes on. We convince ourselves that what we are doing is not really sin or it is not our fault so we keep sinning and doing worse sins.

ii. This is what Paul is talking about in Romans 1:21-32. Let's see what Romans 1 says about the steps of sin.

1. Verse 21-22 says that when men and women reject the knowledge of God they become foolish or stupid.

2. Verse 26-27 says that God therefore allows them to increase in being sinful. God is now talking about unnatural sex such as homosexual behavior, adultery, fornication.

3. Verse 28 tell us that because of their sinful behavior God allows their whole being to do the things they really know are wrong, and they do their sins without even thinking they are doing wrong. Verses 29-31 tell us that it is not only sexual sins that they are guilty of. These verses list many sins.

4. Verse 32 tells us that the people sinning know they are doing wrong but they continue to sin and they even encourage other people to join them in their sins.

ii. We see here that eating forbidden fruit seems like a small sin and should not cause a big problem. The problem is that small sins grow into big sins and the sinner soon get used to sinning and he forgets that he is sinning and the sins keep getting worse.

iii. An example is how the first time a husband hits his wife he is overwhelmed with his sin and wishes he could undo it. The next time he hits his wife it doesn't bother him so much. Soon he is seriously beating her and it doesn't bother him at all.

B. Their sin also caused them shame and so they tried to hide their sin. At the end of chapter 2 they were naked but they had no shame, however, now their sin causes shame so they tried to make clothes for themselves.

C. Another futile way to try to hide sin is by allowing time to go by so that the sin could be forgotten in time and the sin would go away.

D. Another way to try to cause sin to go away is by finding safety in numbers of people. Many times people see other people sinning so they feel it is all right to do what other people are doing and the sin will go away. This will not work. The only thing that can make sin go away is, according to 1 John 1:7, the blood of Jesus.

4. Verse 8 reports that because of their sin Adam and Eve tried to hide from God. They are not the last ones to try to hide from God. Thousands of years later Jonah tried to hide but he couldn't. There are some lessons to be learned by trying to hide from God.

A. First, it is futile; it is impossible to hide from God We need to understand that there is no place where we can hide from God. Psalm 139:7-12 says God is everywhere; there is no hiding from Him. Trying to hide from God is foolish.

B. Second, hiding from God increases our misery; after all we are hiding from the one who gives us good things. See James 1:17. The prodigal son in Luke 15:11-32 suffered when he left his father. Life became good when he returned to his father. If you are hiding from God and suffering, return to Him; come to Him to receive His blessings.

C. The third reason to stop running away from God is that you are running from someone who loves you and cares for you even when you run away. Read the story of Hosea to see this. We should come running to God who offers us salvation through Jesus.

5. Genesis 3:9-14 tells of the meeting between God, Satan, and Adam and Eve.

A. We see in verse 9 that God is asking where Adam and Eve are. Actually, God already knows where they are; He is calling them to come forward and be examined about the sin.

B. Verse 12-13 both Adam and Eve admit to sinning but again they try to blame someone else for their sin. It is best that we confess our sins and not try to shift blame. Every person is responsible for his own sins.

C. God quickly pronounces His sentence on Satan, and in a few verses we will see Him pronounce punishment on Adam and Eve.

6. Genesis 3:15 is one of the most important verses in the Bible. It is the first Messianic prophecy; the first of many Old Testament prophecies about the coming of the Messiah and the work He will do. As we look at the verse we see that God announces first that there will be enmity or hatred between Satan and Adam and Eve and also all their offspring which means all people.

A. God here is looking forward to the cross or the crucifixion of Jesus. When God talks about Jesus bruising the head of Satan, God is saying that Jesus will defeat Satan on the cross; Satan loses the war with Jesus. When God talks about Satan bruising the heel of Jesus, it means that Jesus will be injured on the cross, but Jesus wins the war and defeats Satan. A head injury will kill a person quicker and more certainly than a heel injury.

B. Verse 15 shows us God's grace. God's grace is defined as God providing for us in every possible way, both physically and spiritually, in spite of the condemnation we deserve. In other words, we humans don't deserve anything from God except punishment, but Jesus even gives us His righteousness which saves us from our sins and allows us to be at peace with God. Romans 5:20-21 tells us that it God's grace which saves us.

7. Genesis 3:16-19 are a lesson in punishment. There is much to learn here. We learn that all life suffers from this first sin see Romans 8:22-23.

A. First we look at Eve's punishment. God says that women will suffer in childbirth. This means not just the painful act of giving birth, but also all the suffering she will endure raising the child who will be born with a sinful nature.

i. Verse 16 is often misunderstood to mean that the husband is like a king and that the wife must submit to him without question even if he is abusive or stupid. The idea of the wife submitting to the husband is not a new idea that came after the fall. Chapter 2 :18 & 22 tell us that Eve was made to be a helper for Adam and she was given to Adam. However, she was given to Adam in a time when there was no sin in her, so her obedience to Adam was perfect. However after the fall she behaved in a sinful way to Adam and he also treated her in a sinful way.

ii. Ephesians 5:22, 25 give us insight into how this obedience and submission should be done. Verse 22 says a wife's obedience should be modeled after her obedience to the Lord, and a husband's rule should be modeled after the rule of Jesus over the church. A practical way for this to work out is that the husband will love his wife and treat her in love just as Christ loves His church. It will be easy for the wife to submit to the husband if she knows that everything the husband does toward her is done in love.

B. Now we look at Adam's punishment which has three parts.

i. The first part, verse 17, says that the ground is cursed because of Adam's sin. Before sin, the ground easily produced good things to eat. Now the ground produces things such as thorns and weeds which make it harder to grow food.

ii. The second part of Adam's judgment is that the work Adam has to do to earn a living is difficult; while before the fall the work was easy. We see in our lives today that we must work hard to earn our living.

iii. The third part of Adam's judgment, verse 19, is that the end of all his work and suffering is death.

C. Because there is much misunderstanding about punishment for sin, we will study this subject further. Sin is very serious and God punishes all sin. There are two types of punishment for people.

i. First is earthly punishment which is given to all people whether they are Christian or not. An example is that any person who commits adultery with an HIV infected person can get aids and suffer and die. We must understand that God punishes Christians for their sins while they are still living.

ii. Then there is eternal punishment. The non-Christian or unsaved person goes to hell when he dies and he is punished forever for his sins. Meanwhile, the Christian person has the penalty for his sins paid for him by Jesus, and so he goes to heaven. Remember, Jesus was punished on the cross for every sin ever committed by every Christian. We can only go to heaven if our sins are forgiven because we are Christian.

8. Verse 21 says that God killed animals and made clothes for Adam and Eve. This killing of animals and covering Adam and Eve showed that:

A. Man must be clothed to stand in the presence of a holy God. We must be clothed in the righteousness of Jesus. Our sins must be covered by His blood.

B. Man can't by his own action clothe himself and make himself acceptable to God; it takes the action of God to make man acceptable to God. God is the one who made the clothes.

C. God will provide what is necessary to be acceptable to Him. He provided Jesus.

D. God killed the innocent animals to show that the shedding of blood is necessary to regain paradise. This act of shedding the blood of these innocent animals pointed ahead to the coming perfect sacrifice of Jesus when His blood was shed for the forgiveness of our sins. Hebrews 9:22 tells us that the shedding of blood is necessary for the forgiveness of sin.

9. We see at the end of chapter 3 the banishment of Adam and Eve from the garden. They started this chapter having peace and fellowship with God and now there is a divide between man and God which results in their losing their home in the garden.

10. Genesis 4 reports the birth and life of Cain and Abel; the first birth of human babies. We see how evil man is because Cain kills his brother Abel. There are two main teachings in the Old Testament. One teaching is that man is sinful and lost in his sins. Man continues to sin over and over again. He continually disobeys God who continues to punish man. It becomes clear that man can't save himself; so man is headed for hell. The other main teaching is that God has a plan to redeem man from his sins so that humans can be at peace with God and go to heaven. We see God working His plan to save man all through the Old Testament along with the stories of man's sinfulness. At the end of the Old Testament it is clear that man can't save himself and that he must have a savior. Jesus is this savior.

A. Verses 3-5 report that the brothers each brought a sacrifice to God. Cain's sacrifice was rejected by God who accepted Abel's sacrifice. We see that this made Cain very angry.

B. The big question here is why didn't God like Cain's sacrifice? God talks about this in verses 6&7. We know that God gave orders concerning how He wanted sacrifices to be given to Him, and in verse 7 we learn that Cain did not exactly obey God's rules. The lesson is that God will only accept us if we come to Him through faith in the shed blood of Jesus. This is by faith in Christ alone and not by any work of our own.

i. God also gives a warning to Cain in verse 7. The lesson is that sin is always waiting to trap us so we must always be on guard to avoid sin.

C. Cain is so jealous of Abel that he ignores God's warning, and verse 8 reports that he kills his brother.

D. God immediately confronts Cain over his sin just as He did Adam in the garden. When God questioned Adam and Eve they tried to shift the blame, but they did not lie to God. Now we see that sin has grown in the world and Cain lies to God in verse 9. Lying to God is a serious mistake and a stupid one. Ezekiel 11:5 tells us that God knows our thoughts. God knew that Cain knew exactly where Abel was.

i. Just as sin grew in the world so sin grows in individuals. We often begin with small and infrequent sins, as time passes our sins become worse and more frequent. We must avoid becoming comfortable with our sins and flee to God whenever we are tempted to sin. We must pray and ask Him to help us to not sin.

E. Verses 10-16 report that Cain is punished for the sin of murder. This is another frequently repeated story in the Bible where man sins and God quickly punishes man for the sin. The saddest part of this is that Cain never repents. Verse 16 reports that Cain went away from the Lord.

F. Verses 17-24 are about living without God which is the lifestyle of Cain and his descendants.

i. We see in the story of Lamech, the great grandson of Caine, how sin continues to grow. Lamech is even boasting of his sin of murder. He acts as if there is nothing wrong with murder. We see several generations of Cain's descendants here and after Lamech we hear nothing more about Cain's wicked family.

G. Now in verses 24-26 the story turns away from the godless line of Cain to the godly line of Seth. We don't hear any more about Cain's descendants but they continue to increase in numbers and in sinfulness until they are all killed in the flood.

11. Genesis chapter 5:1-20 is a genealogy of the godly line of Seth. While Cain's line all dies in the flood, Seth's descendants live today; we are all descendants of Seth.

12. Verses 21-24 is a story about a very special man who receives special treatment from God. Even though Enoch was an Old Testament person we learn more about him from the New Testament than from the Old Testament. We know that Enoch was a godly man who lived in a sinful time just before the flood. This is a different Enoch than the son of Cain reported about in Genesis chapter four.

A. We know from the Genesis account that Enoch was a father and when he was 365 years old he was taken to heaven by God without dying. The Bible tells us only two people went to heaven without dying. The other one is the prophet Elijah.

B. Hebrews 11:5-6 tells us that Enoch was a man of great faith which pleased God. What does it mean to walk by faith?

i. It means to trust God for everything. We must believe in God enough to follow and obey Him in everything.

C. Jude 14-15 tells us that Enoch was a prophet and preacher with two messages.

i. He warned that the Lord's judgment or punishment was coming. He seems to be predicting the judgment of the flood which came soon after his life. He is also predicting the second coming of Christ when He returns in judgment. We know that His judgment is fierce according to the Bible. Isaiah 63:1-3 is an example of this.

ii. The second message was that the Lord was coming to execute judgment on the ungodly sinners. Enoch was preaching a message that we need to hear today. We live in a time of terrible sin. We only have to look at what is happening all around us such as tribal warfare, robbery, sex crimes, etc. Our preachers today need to preach the message that severe judgment is coming for unrepentant sinners.

13. Genesis 5: 25-26 tells us about Methuselah the oldest man who ever lived.

III. The third main event in the first eleven chapters of Genesis is the flood. Genesis chapters 6-9 report the story of Noah and the flood.

1. Genesis 6:1-4 are mostly transitional verses going from the pre flood time to the flood. There is much disagreement about most of their meaning. There are no important doctrines in these verses.

A. In verse 3 we are told that the days of man are 120 years. The meaning here is that all the people alive at this time except for Noah and his family are going to die in 120 years. This will be when the flood starts.

2. We learn in Genesis 6:5-7 that since the original sin in the garden man has become increasingly evil until now God is so disappointed that He considers destroying all humans. A lesson is that man is basically evil. Non-Christians say that "man is basically good and improving all the time." This is a lie; man is totally sinful without the restraint of God the Holy Spirit. The only hope for humans is Jesus.

A. Verse 5 tells us that the heart of man is evil and man wants to do what is wrong. In Jeremiah 17:9 we read that the heart is deceitful all the time and the heart is sick. In other words the heart is sinful, and our sin is not just external; it is all through us.

i. We also learn in verse 5 that man sins constantly, and not just occasionally.

3. We study Noah in verses 8-10.

A. Verse 8 tells us that one person named Noah found favor, or in some translations Noah found grace in the eyes of God. Noah was a sinner but God extended favor or grace on him. God did this for no other family living at the time of Noah.

B. Verse 9 tells us that Noah was righteous in God's eyes. Being righteous means in God's eyes the person has no guilt. This means that even though verse 8 tells us that Noah was a sinner; God saw him as blameless. Let's study God's grace to see how this is possible?

i. God's grace (verse 8) always comes before a person becomes righteous (verse 9).

ii. We see in Deuteronomy 7:7-8 that God chooses the people He will love and then God extends grace to them so that they can believe and become Christians.

iii. God loves Christians in a special way and He gives us His grace and we become righteous in his eyes. His seeing that a person being righteous means that in God's eyes the person has no sin and is forgiven and will go to heaven.

C. We see that God gives us His grace and it is a free gift from Him. We do not earn our righteousness, our salvation. Ephesians 2:8-9.

4. Genesis 6:11-22 tells us about Noah's Ark (boat).

A. God is going to destroy all the people on earth except Noah and his family, and He is going to do it by sending a flood.

B. Verse 18 introduces the word covenant to us for the first time in the Bible. This is a very important word and is used more than 200 times in the Bible. A covenant is a promise or agreement from God to His people with whom He is dealing in a special way.

i. There have been earlier covenants but the word covenant was not used. The earliest covenant was in the garden when God in Genesis 2:15-17 told Adam what Adam could eat and what he was forbidden to eat.

5. Genesis 7 is the story of God sending the flood.

A. Noah is mentioned in Hebrews 11:7 as having faith which caused him to build the ark. Consider that it took Noah around 120 years to build the ark. Remember it had never rained before and there was no sign of rain, but by faith Noah persisted and built the ark. His is a story of great faith.

B. There are several lessons for us here.

i. The first is that God provided complete security; even during all the storms and floods that came. Jesus provides complete security for us throughout all the trials and storms of our lives.

ii. There is also a lesson about God's great grace. God kept the ark open for seven extra days for people to come in and be saved. The way is open for every sinner to come to faith and trust in Jesus as long as the person is alive.

iii. There is an end to God's grace. In Noah's time this end came after the week was over, and the door to the ark was closed. After this nobody else could come into the ark and be saved. Today the end of God's grace comes at the time of death or when Jesus returns again. This is the lesson we find in Matthew 25:1-13. After the door is shut it is too late so believe as it says in Acts 16:31, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."

C. Many people including people who claim to be Christians think the flood story is just a story and it is not real. It is true. Either you believe all the stories in the Bible or there is no reason to believe any of them. We can't pick and choose what we want to believe. A Christian must believe and trust all the Bible. We don't understand everything in the Bible but we trust that everything is true.

i. Jesus believed the flood story. He talked about Noah and the flood in Matthew 24:37-41 and again in Luke 17:26-27.

6. Chapter 8 tells the story of Noah living in the ark and then leaving the ark.

A. Verse 1 tells how God remembered that Noah was still living on the ark. The lesson here is that God always remembers us and never forgets us. Sometimes when we are suffering and depressed, we might think God has forgotten us. God promises in Hebrews 13:5 that He will never leave us or forsake us. When we are going through difficult times we can always be reassured that God is there with us. Isaiah 43:2 reassures us of this.

B. Verse 20 tells us that Noah remembered God and he made an offering that was pleasing to God. This gives us an idea of the kind of man Noah was because he remembered to thank God after God saved him. Often people ask God for something and as soon as God gives them what they ask for, they forget to thank God. It is normal for a Christian to thank God for their meal before they eat when they are still hungry. Some Christians wait and thank God for their meal after they have eaten and are satisfied. 1 Timothy 5:18 tells us to always give thanks to God.

C. This is the background for the covenant that God now gives to Noah beginning in verse 21. The covenant actually begins in chapter 6 verse 18 and concludes in chapter 9 verse 17. There are three part to this covenant:

- i. God promises to never again destroy the earth by flood. Genesis 8:20-22.
- ii. Capital punishment is part of this covenant. Genesis 9:1-6.
- iii. God gives the rainbow as a sign of His promise. Genesis 9:8-17.

D. There are three features in this covenant and these features are also found in most of the other covenants.

i. God does all the speaking and He says the things He wants to say according to His pleasure.

ii. The second feature is that the covenant will last as long as the conditions that caused God to make the promise last. In this case God is saying that as long as the earth last He will not curse the ground and destroy every living thing by flood. God says the seasons will continue, He will not again destroy all the living things, and the days and nights will continue. In other words, life on earth will continue until as Revelation 21:1 says the first earth has passed away.

iii. The third feature of covenants is grace. Despite Noah's sins God will continue to save him and never again destroy humanity. God's grace means that even though we Christians continue to sin God will continue to save us. God's grace will never end and He will carry us through this life and into heaven.

7. The second part of this covenant is found in chapter 9:1-7 and introduces human government with laws and penalties. God gives the penalty of death for murder. Previously in the case of the murderers Cain and Lamech God did not order them to be punished. Now we see that God gives authority to the government. We are to obey our government. However, there is one time according to Acts 5:29 when we are to disobey our government and this is when our government orders us to disobey God. We must never disobey God's laws even if the human government punishes us for this.

8. Romans 13:1-5 gives us four ways we are to understand government:

A. Government operates by using its strength, in other words, government uses force to rule its people.

B. Government can't develop morality; in other words government can't make people believe something is wrong or right. The idea of what is wrong, for example, comes from what the people think is wrong and not the government. The government can enforce its will on the people but it can't force people to change its mind about obeying laws. For example, the government says the speed limit for a road is 50 kilometers per mile, but the people think this is wrong, and they drive at 60 kilometers per hour so the government uses its force to make people drive 50 kilometers per mile.

C. Citizens develop morality so it takes healthy citizens to have healthy government. We see this in 2 Chronicles 7:14 where God says that if the people will humble themselves then God will heal the land. God does not say a new leader is needed; rather God says it's the people who must repent and be renewed.

i. The reason much of the world has such bad government is that the rulers are not Christian and they don't have Christian morality. Often our the rich only take care of themselves; they seal so much that there is not enough left over for the poor to survive. Christians are supposed to make sure other people are taken care of. Look at Mark 12:31 to see that we are to love others. James 1:27 says to provide for the widows and orphans. Leviticus 19:9-10 says to leave food for the poor.

D. God established governments so the governments are responsible to God. It was God who gave Noah rules for government and Romans 13:1 also tells us that

government authority comes from God. This means that God gives the government its authority and the government in turn should obey God. The citizens need to remind the government that they are responsible to God. To do this:

i. We citizens must truly understand that God is in charge of everything including our government.

ii. We must also understand the Bible and what it teaches us.

iii. We citizens must be willing to sacrifice everything to see that we live the way Christians should. An example of sacrifice is found in America where the government says homosexual marriages are legal. There are places, in America, where Christians have lost their businesses and homes because they refuse to cater for these homosexual weddings.

9. God, in chapter 9:13, show His love by giving the sign of a rainbow to Noah. Noah must have been frightened by the powerful flood which killed all other families on earth so God promised that He will never send a flood to drown everybody again.

10. Genesis 9:18-29 talks about Noah's sin.

A. The fall of Noah. Noah's sin proves that despite all the good things we have read about him that he is human. Noah is a sinner just like all other people; Romans 3:23 says, "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Even after Noah has seen God's terrible judgment on sinners, he still can't avoid sin and so in Genesis 9:21 we read how Noah got drunk and lay naked in his tent. Romans 3:10-12 again states the fact that every human falls into sin at times. Throughout the Old Testament we learn that man is sinful and can't stop sinning; the lesson is clearly taught that man can't save himself; a savior is needed

B. The sin of Ham. It is difficult to understand what Ham did that caused Noah to curse Canaan the son of Ham. There are many different ideas about what Ham did that was so bad. I think it is safe to say that the sin was dishonoring his father. Ham should have covered his father, and not told anybody about what he had seen.

C. The prophecy found in Genesis 9:25-27 that comes from these verses has three parts:

i. A curse on Canaan. There is disagreement about what the curse was.

a. I believe the curse was that the Hebrew people would capture the land of Canaan when the Hebrews returned from Egypt.

b. An example of how people misinterpret the Bible to serve their own purpose is that many people used to say the curse was being a black person and that verse 25 of chapter 9 makes it all right to make slaves out of black people and that it is all right to mistreat black people. For centuries Arabs, Europeans and the South African government misused this verse to abuse black people. This is a terrible sin. God does not judge people by the color of their skin. God judges all people based on whether their sins are covered by the blood of Jesus or not. God loves black people the same as he loves other people.

ii. A blessing for Shem. Actually, Noah pronounces the blessing on God. This blessing on Shem is fulfilled in his descendant Jesus.

iii. The second blessing from Noah is for Japheth. First he is told his descendants will extend his territory which happens. His descendants are great prosperous nations such as America. The second part of the blessing is being spiritually blessed, and this is a greater blessing than being prosperous. Japheth living in the tent of Shem in verse 27 means that many of the descendants of Japheth will be blessed by the descendant of Shem named Jesus.

11. Chapter 10 tells us where the sons of Noah and where they went to live on the earth. This settling in various parts of the earth probably took place after the tower of Babel which is reported about in chapter 11.

A. History records that the sons of Japheth went north and settled Russia and Europe.

B. Verse 6 begins telling us that the sons of Ham went south and they settled in Africa. Cush, the name of a son of Ham is also the Bible name for modern Ethiopia.

C. The last son reported about is Shem who is the most important one because he is the father of the people of Israel who are the Jews. Jesus is a Jew.

IV. The fourth main event of chapters 1-11 is the tower of Babel. This story is told in Genesis 11:1-9. The number of men grew after the flood and so did their sins. They forgot the lessons about sin taught by the great flood.

1. Genesis 11:1-4 tells how most of the people disobeyed God and did not fill all the earth. They settled together and worked together to rebel against God. Verse four tells how they disobeyed the command God gave Noah in chapter 9:1 to multiply and fill all the earth. God told Noah the same thing He had earlier told Adam. Humans are to fill up the earth and rule the earth.

2. God examines the situation in verses 5-9 and He stopped the people plotting together against Him by sending them all over the earth. He also gave them many different languages to keep them from plotting against Him. God made sure the people filled the earth.

3. The rest of chapter 11 takes us from Noah to the coming of Abram.

The rest of Genesis beginning in chapter 12 is the story of how four men were used by God. These men Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph are known as the patriarchs or fathers of the Jews.

I. Abram or Abraham. The first of these patriarchs is Abram who was later called Abraham. (Abraham was called Abram until the birth of his son Isaac). He is the father of the Hebrew nation; the father of the Jews.

1. Gen. 12:1-3 is the call of Abraham.

A. In verse 1 we are introduced to one of the most important people in the Bible.

B. Some of the things we know about him:

i. He was a man of great faith.

ii. He was a friend of God. 2 Chronicles 20:7, Isaiah 41:8, and James 2:23.

iii. He was a coward; two times he gave his wife to another man to save his own life.

iii. He was a sinner and probably he worshipped idols. We know from Joshua 24:2 that his father worshipped idols.

C. Verse one tells us that God called him to leave his home and go where God told him to go. Often God calls us to leave our home and families and follow Him wherever He leads us no matter how good the place we leave is or how bad the place we are going to is. This was the first act of faith we see from Abram as he did what God told him to do.

D. In these verses God makes seven promises to Abraham:

i. He promises to show Abram a land. Later in verse seven God promises to give this land to Abram's offspring.

ii. God promises to make Abram a great nation. This is a remarkable promise because Abram was 75 years old with no children.

iii. God promised to bless Abram. God went on to bless Abram with wealth, family and faith.

iv. I will make your name great and you will be a blessing. Abraham's name is very great. He has been a blessing through Jesus his offspring.

v. I will bless those who bless you. An example of a blessing is that Rahab and her family were spared because they befriended the Hebrews.

vi. Whoever curses you I will curse. An example of a curse is the destruction of Pharaoh's army during the Exodus.

vii. In verse 7 God tells Abram that He will give the land to his offspring. The land He promised is the "promised land" in Canaan which the Hebrew people took possession of during the time of Joshua.

E. Genesis 12:3 is the second messianic promise. The first one was found in Genesis 3:15. This prophecy goes far beyond any promise of material blessing because the blessing being promised to us is the promise of Jesus Christ, the messiah. The promise of Jesus is the most important promise ever, and Genesis 12:1-3 should be memorized.

2. Genesis 4-9 tells about Abram's great faith and how his faith was great enough to cause Abram to follow and obey God.

A. Abram was 75 years old when he obeyed God's call and moved to Canaan from Haran. He, in faith, moved from his home to live in a strange land.

B. Faith is the most natural thing in the world; especially faith in natural things. Our everyday life is full of acts of faith, for example, every time we sit in a chair we do this because we have faith the chair will hold us up. We have faith that the driver of our automobile will safely deliver us where we want to go.

C. However, most people do not want to have faith in God. They will do all they can to deny faith in God and not obey Him.

D. Abram's faith is shown in four steps. Often our faith just like Abram's faith has to be developed in steps as we mature in our relationship with God.

i. Abram's first act of faith was to leave his home.

ii. His second act of faith was to live with foreigners; in unfamiliar tents instead of in a city with houses.

iii. By faith he trusted God and even though he thought he was too old he fathered Isaac the son of promise.

iv. Later Abram by faith offered Isaac to God as a sacrifice.

E. All Christians must pray and seek faith enough to do whatever God calls us to do; even when it calls for great personal sacrifice, or puts us in great danger.

3. Genesis 12:10-20 tells the story of Abraham's trip to Egypt where he travelled to so that he could escape a famine. There are a couple of lessons here.

A. It appears that Abram goes to Egypt without asking God if he should do this. We should always ask God to direct us before we make any major moves. Egypt is a place which will cause Israel trouble throughout history; even in modern times. Egypt stands for the world and God is teaching Abram that he and his descendants are to be different from the world, and Israel must trust God for its help in times of trouble.

B. Abram gets frightened in Egypt and shows that even though he is a man of great faith there are times when his faith weakens. While in Egypt Abram's faith weakens and he gives his wife to Pharaoh to protect himself. The lesson for us is that there are times when our faith will be weak, but when we think about what the Bible teaches us about God our faith gets strong again. The way to keep our faith strong is to really get to know God well which we do by studying the Bible, and praying frequently and passionately.

3. Genesis 13 reports that Abram and his nephew Lot had become so prosperous with large herds of animals that they were forced to live in separate places to have enough grass to feed all the animals.

A. We see that Abram has a generous heart because he allowed Lot to take first choice of the land. It is good that they didn't fight over the land.

B. Lot chose the richest looking land and moved into it. Verse 13 tells us that Lot moved into a land close to Sodom which was inhabited with very sinful people. Later this choice of land causes trouble for Lot when God destroys Sodom.

C. In verse 14 God tells Abram to look up which is good advice for us. We need to look up to God and trust Him. God continues the promise of a future that He first mentioned in chapter 12.

i. When we are troubled we must learn to look up and trust God. We should think about the wonderful relationship we have with God and remember the wonderful future we have waiting for us in heaven.

4. Chapter 14:1-17 reports about the first war that is reported in history. Abram became involved because his nephew was captured and Abram went to war to save his relative. We read that God gave him complete victory.

5. Chapter 14:18-20 introduces us to Melchizedek a most interesting person. He is only mentioned in three verses in Genesis but we can see that he is a very important person. Who is Melchizedek?

A. Genesis 14:19 tells us that Melchizedek blesses Abram which makes Melchizedek more important than Abram; this is confirmed in Hebrews 7:4-7 which states that the inferior is blessed by the superior. When God blesses us He gives us good things such as our salvation.

B. Verse 20 confirms the importance of Melchizedek when Abram gives him a tithe of everything.

C. Psalm 110 is a Messianic Psalm and verse four links Melchizedek to Jesus.

D. Verse 18 tells us that Melchizedek was a priest of God. He is the first person in the Bible called a priest.

E. The name Melchizedek means “king of righteousness”. He was the king of Salem; Salem means peace.

F. The relation between Melchizedek and Christ as type and antitype is made in the Epistle to the Hebrews to consist in the following particulars: Each was a priest, (1) not of the Levitical tribe; (2) superior to Abraham; (3) whose beginnings are unknown; (4) who is not only a priest, but also a king of righteousness and peace.

6. Chapter 15:1 begins with God coming to Abram in a vision where He promises to be Abram’s defense and his great reward. During Bible times God still spoke to people in visions and dreams; God no longer does this because the Bible is completed. `God now speaks to us through His word—the Bible. Read this in Hebrews 1:1-2 and Revelation 22:18-19.

A. Here in verse one of chapter 15 God tells Abram that He will be Abrams’ protection and God will also give Abram a great reward. God had just protected Abram when as chapter 14 reports Abram defeated an army bigger and more powerful than his own small army of 318 men.

B. God is the Christian’s protection against many things such as:

i. Human enemies. The Bible has many stories reporting how God protected His people. For example, often God protected David when King Saul was trying to kill him. Read 2 Samuel 22:2-3 to see what David says about the protection of God.

ii. God protects us against Satan by controlling him and Satan can only do to us what God allows him to do. We read this in the story of Job. When we feel Satan is attacking us we must pray and look to God for protection. This is the lesson Ephesians 6:10-18 teaches.

iii. Temptation. God protects us against temptation. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10:13 that God will protect us so that no temptation will come to us that we are not able to resist. He also tells us that God will provide a way for us to stand up to the

temptation. We must look to God in prayer and trust to be able to say no to any temptation. Remember, we people are always responsible when we choose to sin.

iv. Bitterness. Paul says in Philippians 1:12 that he rejoiced in his suffering because his suffering advanced the gospel. Often God's kingdom is advanced through the suffering of God's people. Remember the great comforting message from Romans 8:28 that says, "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. "This means that your suffering is for your good. A person with strong faith believes this and is protected from becoming bitter.

C. The reward God is talking about is the reward of living a blessed life belonging to Jesus and also the promise of eternal life. We Christians look forward to these rewards. It is a fact that the places where people live the most comfortable lives are in Christian places or places which were formerly strongly Christian. An example is the United States of America. Our hope for Africa is that Africa will soon become Christian.

7. We have a few lessons in verses 2-5.

A. It is all right to ask God for something and if we don't get our wish it is all right to ask again. We must do this respectfully and not complain because God has not given us what we want. In this case Abram was asking for children which was something God had already promised to give him, see Genesis 13:15-16.

B. We also learn that God has His own timetable and we need to wait for God to act in His own perfect time. We must also accept it when God says no to our request.

i. An example of this happened to me. In 1986 I felt called to be a foreign missionary, but God said what I thought was no. Actually God was saying wait because in 2005 when I thought I was too old to begin as a missionary God called me to full time missions and He brought me to Uganda. I was 62 years old when I started as a full time missionary.

8. Next is Genesis 15:6 which is one of the most important verses in the Bible. For the first time we are introduced to the doctrine of justification by grace through faith. Justification means that God judges a person as not guilty of all his sins when he is justified. When a person is justified by God it means that all his sins are forgiven and He will go to heaven.

A. We are justified by our faith in Jesus Christ. Note that we are not saved by faith itself, but by our faith in Jesus who is the object of our faith.

B. Abram and the other Old Testament believers were saved by their faith in the Messiah who was to come. We read this in Galatians 3:8-9 which says And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed." So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

C. What exactly did Abram believe in?

i. First Abram was justified by believing God's word. Remember the promise found in Genesis 12:3 when God promised that all families on earth would be blessed through Abram. Hebrews 11:10 says, "For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God." This tells us that Abram was looking forward to the New Jerusalem which is in heaven.

ii. Abram believed in redemption from his sins. This redemption means that Jesus delivered us from the bondage of sin at the cost of His own life because He loves us. This means that everyone who is redeemed and justified is free from all sins and they are forgiven. We who are redeemed will enjoy the promises of heaven that were given to Abram

iii. Abram also looked forward to the coming of Jesus. We are told this in Galatians 3:16 which says, "Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your offspring," who is Christ."

D. Salvation is a gift to us. We don't do anything to earn it. God picks whoever He wants to save so there is nothing for us to boast of. There is nothing we do to be proud because we didn't do anything. Ephesians 2:8-9 tells us we are not saved by anything we do that God does everything.

7. Chapter 15:7-21 tells us about the covenant God made with Abram. Abram was very troubled because he had no children which was a terrible thing in his culture. It was considered to be a sign that a person had no favor with God if he had no male children.

A. God in verse four had promised children to Abram and in verse seven God promised land to Abram.

B. In verse eight Abram asked God for a sign to show him that this would happen. Later Gideon in Judges 6:36-40 and King Hezekiah in 2 Kings 20:8-11 also asked God for a sign and God gave them a sign. Asking God for a sign is acceptable.

i. Today we Christians sometimes ask God for a sign. For example when I was considering if I was called to come to Africa as a missionary I asked God for a sign. Money was the sign. I knew how much it would cost for me to be a missionary. The sign was that I needed a certain amount of money to be a missionary and the sign to me that I was supposed to come to Africa was God giving me the needed money.

C. God reacts to Abram by giving him a sign of a covenant. Remember, God gave a covenant to Noah. A covenant is a promise from God. A covenant has three parts:

i. First, these covenants come only from God to man. Covenants totally depend on God, and God will make sure the covenants are kept.

ii. Second, they are forever and can't be changed. They are eternal.

iii. Third, covenants are based on God's grace alone. God gives them to us at no cost and He gives them to people who have done nothing to deserve them.

D. In Abram's day an agreement was signed and sealed by cutting animals into two parts and placing the parts in two rows. Then the people making the agreement walked between the parts. Since God is the one who made the covenant by Himself, only God walked between the animal parts. The blood of the animals made the ceremony sacred

E. Verse 17 reports the Lord appeared as a smoking firepot, and "a blazing torch."

F. While Abram is sleeping, God tells him that his offspring will spend 400 years living in a strange land. He also tells Abram that He will bring Abram's descendants out of this foreign land with great possessions. Later the Bible tells us the story about how the Hebrews travelled to Egypt where they lived for four hundred years. We will also read that 400 years later the Hebrews came out of Egypt with many possessions taken from the Egyptians who willingly gave their riches. Exodus 12:35-36

G. God in verses 18-21 tells Abram the boundaries of the land He is giving to his descendants.

8. Genesis 16 is the story of Abram's unbelief and how he and his wife conspired to produce a male child through Hagar his servant. Ishmael is the son, and he is the father of the Arab nations. These are the nations of Islam which desire to kill every Jew alive today. Even though Hebrews 11:8 calls Abraham a man of faith; we see that at times his faith, like everybody's faith, weakened. Abraham's son Ishmael was born because of Abraham's lack of faith.

A. We, Christians, must always trust God. This means that even if God is not doing what we think is right or what we want; we must follow His rules and accept whatever He orders.

i. An example is a person who wants to pass a test so that he gets a new job with increased salary. It is wrong to cheat to pass the test. Trust God and accept it if He allows you to fail the test and not get the job. Do not ever cheat.

B. In verse 7 we are introduced to the “angel of the Lord”. The angel of the Lord is probably Jesus who shows himself before his later physical birth. The word angel means messenger so Jesus is the messenger. Look at the following two verses where the angel of the Lord says, “I will” this can only mean that the speaker is God because only God can do these things. Genesis 16:9 says, the angel of the LORD said to her, "Return to your mistress and submit to her." Genesis 16:10 says the angel of the LORD also said to her, "I will surely multiply your offspring so that they cannot be numbered for multitude."

9. In chapter 17 Abram is sixteen years older than he was in the last chapter, and he is now 99 years old and this is much too old to be a father and his wife is too old to be a mother. Genesis 17:1-8 contain a promise from God that Abram is to be renamed Abraham because he is promised a male heir and will as God promised earlier be the father of a multitude of nations. In the following year Sarai gives birth to Isaac who was the son of promise and an ancestor of the Lord Jesus Christ.

A. In verses 1-8 God changes the name of Abram to Abraham as He reminds Abraham of his previous promise of an heir. This name, Abraham, means father of many nations.

B. Next in verses 9-14 we have the covenant of circumcision where the Hebrews are set apart as God’s special people. Circumcision is a symbol which set God’s people apart from all other people just as baptism does to Christians today. This is the teaching also of the New Testament that we Christians live in this world but we do not belong to this world. Our real home is with God in heaven. See John 17:14-16 and 18:36.

i. This covenant of circumcision is very serious. This is the first covenant where God requires the people to do something. Failure to obey God in this matter was very serious. See Exodus 4:24-25 to see how serious God treated the failure of Moses to obey the covenant.

ii. Circumcision was a sign to the Jew that a person belonged to God; that he identified himself as a Jew. Baptism is a sign to the Christian that he belongs to Jesus; that it identifies him as a Christian.

C. In verses 15-19 God promises to bless Sarai, even though she is 90 years old, with a child and she is to be renamed Sarah which is a fitting name meaning princess because she is to be the mother of kings.

i. Verse 17 reports that Abraham laughed with joy over the promise of a son; an heir. He is overjoyed with this news.

ii. In Genesis 17:18 Abram shows he is a man who takes care of his responsibilities when he ask God to make Ishmael his heir. Abraham doesn’t really understand God’s plan when he ask God to make Ishmael his heir. It was good of Abraham to want his son provided for. God wants us to care for our children.

iii. In verse 19 God makes it clear that Sarah is to be the mother of the heir named Isaac and that God’s covenant shall be established through Isaac.

D. God promises to provide for Ishmael in verse 20 where He says, “As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I have blessed him and will make him fruitful and multiply him greatly. He shall father twelve princes, and I will make him into a great nation.

10. Chapter 18:1-8 deals with Abraham's friendship with God. God comes with two companions to visit His friend Abraham. There are three other times in the Bible that Abraham is identified as God's friend; 2 Chronicles 20:7, James 2:23, and Isaiah 41:8.

A. We learn from this visit God makes with Abraham that God wants to be a friend to us and to have us be friends with Him. It is comforting to know that we can look forward to spending eternity with God our friend.

B. There are three ways that God provided friendship to Abraham.

i. God was a companion to Abraham. At this point in Abraham's life, he really only had one companion; his wife. God is always there to be our companion, see Psalm 146:9. He will never leave us even if everybody else does.

ii. God is always ready to communicate with us. We can talk to God anytime we desire and He is always waiting to listen to us. Proverbs 18:24 tells us that God is closer to us than a brother.

iii. God always has compassion on us. He showed this compassion by giving Sarah a son.

C. Jesus called Christians friend see John 15:12-15. Let's study this friendship and note that it is different than His friendship with Abraham.

i. The companionship Jesus offers us is longer even as Matthew 28:20 says to the end of the age.

ii. Abraham had communications with God during a couple of times in his life, but we have the complete Bible which gives us communication with God whenever we want it. We can also communicate with God at any time by praying.

iii. There is no greater friendship than the compassion Christ showed by dying for we sinners.

D. Jesus wants to be our friend. Are you His friend? John 15:14 tells us we are His friend if we obey Him. To obey Him we must know Him and do what he wants us to do. The only way we can do this is by learning all we can about Him. We learn about Him when we study the Bible. Psalm 119:11 says, "I have stored up your word in my heart that I might not sin against you."

11. Genesis 18:9-15 talks about something being too difficult for God to do, and Sarah's believing that something is too difficult for God to do.

A. We read here that Sarah hears God promise that in a year she will give birth to a son. Sarah doubts God because she is only thinking about this as a human being, and a human is limited in what they can do. She forgets that with God all things are possible. Read Luke 1:34-38. God is not limited in what He can do; after all He is omnipotent which means there is no limit on His power.

i. Late in 2013 this writer was diagnosed by doctors with terminal lung/liver cancer, and there was no treatment for this. I was told to go home and die. However, God had other plans and as I write these notes it is January 2017 and I am still alive and the cancer is gone. Just like God giving Sarah a son; God acted in a miraculous way to deliver me from cancer.

B. Sarah's laugh was the laughter of complete unbelief, and it was the laughter of sin. Let's study Sarah's sin of unbelief.

i. First, unbelief is sin. She is calling God a liar because earlier in chapter 17:15-16 God promised a son to Sarah. 1 John 5:9-10 tells that anybody who does not believe God calls God a liar. We must not treat unbelief lightly because calling God a liar is a very stupid thing to do. We must believe and trust God in all situations.

ii. Second, like all sin, unbelief leads to other sins. In this case the sin of unbelief led Sarah to the sin of lying. It is best to not commit the first sin, but when you do sin

you should immediately fall on your knees and admit your sin and ask forgiveness. Don't try to fool God because He is omniscient and knows everything.

iii. Third, God does not treat unbelief lightly. He treats all sin as very serious. We must also realize that all sin is very serious and we must avoid even what seems to us a small sin because even one small unforgiven sin is enough to send a person to hell.

C. There is also a lesson in God's grace here in these verses. God forgave Sarah for her sin and gave her a son. We must forget our circumstances and look to God in faith knowing that His grace is greater than our circumstances. We must not limit God. Don't be afraid to ask Him for really big things. I did this when I asked God to cure my cancer.

12. Next in chapter 18:16-33 we read the story of Abraham interceding for the people of Sodom. This is a lesson for us about intercessory prayer which is the kind of prayer where you pray for someone else's benefit. There are some lessons here which apply to us. Often, we pray mostly for our own desires. We should, instead, pray for other people such as the persecuted church, the sick, God's kingdom to be enlarged, unsaved people, etc.

A. God uses the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah just as He used Noah to show that He will judge all sin and sinners. This judgment will be very fierce. One of the main messages from the Old Testament is that God will punish all sin. The New Testament also teaches the same lesson' read 2 Peter 2:4-9 to see this.

B. Let's study and learn lessons from the intercessory prayer of Abraham's so that we might be able to properly intercede for others.

i. First we learn that Abraham's prayer is for other people and not himself. It is good to make praying for others a regular part of our prayers.

ii. Second it is all right to present arguments to convince God to grant your request. Note how Abraham in verses 23-33 ask God questions which are designed to cause God to spare Sodom. Abraham is humble and he respectfully pleads with God.

iii. We see other people argue for God to spare people such as Moses in Exodus 32:11-12.

iv. A short time ago I was made aware of a fellow missionary who was very sick with malaria. The malaria had gone into his lung and his life was threatened. I have prayed, many times, for this man to recover. I have asked God to allow this man to live so that he could return to his missionary work. I gave God another reason to restore this man's health by mentioning that his wife and children need him. It is all right to pray this way.

C. Often, unrepentant sinners will benefit because of God's protection of the righteous person; an example of this is found in Acts 27:24 where God allows everybody on the ship with the Apostle Paul to live along with Paul.

i. Here is another example of unrepentant sinners being spared from judgment by association with Christians while they are living. God sometimes spares the unrepentant sinner to protect the righteous person. However, the unrepentant sinner will not permanently escape judgment. Matthew 13:24-30 shows how the weeds, who are the unrepentant sinner, will be allowed to grow along with the good wheat, but in the end the weeds will be gathered up and burned at judgment time.

13. Genesis 19:1-29 tells about sinful Sodom, and how Lot who was the nephew of Abraham became part of sinful Sodom, and how God destroys sinful Sodom and Gomorrah.

A. We want to study Lot to show how a person can gradually move from living the way he should to living a sinful lifestyle. Lot moved to Canaan with Abraham and for a time was close to Abraham. He then made choices which led him away from living

close to his righteous uncle Abraham to living as a part of sinful Sodom. We see these bad choices he made in several verses:

i. The first bad choice is mentioned in Genesis 13:10 where Lot looked at sinful Sodom. Just a quick look at Sodom was not the such bad choice. The bad choice was looking at Sodom for a long time and thinking about how he would enjoy the attractions of living in a big city even though he knew Sodom was a wicked city.

ii. The next bad choice is reported in Genesis 13:12 when he moved close to the city. He moved close to the temptation of Sodom.

iii. By the time of Genesis 19:1 Lot had moved into the city.

B. Often people get involved into a sinful life style by doing just what Lot did. They look closely at a sinful attraction. Then they get closer to this sin, and finally they get involved in the sin. The best thing would have been for Lot to have avoided looking over and over again at Sodom, and not looked at the city for long periods of time. The way to avoid getting trapped in sin is to flee from sin the first time you see it; flee the first time you come into contact with it.

C. We see in verses 1-3 that Lot still is not as sinful as the other men in the city and he offered sanctuary to the angels. However, Lot appears to have been affected by his living with these sinful people. This is the only way I can explain him offering his daughters to the men for their sexual pleasure. This shows that it was not good for Lot to live in Sodom; offering his daughters to these men was a very evil thing.

D. The Bible in several places tell us that Sodom was sinful in many ways. Isaiah 1:9-10, Isaiah 3:9, Jeremiah 23:14, and Ezekiel 16:49 make it clear that Sodom and Gomorrah were known for being evil. Sodom was not destroyed just for the sin of homosexual sex but for all the many sins put together.

i. However, the sin that Sodom is best known for is the sin of homosexual sex. God makes it clear that this sin is particularly hateful to Him. Homosexual behavior is an attack on the family. God wanted people to have a home where a man and a woman join together to raise their children.

E. Ecclesiastes 3:1 tells us, "For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven. For Lot and his family it is the time when the only wise thing a person can do is to flee from the place they are.

i. Beginning in verse 12 the angels warn Lot to gather his family and flee the city before they are all destroyed. Lot has been so changed by the sinful city that he has been living in that he hesitated and the angels had to take his hand and lead him out of the city. This shows how easy it is to be trapped by sin and perish. We must flee all temptations and ask God to help us avoid the sinful temptations of life.

F. In verses 18-26 we see Lot continuing to act stupidly and sinfully as he continues to argue with the angels that God sent to save him and his family. Psalm 107:17 tells us that people become fools because of their sinful ways and they suffer because of this. It is difficult to understand why Lot argues with the angels that God sent to save him but he did. This shows that Lot was so trapped by his sin that he couldn't make himself leave it all behind.

i. Lot's wife disobeyed the instructions to not look back at Sodom which brought instant judgment when God turned her into a pillar of salt.

ii. Verses 24-26 report that God's judgment was very fierce with the cities being destroyed, along with the people, and even the things growing on the ground.

G. Next in verses 27-28 we read how Abraham got up in the morning and looked toward the cities and he saw their total destruction. God's judgment was both fierce and also very quick in being delivered. It was just the evening before that Abraham had pleaded with the Lord for the cities to be spared. Many people are waiting until later to become a Christian; the warning here is to not wait until tomorrow because

you might not have tomorrow. Hebrews 10:31 tells us, “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

i. You can turn to Jesus in belief and repentance only while you are still alive so don't wait any longer.

14. Genesis 19:30-38 reports a shameful story about Lot and his two daughters. It is a story of how the daughters did not trust God so they got Lot drunk and then they slept with him to have children; this is incest which is a terrible sin. Each daughter had a son who became the fathers of two nations; Moab and Ammon. These two nations became enemies of the Jews.

A. We learn, from Lot's story, that what begins as temptation becomes sin if the person allows himself to indulge in his desires. Once sin gets ahold of a person it becomes difficult; even impossible to escape. The cure for this problem is to flee the temptation. If you start living a lifestyle of sin then stop. The only sure way to escape from the trap of temptation and sin is to turn to God and ask His help to overcome the problem.

15. Genesis 20 is a story about value of prayer in God's eyes. We read here how Abraham to protect his own life gave his wife to Abimelech. However, before Abimelech could have sexual relations with Sarah, God warned Abimelech and told him he would die unless, Abimelech had Abraham pray for him. In other words God required prayer before He would act for Abimelech. A powerful story here about the sovereignty of God and the power and importance of prayer.

A. There are other lessons in this story for us. One is that we people who belong to God must have a good testimony to the world. We must act in a morally correct manner at all times. Here the pagan king Abimelech does the right thing and Abraham does the wrong thing. In verses 9-10 Abimelech questioned Abraham about why Abraham did this terrible thing of giving his wife to Abimelech.

i. We Christians must work very hard to always have a good testimony. We must do everything we can do to show the world that Christians live in a better way. It is terrible when the non-Christian does the correct thing and the Christian is the one who sins and does the wrong thing.

B. There are three characteristics of Abraham's sin that we will look at.

i. First is that it was a cowardly sin. Abraham should have been willing to die to protect his wife. This lesson is clearly taught in Ephesians 5:25 where we men are told, “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.”

ii. The second characteristic about the sin is that it was an old sin repeated. Remember when Abraham was in Egypt years earlier he gave Sarah to Pharaoh. We must also guard ourselves from old sins coming back. The way to do this is to pray and ask God to protect us from this sin. We must avoid situations which would tempt us to repeat this old sin. An example of this is alcohol and being drunk. If you have earlier had a problem with drinking alcohol stay away from alcohol. Don't ever go into a place where it is served; cross the street to avoid walking by a tavern which would tempt you. Pray whenever you feel any temptation and ask God to protect you from this temptation.

iii. The third thing this sin showed was the lack of faith of Abraham. Even though Abraham was known as a man of great faith at times his faith fell short. We must learn from Abraham and we must remain humble and trust God when danger threatens us.

C. We learn a lesson about God's grace from this story. God forgave Abraham and God continued to use him. Many characters of the Bible such as the Apostle Peter fell

into sin but God picked him up and restored him to service. Let God pick you up from your sin and remember God can restore you to and use you for His service.

15. Chapter 21:1-7 is the story of the birth of Isaac. The name of Isaac means laughter. Sarah and Abraham are overjoyed with the birth of Isaac and Sarah rejoiced with laughter. Isaac was the son of promise.

A. There are a number of lessons for us in this passage.

i. One lesson is that God is always faithful to His promises. This means that every promises in the Bible will happen. This includes the promise of heaven for the redeemed person and the promise of hell for the unrepentant sinner.

ii. We learn that God is all powerful and He is able to do all that He promises. God not only gave a son to Abraham after Abraham was considered too old to have a son, but later, after Sarah died, Abraham fathered six more children. Don't ever hesitate to do whatever you feel God is calling you to do because you feel you are not able to do the job. I was 62 years old when God called me to be a fulltime missionary and I was not in good health. Remember it is God who makes something successful and not the individual person's ability or effort.

iii. Another lesson is about time. God will do things when he wants to and not according to when we want them done. I felt called to be a fulltime missionary in 1986, but I was turned down by the mission board. 19 years later God ignored my age and health and made me a fulltime missionary. God has faithfully provided all that I need to be a missionary.

B. There are many comparisons between the birth of Isaac and the later birth of Christ. We say Isaac is foreshadowing Christ. Foreshadowing is when God uses something or somebody to partially reveal the future. As we look at the birth of Isaac we are pointed to look forward to the birth of Jesus. The birth of Jesus is fulfilment of what the birth of Isaac looked forward to. In the next chapter 22:14 we will see this when Abraham almost sacrifices Isaac. Some of the comparisons concerning birth are:

i. The birth of both men was promised by God before each man was born. Jesus was first promised at Genesis 3:15.

ii. Both mothers had some doubt about a son actually being born to them. Genesis 18:13 tells that Sarah doubted because she thought she was too old and God answered her, verse 14, by asking, "is anything too hard for the Lord?"

iii. God named both of the sons before they were born. The name of Jesus signifies that he will save his people from their sins.

iv. Both births came at God's appointed time.

v. Both births required a miracle. Isaac's birth required God to make it possible for two people who were too old to have a baby. The birth of Jesus required a miracle for a virgin to give birth.

vi. The birth of both Isaac and Jesus caused great joy; Sarah even laughed. Mary broke out in joyful song, Luke 1:46-47. Even though the birth of Jesus was in a very poor place under poor circumstances the birth of our savior was a very joyful occasion.

16. Genesis 21:8-21 is the story of how Hagar and Ishmael permanently separate from Abraham.

A. We aren't told all the reasons why Hagar and Ishmael had to leave but one reason was because of friction or fighting between Hagar and Sarah, this friction is reported in chapter 21:9-10 and earlier in chapter 16. Friction is another good reason that a family should only have one husband and one wife.

B. Verse 9 gives us a reason that Hagar had to leave. It says that Ishmael was laughing or mocking Isaac.

C. We see that Abraham loved his son Ishmael and he didn't want to be separated, however, God in verse 12 tells Abraham to send Hagar away as Sarah wanted.

D. God provided for the immediate needs of Ishmael and Hagar in verse 19. God also promised that Ishmael would have success in life.

17. The rest of chapter 21 tells how Abimelech and Abraham are able to work together peacefully even though they are such different people.

18. Chapter 22 tells us the story about the testing of Abraham. We see why Abraham is called a man of great faith. This is a very important story and is one of the most preached about stories in the Bible.

A. The first part of the story takes place in verses 1-12 which is where Abraham was tested about sacrificing his son Isaac. Many preachers use a lot of imagination when they teach about this story. We will stay close to the facts and let them speak for themselves.

i. We know for sure that Abraham was ordered by God to sacrifice Isaac and Abraham followed God's order. He went to the designated place and prepared Isaac for the sacrifice. He was beginning the move to sacrifice Isaac when God stopped him.

ii. There were surely a lot of conflicting thoughts in Abraham's mind. After all, Isaac was the son of promise who was to be the link with Christ. Isaac was the one who was to be the one through whom God would fulfill the promise of blessing for all people earlier promised to Abraham.

iii. Abraham must have had many thoughts about whether God was going to allow Isaac to be sacrificed. In any case he quickly started preparing for the sacrifice by beginning his travel to the place where the sacrifice was to take place. Abraham did everything he had to do to prepare for the actual sacrifice.

iv. In verses 11-12 God stopped Abraham from killing his son. Abraham had proven his complete faith in God. Christians must trust God enough to follow Him anywhere and do anything He leads us to do. Even if it leads to the sacrifice of our lives.

B. The second part of the story in verses 13-14 tells how God provided a substitute for Isaac. It actually goes forward to look to the cross. God lets us see what is coming.

i. In verse 14 we read that Abraham says, "God will provide or God will see." Abraham is looking past the fact that God just provided a substitute sacrifice for Isaac to the future when God will provide Jesus; the perfect sacrifice for all our sins.

ii. God had ordered Abraham to go to Mount Moriah which is where Jerusalem is located and where Jesus was sacrificed for us.

C. Genesis 22:15-24 teaches us more lessons about the obedience of Abraham. God promises to bless Abraham's descendants because of Abraham's obedience. God had already made promises of blessings but now he enlarges the promise. Earlier He had promised that Abraham's descendants would be as numerous as the stars of heaven, Genesis 15:5, and now He adds that his descendants would also be as numerous as the sands of the seashore. So God has added to His original promises because of Abraham's obedience. There are some lessons for us from this obedience:

i. Abraham's obedience was immediate. He didn't put off obeying the order; the very next day, early in the morning, he started off on his trip. We must quickly obey God even if He wants us to do something difficult.

ii. The obedience was a sustained obedience. It wasn't something that Abraham could do and it would be over quickly. He had to obey for three long days. This is a lesson for us. We must persist and obey God even if it takes the rest of our lives to do what He orders us to do.

iii. The third thing we see about Abraham's obedience is that it was a willing obedience. He wasn't doing what God ordered reluctantly because he had to do it. He followed the order willingly just as Jesus willingly went to the cross for us.

iv. Abraham's obedience was contagious; even Isaac willingly obeyed. We Christians must be willing to work together to obey God.

D. Genesis 22:18 is another Messianic prophecy found in Genesis. The angel of the Lord is talking about Jesus as being the one who all nations on earth will be blessed through.

19. Genesis 23 reports the death and burial of Sarah. There are lessons we learn from the life and death of Sarah. Sarah's life was a good example for us as she had a good testimony.

A. Twice the Bible tells us to look at Sarah as being a good example.

i. Isaiah 51:1-2 tells us that Sarah was a good example.

ii. 1 Peter 3:3-6 tells how Sarah was a beautiful person inside.

B. Sarah was a good wife married to Abraham for over 60 years that we know of and faithful all those years. She allowed Abraham to be the leader of the house which is proper.

C. We learn from Abraham in Genesis 23:2 that it is all right to mourn and cry over the death of a loved person. Unlike non-Christians our mourning is not hopeless grieving. We mourn because we miss the person but we know as Christians that we will see our loved one in heaven.

D. Beginning in verse 3 we learn from the story about Abraham buying the land to bury his wife that we should be sensitive to local customs and we must be honest when we do business with people. It is true that he was offered the land for free but the local custom was that he should turn down this offer and pay a fair price which Abraham did.

20. Genesis 24 is the story of Isaac's marriage. There are lessons from this story.

A. Isaac must have a wife and since his wife would be the mother of the many nations, God had instructed Abraham that the wife must be chosen very carefully. The wife must not be a local person; she has to come from Abraham's family. We see this principle in the rule for us from 2 Corinthians 6:14 that we Christians are only allowed to marry a Christian. We must not be married to a pagan; a non-believer. The Bible is full of stories about how often the people of Israel got into serious trouble by marrying foreign women. Even wise King Solomon married a foreign woman who helped lead Solomon away from God.

i. Christians must not become partners with non-Christians. An example is that Christians must not become business partners with a non-Christians. This is because Christian businessmen must be honest with their customers and also we must treat everybody in a good way, and this includes employees.

B. Abraham also knew it would be good to not send Isaac to their original homeland because it was important that Isaac live in the land God promised. Abraham did not want to allow Isaac to be tempted to stay in the original homeland.

C. We see the importance of always having an attitude of prayer. The servant was certainly a man of prayer which is very important.

i. Along with his prayers, the servant also asked God for signs so that the servant would understand the Lord's will. We can also do this. For example, for my wife and I to become fulltime missionaries we needed people to promise the necessary money for us to live on. We decided we needed a certain promised income before we could go to Africa. As soon as we raised that amount of money we prepared to leave. God raising the needed money was our sign from Him that He wanted us to be missionaries in Africa.

D. Our attitude must be to go as soon as God calls us to go and enables us. In verse 50 Laban and Bethuel recognized that the sending of Rebekah was from God they agreed she would go and marry Isaac. In verse 58 Rebekah agreed to go as soon as she was asked and she and the servant quickly left.

II. We now come to the death of Abraham which brings us to study Isaac as the second patriarch of Israel.

1. Chapter 25:1-11 reports the death of Abraham. He took another wife, after Sarah died and he fathered six more sons with her. Abraham died at the age of 175 years and he was buried with Sarah.

A. Peter wrote in 2 Peter 1:5-8 telling us how our character should be; how we Christians should live. We see these good characteristics in the way Abraham lived. Let's look at some of these good characteristics:

i. Moral excellence or virtue. Note how he allowed Lot first choice of the land and also how he rescued Lot and his family from the eastern kings. He gave a tithe to Melchizedek who was God's priest. This acknowledged that God was the source of all Abraham's victories. Abraham wanted to make sure that God gets all the glory, and we must do this also.

ii. Christians must know God. Abraham knew God from his meetings with God and he studied God. For us today we also must know God and we can only learn about God by studying the Bible. Everything we know about God we find in the Bible. A good rule is never believe anything somebody tells you about God unless you know it is in the Bible. Don't be afraid to ask the person to show you in the Bible where it says what the person said about God.

iii. Second Peter 1:6 says we must develop self-control. We also read this in Galatians 5:22-23 where the fruits of the Spirit are listed. Self-control means submission to the will of God and Abraham showed this when he looked at the destroyed cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Remember that Abraham had prayed earnestly for God to spare the cities and he didn't complain about the destruction, he accepted God's will in this matter.

iv. Sustained obedience or perseverance. Abraham showed this when he spent three long days journeying to Moriah to sacrifice Isaac. We must persevere all our lives serving God.

v. Godliness or being godlike in behavior is another characteristic Peter tells us to develop. We can only develop this by spending more time with God. Wherever Abraham moved to, he quickly built an altar so that he could worship God. We see this in Genesis 12:7 and 12:8 and 13:18. We must imitate Abraham and worship God continually. Worshipping with other Christians is important.

vi. We must develop brotherly kindness which is expressed in loving and helping others, especially fellow Christians according to Galatians 6:10. Abraham showed this in the way he treated others such as Ishmael, Hagar, Sarah, and Isaac. Genesis 23: 2 records how he mourned and wept over Sarah at her death.

vii. The greatest virtue is love. Another characteristic of Abraham was his love for both other people and especially for God. We see this throughout his life.

2. Genesis 25:12-26 is a story about two sons.

A. Verses 12-18 tell about the sons of Ishmael who was the firstborn son of Abraham. We read that Ishmael had twelve sons who settled the lands of Arabia.

B. Verses 19-26 tells us that Isaac was forty years old when he married and at first Rebekah is barren. Verse 21 tells us that Isaac prayed for twenty years before twin sons were born to Rebekah.

i. Esau was firstborn and Jacob was second born. Verse 22 report that the twins struggled in the womb and when Rebekah inquired of God why this was, He told her in verse 23 that the first born would serve the second born. The fact that He chose Jacob over Esau before they were born proves that God is sovereign and He chooses the person He will save based only on His sovereign choice, and not because of something a person does. In other words, we are saved by God's grace only and not by our own merit or because we are good people.

C. The Apostle Paul uses this story in Romans nine to prove that God is completely sovereign and people are saved solely by His Grace. Another way of saying this is that God is completely in control and people are saved only because God chooses to save them for His own purpose because He wants to. Romans 9:10-13 tells us that God said even before the birth that, "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I hated." There are some practical applications to this passage:

i. No person should ever boast and be proud because they are a Christian. Ephesians 2:8-9 tells us that we didn't do any work to be saved so we have nothing to boast about. God did all the work. Think about Abraham and the kind of man he was when God called him. He was a pagan; an idol worshipper.

ii. We should love God even more because God loved us first according to 1 John 4:19. Romans 5:8 tells us that Christ died for us while we were still sinners. God loved us when we were not very lovely.

D. Knowing all this, we should be very humble about the salvation Jesus gave to us. We should be so thankful that we willingly give our lives in service to God, and especially we tell others about Jesus.

3. Genesis 25:27-34 talks about birthrights. Esau was firstborn so he should have had the birthright of being firstborn. Jacob means deceiver or liar and we see that he earns his name as he steals Esau's birthright and also tricks Isaac into giving him the first born blessing.

A. Verse 28 tells how Isaac favored Esau and how Rebekah favored Jacob. We will see how this favoritism caused Rebekah to help Jacob deceive her husband.

B. The story about Esau and Jacob and the stew is a story about how Esau despised the inheritance that was rightly his. It is not just a physical inheritance that Esau despised, rather he was not interested in the spiritual blessing that was rightly his. Esau chose worldly things over spiritual things. Jacob was correct to want the spiritual blessings, but he was wrong to steal them. He should have behaved honestly and God would have given him the blessing if he had waited. We must never be dishonest to get something we want no matter how good the item is. We must trust God and wait for whatever he gives us and be satisfied with it.

i. If God gives your neighbor a big house and a new car, don't be jealous. You should be happy with whatever God gives you.

C. Another mistake Esau made was to seize the thing he could get immediately instead of waiting for what God wanted to give to him. He did not trust God to give him what would be best for him. I waited until I was 38 years old for God to send me the right wife, and I am glad I waited because God chose best for me.

4. Genesis 26 tells us more about Isaac.

A. We read about a famine coming to the land and verse 2 tells us that Isaac heads to Egypt to escape the famine. However, he did this without consulting God so God tells Isaac not to go to Egypt and Isaac stays in Canaan.

i. Egypt represents the world and is not the place of God's blessing. Repeatedly throughout the Old Testament the people turn to Egypt when they are in trouble and they get into more trouble.

B. We see that Isaac repeated a mistake of his father when he denied being married to Rebekah. A lesson here is that parents must always be good examples for their children because often children do what they witnessed their parents did. Children must learn to follow their parents when their parents are obeying God but they must not follow their parents when they are sinning.

i. It is remarkable that just after God met with Isaac and repeated the blessing coming to Isaac that Isaac felt afraid and gave his wife to Abimelech. Again we see that men of faith have times when their faith weakens. The best way to be strong in faith is to really study your Bible and get to know God better.

C. There are two more lessons to be learned in this chapter.

i. Although Isaac wandered from the Lord when he headed to Egypt, after he returned to Beersheba he faithfully stayed there the rest of his life.

ii. God never mentioned Isaac's sins again. In fact Hebrews 11:16 tells how God praised Isaac. The lesson for us is that we will often sin and fail to perform as God wants. However God does not hold these sins against us. God does remember our victories and encourages us to continue with our lives.

5. Chapter 27:1-40 is a story about a family which tries to deceive each other and God. It was not a good family to be part of because when family members are not honest with each other there is much friction and unhappiness in the family. We Christians must be open and honest with each other.

A. The story tells us how Isaac, Rebekah, and Jacob all planned how they could get what they wanted and they didn't care if they were doing things in a wrong way.

i. Isaac wanted to see Esau get all the blessing despite knowing that God told Rebekah in Genesis 25:23 that Jacob was to get the blessing. Part of the reason that Isaac tried to secretly give the blessing to Esau secretly was that he was afraid of Rebekah. Isaac should have followed the will of God. Husband are to be the leaders of the family and they must be strong enough to make the right decisions.

ii. Rebekah was only interested in having her way no matter what. Her failure was a spiritual failure. Rebekah had been told by God that God's will was what she wanted but Rebekah didn't trust God to do what she wanted so she helped deceive Esau. She was guilty of manipulating God which is terrible.

iii. Jacob took part in the deception and he also lied. Jacob even lied to his father.

iv. Isaac according to verse 33 realized his sins and became a changed man. He trembled because he knew God had outwitted him and that he was wrong in trying to have his own will instead of doing things God's way. Isaac became a new man and this is why Hebrews 11:20 says, "By faith Isaac invoked future blessings on Jacob and Esau." The lesson for us is that it is never too late to repent and follow God in obedience.

B. Jacob and Rebekah paid for their sins and Jacob was forced to flee from the wrath of Esau and live in a foreign land for twenty years.

C. We should always want God's will in our lives even if God's will is not what we think we want. We must trust that God knows best and we should do His will no matter what. We know from 2 Corinthians 6:14 it is God's will that you not marry the non-Christian woman you want to marry. A Christian should not ever marry a non-Christian even if it means that he will never have a wife. It is always best to obey God.

6. Chapter 27:41-chapter 28:9 talks about this deceitful family and has some lessons for us.

A. The first lesson concerns the will of God. Unlike Isaac and Esau we must never try to defy the will of God. At first Isaac and Esau worked together to defy God's will by causing the first born blessing go to Esau. However Isaac repented of this and in Genesis 28:3-4 Isaac openly and willingly gives his blessing to Jacob in accordance to

God's will. Esau never submitted to God's will and he even vowed to kill Jacob and Jacob has to flee for his life.

B. The second lesson here is that being deceitful or dishonest to get what you want leads to trouble. We see examples of this trouble:

i. Rebekah's sin caused her to lose both of her sons. Jacob had to flee and as far as we know she never saw her favorite son again. Esau left her and according to Genesis 32:3 he went to live in the hill country of Seir or Edom.

ii. Jacob was forced to live, for twenty years, with Uncle Laban who as we shall read was a bigger liar and more deceitful than either Jacob or Rebekah. Later in his life Jacob was deceived by his sons who led him to believe that his favorite son Joseph had been killed by wild animals.

iii. The third result of his deceit was that instead of living as the son of a rich man, Jacob was forced to live as a servant to a lying man who took advantage of him. This abuse lasted for twenty years.

III. Now we study Jacob the third patriarch. Jacob's name means deceiver or liar which we have seen Jacob is, but we will read about how Jacob changes and follows God. He fathers twelve sons who become the twelve tribes of Israel.

1. Genesis 28:10-16 reports how God blesses Jacob and promises to always be with him. Psalm 139:7-10 tells us the truth about God; that he is everywhere and that God will never leave us alone; He will always be with us. Be encouraged to know that no matter how serious your troubles are that God is there with you. Isaiah 43:2

A. Jacob must have been discouraged on his trip to uncle Laban. He was all alone after living all his life in a rich family as a rich man's son. He would also have been afraid. However he was comforted by knowing that God was with him.

B. The dream of the ladder reaching to heaven is a well-known story. God loved Jacob and he wanted to encourage and comfort Jacob and the vision of the angels reassured Jacob that he was not alone and that he was under the protection of God.

C. God goes even further to reassure Jacob by appearing to Jacob and giving him a blessing. God delivers His blessing in verses 13-15. This blessing is just what Jacob needs to hear.

i. Remember that Jacob was totally alone, but God promised Jacob that He would always be with Jacob. This is the same promise that God makes to every Christian today. Matthew 28:20.

ii. Jacob owned nothing; he was poor with no possessions. Now God promises Jacob will have both land and offspring.

iii. God also took care of another problem of Jacobs. Jacob was disgraced, and he was fleeing in dishonor. However, God promised that He would bless all people through Jacob and his offspring. God is showing that we may fall and be disgraced but He will raise us up if we repent of our sins. No matter how low you fall God can pick you up and just like with Jacob He can restore you and do wonderful things through you.

iv. In His blessing God promises to bring Jacob back to his home. He promises to always watch over Jacob and that He would not leave Jacob.

2. Genesis 28:16-22 reports what happened after Jacob woke from his sleep.

A. Verse 16-17 tells that when Jacob woke up he knew that this was no ordinary dream; he recognized he had been visited by God. He was afraid because he recognized that God had visited him. This was not a fear of terror rather it was a proper fear for God.

i. We should all have a reverent fear of God. This kind of fear is one of respect and total submission to God.

B. There is controversy about verses 18-22. Some people don't think Jacob was sincere, but I believe he was sincere. I think his actions were proper. We read how Jacob worshipped God at this place called Bethel which later became a town. Let's examine Jacob's worship. Jacob made a proper vow. His vow:

i. His vow was done to express gratitude to God. He was not asking for something for himself.

ii. His worship is proper.

iii. He shows his gratitude by promising a tithe of all he receives. This was voluntary because this was long before the tithe became law.

3. Genesis 29:1-30 is the story of how Jacob met his uncle Laban who was a bigger liar and deceiver than Jacob. Jacob spent 20 years living and working for him. All this time Laban cheated him and took advantage of him.

A. Jacob works for seven years to earn Rachel, to be his bride and then Laban cheats him Leah sneaks into the marriage bed. This means that Jacob has to work another seven years to receive Rachel for his wife. This caused Jacob to have the difficulty of living with two wives. Two wives is not what God planned when in Genesis 2:24 He gave the rule that one man should marry one wife and these two would become one.

4. Genesis 29:31-30:24 is a sad story about the problems of Jacob having two wives. They are jealous of each other. Leah is not loved by Jacob but she is able to have children. While Rachel is loved by Jacob but not able to have children. This household was not a happy one, and may help us understand the behavior of Jacob's sons later in life.

5. Genesis 30:25-43 tells how God makes Jacob wealthy with children and possessions. There are three principles here for us in how we would work and allow God to determine our wealth:

A. The first principle is to not be concerned about becoming wealthy. Note that Jacob worked for 14 years and he is as poor in worldly goods as when he began. He did not worry about this and made a fair deal with Laban to work for a fair pay. He was honest with Laban.

B. The second principle is to be a hard worker. Give your employer an honest day's work. A godly employer will, in return give his employees an honest day's wages. It is right for the employer and the employee to be honest with each other and not try to cheat the other person. This is a Christian principle but sadly here in Uganda many employers cheat their employees. Christians must be honest.

C. The third principle is to trust God for your prosperity. Jacob chose to take the spotted animals even though he knew that most of the animals are born pure white. However, no matter what Laban did, verse 43 tells us it did not prevent God from blessing Jacob with riches. God blessed Jacob who became very rich.

i. Next we have a story found in verses 37-42 which goes along with this idea of trusting God. I believe God caused Jacob to set the branches up as a symbol of Jacob's faith. It is similar to what happened with the serpents in the desert as reported in Numbers 21:5-9. The people were being saved from death after being bitten by the serpents when they looked up to the bronze serpent on the pole. They weren't saved by anything on the pole rather they were saved by looking up in faith as God commanded by word of His prophet Moses. In the same way, Jacob became rich because in faith Jacob looked up to the poles. In the same way as we are saved by looking up in faith to Jesus on the cross.

6. Genesis 31 tells how Jacob began his trip back to Canaan where God wanted him to live. We see in this passage how God helped Jacob know that it was time for him to go home. Chapter 30:25-26 after Joseph was born, Jacob first expressed a desire to go home. Uncle Laban talked Jacob into staying and continuing to work for him.

A. But God slowly prepared Jacob for the trip back to Canaan.

i. First as we said above, Jacob developed a desire to leave Laban and go home.  
ii. Second we see beginning in Genesis 31:1-2 that both the sons of Laban and Laban became jealous of the wealth Jacob accumulated. Despite the fact that Laban and his son's prospered because of Jacob, they became jealous of Jacob. We should never be jealous when someone prospers. We should be content with what God gives us. Jealousy destroys many lives and starts many quarrels and wars. In this case the jealousy of Laban and his sons caused Jacob to leave and so their actions caused the source of their wealth to leave stopping future wealth for Laban and his sons.

iii. The third thing God did to prepare Jacob, according to verse three, was tell Jacob to go home.

B. There are lessons here for us about knowing God's will for us. Often God convicts us that we should do a certain thing. Then he makes it possible for us to do this thing we think He is calling us to do. Lastly, He gives us peace about doing what we think He is calling us to do. We should pray often and patiently wait for God to make His will clear to us.

i. Scripture should be our first guide as to whether we should or should not do certain things. Remember God will never tell you to do something that is against the Bible. For example 2 Corinthians 6:14 tells a Christian to never marry a non-Christian so don't expect God to bless your plans to marry a non-believer.

C. The way God called me to become a fulltime missionary is a good example of how God sometimes reveals His will. Briefly the story is as follows:

1. In 1985-86 we felt God calling us to become fulltime missionaries. Two different mission agencies refused to accept us so we did not become missionaries then. Later God sent us another project which we finished.

2. I still wanted to be a fulltime missionary but I knew by then that I was too old and unhealthy to be a missionary. However, God decided it was time for me to become a missionary and He called me to 2 1/2 years' service on the mission field in America.

3. This mission work ended in 2008 when I was 65 years old and then God called me to become a fulltime missionary in Africa.

4. God let me know it was time to come to Africa by:

i. Putting a desire in my heart to come to Africa.  
ii, Giving me a definite call. I knew exactly where God wanted me to serve because the people in charge asked me to come to Africa and work with them.

iii. The last thing needed was enough money for us to live on. As soon as we had enough money raised in promises from people to allow us to live we knew we should prepare and travel to Africa.

D. Again in Genesis 31:13 God tells Jacob to go home. Ezra 7:10 tells us to do what God says to do which Jacob did and he started for home.

i. Jacob wisely talked to his wives to make sure they would willingly go with him. He did not just order them; instead he convinced them to willingly leave their homes. A good leader will attempt to get his people to willingly get his people to follow him instead of just ordering them to.

ii. Jacob departed secretly but Laban soon caught up with him. We see in verse 24 that God directly intervened to protect Jacob. We must never fear to do whatever God calls us to do even if we might be attacked and killed. God will protect you as

long as He has work for you to do. The worse thing God's enemies can do is kill you and according to 2 Corinthians 5:8 when we die we go to be with the Lord.

E. Verse 34 tells how Rachael stole Laban's idols. Jacob's family worshipped idols even though they knew the true God. The Jews will always struggle with idolatry which continues to have a powerful attraction to Christians today. 1 John 5:21 warns us to keep away from idols. Remember, an idol is anything that replaces the one, true God. This can be love of money, superstition, excessive love of sports, etc.

F. Chapter 31 ends with Jacob and Laban agreeing to go their separate ways. Verses 45-52 tell how Jacob and Laban put up a pillar marking a line which will forever separate them. It's a line they agree to never cross.

7. Genesis 32:1-23 describes a fearful Jacob. At this point he is a broken and fearful man. He can't go back to Laban because if he crosses the line of the pillar Laban will regard this as an act of war. As he travels forward toward his home he knows that Esau waits for him and he does not know if Esau still wants to kill him. Jacob is not a very brave man so he is tormented by his fears. He learns that Esau is coming to meet him with 400 men and this makes him even more afraid. He is so afraid that he divides his camp and he sends Esau many gifts. Finally Jacob does something which the bible has never reported him doing before. He prays which is the first thing he should have done when faced with danger. Jacob's prayer shows that he is not experienced in praying because his prayer has good parts and the prayer also lacks a few things. Prayer like so many other things get better as we practice. It is always better to pray than not to pray even baby prayers are good.

A. God cares most that we have a proper attitude when we pray. Our words are not as important as our sincerity. Romans 8:26-27 tell us that God the Holy Spirit helps make our prayers proper as He takes them to God the Father.

B. Here we learn some good things about Jacob's prayer:

i. First, in verse 9, he directed his prayer to the only true and living God; the God of Abraham and Isaac.

ii. Second, verse 10 tells he acknowledged his unworthiness. Another way of saying this is that he confessed that he was a sinner.

iii. Third in verse 10 he acknowledges that God has always been faithful.

iv. Now after properly beginning his prayer he presents his petition; he tells God what he wants.

v. He told God why God should give him his request. It is good to respectfully give God reasons to grant our request. Remember how Abraham in chapter 18 gave God reasons to spare Sodom and Gomorrah. One time I was sick and expected to die and I prayed and asked God to spare my life. I asked to be allowed to live to continue the missionary work He had me doing especially the work with young people.

B. Jacob's prayer lacked a few things:

i. His prayer called on the God of Abraham and Isaac but he failed to add that this was his God also.

ii. God sent angels to meet Jacob and in Genesis 32:12 Jacob remembered that God had promised to bless him. Jacob should have had confidence from this and gone forward confidentially with his whole camp together to meet Esau.

iii. Jacob never asked God what God's will was. Jacob should have asked God what he should do. For example, did God want Jacob to send all his gifts to Esau and to divide his camp into two groups? Jacob never asked. When I asked God to spare my life I asked Him to do this only if it was His will. I also told God that if I died it was all right with me. I trusted that God knew what was best for me.

C. At this point Jacob was left all alone and very frightened. He was very discouraged. This made him ready and properly prepared for what happens to him next.

8. Genesis 32:22-32 tells the story of Jacob's battle with God. Up to this time in Jacob's life he might have belonged to God but he was living only for himself and not for God. Here he meets God and becomes a new man. After this experience, he shows that he definitely belongs to God.

A. Verse 24 tells us that Jacob was all alone and he was terrified when suddenly a man appears and starts wrestling with him. Verse 30 tells us that the man is really God. Note that verse 24 tells us that God started wrestling with Jacob and He would not allow Jacob to escape because God had decided this was the time Jacob was going to become God's man.

i. We see that they wrestled all night before Jacob surrendered in defeat. We know that God could have defeated Jacob in very little time, but God was letting Jacob wear himself out. Many people fight against God for a long time before they surrender to Him and become converted to Christianity.

ii As a sign that Jacob is a new man and that he is no longer Jacob the deceiver, God changes his name to Israel. This is a good name because Israel is the father of the 12 tribes of Israel.

9. Chapter 33 reports about the meeting of Jacob with Esau.

A. Verses 1-4 report that Jacob is changed and has overcome some of his fear and he goes in front of his family to meet with Esau. God has worked in the hearts of both men and they have forgiven each other; in fact they never even talk about their problems of twenty years ago.

B. Although Jacob is a changed man there is still a lot of the old man in Jacob. This is why the Bible continues to call him Jacob more often than his new name of Israel. We see some of the old Jacob in his meeting with Esau. For example:

i. We read that Jacob forced Esau to accept his gifts. This indicates that Jacob did not fully trust God to protect him. The custom in that time was that as soon as Esau accepted the gift, Esau acknowledged that Jacob was his friend and so Esau could not attack Jacob.

i. The second event that showed that Jacob had not changed in all his bad ways was that he lied to Esau. He promised to follow Esau to Seir but instead Jacob went to Succoth.

iii. The third bad thing Jacob did was to settle down to live in Succoth and Shechem. Remember that in Genesis 31:3 God told Jacob to go back to his native land. This disobedience of Jacob's caused the terrible rape of Dinah which is reported in Chapter 34.1

C, Even though Jacob didn't behave exactly the way he should have we do see that he did many things correctly which showed he was a changed man. Verse 20 reports that as soon as he settled in Shechem he built an altar and worshipped God. New Christians are often a lot like Jacob because change doesn't come all at once. Our Christian life should be one where we slowly grow to be more like Jesus and behave less like we did before we became a Christian. We should copy Jacob and attend worship services faithfully as Hebrews 10:25 instructs. Our gradual change and becoming more like Jesus in our behavior is a sign that we have really become Christian. If we don't see change in our behavior we need to examine ourselves to see if we really are Christian. Galatians 5:16-25 tells us how to behave and how not to behave.

10. Chapter 34 tells a terrible story about the rape of Jacob's daughter Dinah by the son of the king of Shechem. There are a few lessons in this story:

A. Jacob was supposed to be living with his family and not in Shechem; this is what God had ordered him to do. If Jacob had obeyed God this trouble would not have happened.

i. We should always live where God leads us to live. Often God leaves you in your homeland where you were born. At times he leads you to move as he did my wife and I when He directed us to move to Africa to become missionaries here. We know we are living where God wants and we feel that at the present time Africa is our home; not America.

B. We see the king's son proposed marriage which Israel wisely rejected because God's people were to only marry their own people. This marriage would have meant the Hebrew people would have been absorbed by the much larger kingdom of Shechem. This would have meant the end of the distinct people God planned to use to bring salvation to all the world.

C. The revenge the Hebrews took on Shechem was a terrible thing. They killed everybody in the city because of the sin of one man. They also employed circumcision which was the sign of the covenant of grace, as a means of deception. This was a terrible thing to do. We should not use religion to commit any crime especially murder.

11. Chapter 35 report that Jacob returns to Bethel.

A. Verse one tells us that God orders Jacob to go to Bethel. God had three reasons to order this:

i. Bethel was the place where previously in Genesis 28:10-22 Jacob had made a vow to God.

ii. Second Jacob chose to live close to Shechem which was same mistake that Lot made, see Genesis 19:12. This mistake was to settle too close to Sodom where he got dragged into the affairs of Sodom. Also we have seen how Jacob had troubles by being close to Shechem. The lesson for Christians is that we must not get too close to non-Christians. Christians are not at home in the world; our home is in Heaven.

iii. Third, we know from Genesis 34:1-29 that it was very dangerous for Jacob to stay in Shechem.

B. Next we read that Jacob ordered his family to put away their idols and purify themselves. We know that Jacob's family had taken idols from Laban. It is necessary for us to cleanse ourselves in order to worship God. Verse 35:4 tells us that his family surrenders all their idols and they are buried. Christians are purifying themselves every time they repent and ask God to forgive them for their sins. Verse 5-8 tells us that God protected Jacob's family as they traveled to Bethel and worshipped God.

C. Verses 9-15 reports a renewal of the earlier covenant when promised great blessings to Jacob.

D. We read in verses 16-29 about great sadness in Jacob's family.

i. The first sad event is the death and burial of Jacob's beloved Rachel, who died in childbirth. This was Jacob's true love; it had cost him 14 years of working for Laban to earn her as his wife.

ii. Verses 21-26 report more sadness for Jacob. The sin of Reuben was more than sexual sin, it was also an attempt by Reuben to take over Jacob's position of head of the family. 2 Samuel 18:18-23 reports Absalom did a similar thing to King David.

iii. The third sad thing was the death of Jacob's father Isaac. His mother had died before Jacob returned home from his exile with Laban.

12. Chapter 36 is about Esau; about how God kept His promise to Abraham and blessed Abraham's offspring even though Esau despised God. For example, Esau married three women from Canaan instead of marrying a wife from his family like Jacob did.

A. God still blessed Esau. Esau had five sons. Verses 7-8 tell us that Esau had too much wealth to live near Jacob so he moved to the hill country of Edom.

i. It is interesting to note that later Jacob's descendants lived in slavery in Egypt while Esau's family prospered in Edom. Jacob's family waited for the blessings promised by God while Esau lived for today's blessings.

B. Esau lived a life of spiritual decline. Later the nation of Edom which he founded is the object of God's judgment as reported in the book of Obadiah. We see three points of this spiritual decline in Esau. They are:

i. We know from our earlier study in chapter 25 that Esau despised his birthright as firstborn son.

ii. Esau indulged his sensual life rather than spiritual life. His hunger was more important to him than his birthright. For example, when it was time for him to marry he chose Hittite women who Genesis 26:35 tells us were a source of grief to his father and mother. He chose the local Canaan women who were close by and easy to get.

iii. Esau never taught his family about God. So the generations of his descendants worshipped false gods, and they have all disappeared from history.

13. Chapter 37 introduces us to Joseph and talks about the sons of Jacob. This is a story about Jacob's family which is dysfunctional; what I mean is they don't get along with each other. The family is torn apart by favoritism, gossip, jealousy, murderous hatred, etc. Remember Jacob's family had their idols and there was always friction between Jacob's wives.

A. Verse 3 tells us that Joseph was his father's favorite child born from his favorite wife. We should love all our children equally but in most families one child is a favorite. Most parents try to treat their children equally but Jacob made it obvious that Joseph was his favorite, and this caused jealousy and much trouble.

i. Chapter 37:5-11 reports that Joseph told his family that he dreamed they would bow down to him and pay him respect. This made Joseph's family very angry with him. These dreams later proved to be prophetic words and the dreams come true.

ii. Gen. 37:28 reports that his brothers became so angry that they sold Joseph as a slave to some Ishmaelite's who took him to Egypt. God wanted to prepare the way for His people to be able to move to Egypt where they were to live until they were ready to take possession of their promised land. Joseph going to Egypt was God's plan.

13. Chapter 38 tells terrible stories about Judah, one of Jacob's sons, and his family. As we study how wicked Judah was we should remember that Jesus is descended from Judah. Once again we are reminded that God can work with anyone no matter how wicked they or their family are.

A. The sins of Judah. Chapter 38:1-5 reports that Judah left his family and lived with the Canaanites. He did not learn from the experience of Lot and also Jacob about the dangers of living with the pagans. He committed three sins:

i. He married one of their women which was a sin.

ii. His second sin was that he didn't keep his obligations to Tamar. Judah was obligated by social custom to provide a husband for the widow Tamar. He provided Onan who was disobedient to God and he died. At this point Judah was supposed to provide his son Shelah to be Tamar's husband, but as verse 11 says he was afraid. He

was afraid because two of his sons had married Tamar and both died. Of course the reason they died was because the two sons disobeyed God.

iii. His next sin was to behave as sinful as the people of the land. He had sex with a person who he thought was a prostitute, however it was Tamar, his daughter in law. Then he wanted to kill Tamar when she became pregnant. He was forced to recognize his sin by Tamar.

a. The idea that the woman should be punished and not the man is a pagan custom and is wrong. Leviticus 20:10 teaches that both the man and the woman are to be equally punished.

IV. The last Patriarch we meet is Joseph. He is unique because he is a very moral man and there is no scandal in his life. We previously talked about how Joseph had been sold as a slave in Egypt. God sent him to Egypt to prepare the way for all the Hebrew people to move to Egypt. God wanted His people to move to Egypt so that they could live by themselves and not become part of the people of Canaan. The Egyptians did not like foreigners, Genesis 46:33, and did not intermarry. The time God's people spent in Egypt allowed them to become their own separate nation. They became God's chosen people.

1. Genesis 39:1-6 is the story of how Joseph prospered while serving as Potiphar's slave.

A. Verses 2 tells us that the reason Joseph prospered was because God was with him.

B. Verse 5 tells us that Potiphar also prospered and was blessed by his relationship with Joseph. God remembered His promise to Abraham from chapter 12:2-3 that He will bless those who bless you. Laban was blessed because of his relationship with Jacob. American people were blessed because of the many Christians in the country.

2. Verse 7-12 talks about Joseph's experiences with Potiphar's wife.

A. First we see a lesson in avoiding temptation. We are continually being tempted to sin. God helps us prepare to resist temptation. He warns us to be ready for temptation 1 Peter 5:8-10. Then He encourages us that we can, with His help, resist the temptation 1 Corinthians 10:13. The next verse, 14, tells us to flee temptation.

i. There are all kind of temptations and sexual temptation for a young person is very appealing and difficult to avoid.

ii. Each person is different and what tempts one person has no appeal to another. We need to recognize this fact and know our personal temptations. There is always a temptation waiting to trap us.

B. How can we fight sin?

i. We must recognize sin as sin and not try to make it something else. For example, if the Bible tells us that something is a sin don't try to get around this fact. And say that something is not really a sin. We must admit something is a sin and resist doing the sin.

ii. Here are two examples of what I mean when I say don't try to get around the fact that something is sin.

iii. The Bible in 2 Corinthians 6:14 commands a Christian to only marry a Christian. Once I was teaching about this when a pastor in the class stood up and said that God had given him special permission to marry a non-Christian so his marrying a non-believer was not a sin. This is a lie because it is always a sin to disobey God's rules as found in the Bible.. It is always a sin for a Christian to marry a non-believer.

iv. Another example is something that is currently happening in churches in many western countries. This concerns homosexual sex. God makes it very clear that homosexual behavior is a sin and He hates this behavior. Many western churches now allow active homosexuals to be pastors or even bishops. This is clearly sin.

C. We must recognize that often our sins hurt other people and this knowledge should help a person avoid sin. If Joseph had sinned with Potiphar's wife this would have hurt Potiphar who had been good to Joseph. The sin of his wife in lying about Joseph did hurt both Potiphar and Joseph. Joseph went to prison and Potiphar lost the services of Joseph.

i. The sin of adultery hurts other people. Your spouse gets terribly hurt and so do your children.

D. A Christian must never want to sin. A Christian can help avoid sin by hating sin and doing all he can to not sin. Praying to God is our best weapon to avoid sinning, We see in verse 9 how Joseph didn't want to sin against God; that he knew that his sin would be sinning against God..

E. Another defense against sinning is to always be prepared for temptation to come. You should know the kinds of temptation which could lead you to sin and have a plan for when these temptations come which will help you not sin. For example, if alcohol tempts you, then stay away from places where alcohol is served such as parties or night clubs or private homes.

G. Another way to avoid sinning is to do what Joseph did in verse 12 when he ran out of a house. One time a woman came to me and promised sex if I would do something for her. I ran away from her as fast as I could and found my wife and told her about this.

3. We will leave Genesis for a moment and go to Psalm 51 for a lesson in what we should do if we sin. This Psalm tells how David repented after the prophet confronted David with his sin of adultery with Bathsheba and his murder of her husband.

A. David did not run away or deny his sin. He immediately repented and confessed that he had sinned against the Lord.

B. Let's study Psalm 51 to learn from David how to repent. There are four points to this Psalm:

i. First David confesses his sin based on the mercy of God (verse 1). We can only come to God because of His mercy; not His justice which would condemn us. David freely admitted his sin.

ii. Next David, verse 7, asked God to clean him from his sin. This means that David was asking God to forgive him. 1 John 1:8-9 tells us that Jesus is faithful to forgive us of our sins if we confess them; which David did.

iii. Next David ask God, verses 10-12, to give him a new heart. David is admitting that he had wandered away from God and he ask God to bring him back to a close relationship with Him. This means we Christians must ask God to bring us close to Him again when we wander away. Churches and individual Christians must always guard against wandering away from God and constantly pray for God to help us stay close. Hebrews 2:1 warns us about the danger of drifting away from God. It helps to often read our Bibles and pray to stay close to God.

iv. Finally David, verse 17, ask God to give him a broken and humble heart. He ask God to make him a man who knows he is totally dependent on God's mercy.

4. Genesis 39:13-23 tells how Potiphar's wife arranged for Joseph to be declared guilty by Potiphar and imprisoned even though he was innocent. We know from Psalm 105:17-19 that the prison Joseph was put in was very difficult for him and he was mistreated.

A. Even though Joseph was innocent and in prison unfairly he accepted that this was God's will and Joseph behaved in a way that caused the keeper of the prison to give him great responsibility. Joseph remembered that he belonged to God and he accepted whatever happened to him without complaint. Joseph trusted that God knew what was best for him. His life is a good testimony for God.

B. Many; probably all of God's leading servants have been matured and had their faith strengthened by severe trials. Joseph is not the only one. Consider the apostles Paul and John, and Samson and the prophet Jeremiah. All of these men along with Joseph drew closer to God and were matured and strengthened by their trials. See 1 Peter 1:7 about this.

5. Chapter 40 tells how Joseph continues to mature in prison.

A. We know from chapter 41 that Joseph spent more than two years in prison. Joseph was an innocent man who was in prison, but he never lost hope or blamed God for his trouble. The lesson for us is to accept whatever our situation is without losing our trust in God. Romans 8:28 tells us that God has a good reason for allowing us to suffer.

B. One of God's reasons for Joseph to be in prison was so that he was able to meet the cupbearer of Pharaoh who was in prison for a short time. Joseph interpreted a dream for the cupbearer who was shortly restored to his favored position in the king's palace. Later the cupbearer would be the way Joseph would get out of prison and be elevated to a position of high power.

C. Joseph also interpreted the dream of the baker, and this dream had a bad future foretold for the baker. The baker was going to be executed. It took courage for Joseph to deliver this bad message. We preachers and teachers of the Bible need to always have courage to faithfully preach all of God's messages even if the message is hard and the audience will not appreciate the truth. An example is one that I have had teaching in Uganda. The Bible teaches Christians to be ready to experience great difficulty and even persecution according to 2 Timothy 3:12. I have had to stop teaching and leave a church because the church members only wanted to hear a message promising health and prosperity to Christians. Other African Teaching Africans teachers have had to stop teaching at churches who did not want to hear the truths of the Bible. We must always be faithful to preach and teach the Bible even if people don't want to hear it. We don't have to please man, but we must please God with our preaching and teaching.

C. Another lesson from chapter 40 is that man is often unfaithful but God is always faithful. Joseph did the cupbearer a favor by interpreting his favorable dream, and Verse 14 tells us that Joseph asked the cupbearer to say something good about him to Pharaoh so that Joseph could get out of prison. Verse 23 tells us that the cupbearer forgot Joseph. There are three lessons here for us:

- i. Don't trust in man according to Isaiah 2:22.
- ii. When you are disillusioned by man, when man lets you down, turn to the love and faithfulness of God. There are many Bible verses about this such as Jeremiah 17:5&7 and 2 Timothy 2:13.
- iii. The third lesson is wait and trust God's timetable. God knows the right time for something to happen. God knew Joseph needed to remain in prison for a couple of years so that he could mature. God brought Joseph out of prison when it was time for the events which we will study next in Genesis to happen.

6. Chapter 41 tells how Joseph moves from the prison to the palace.

A. The story is that Pharaoh has a dream which troubles him especially when his magicians are not able to tell him the meaning. At this point the cupbearer finally

remembers that Joseph could interpret dreams so he told this to Pharaoh. Joseph is released from prison and brought to the palace to interpret Pharaoh's dream.

i. Joseph in verse 16 shows the kind of man he is when he gives credit to God for his power to interpret Pharaoh's dream. Joseph knew what every Christian should know and tell to everybody; that all the good things we do are because God gives us the power to do these good things. By myself I am not able to do any good deed. We Christians must be humble; remember God did the work to save you and he enables you to do good works. We must give all the credit to God.

ii. Joseph continued to give God the credit. Verses 25 & 28 tell how Joseph twice gave God the credit for the revelation of the true meaning of Pharaoh's dream before he interpreted the dream. In verse 32 Joseph tells how God will cause the dream to come true.

B. Joseph told Pharaoh the meaning of the dreams and Pharaoh believed what Joseph told him. These dreams allowed the Egyptians to prepare for the coming famine so that Egypt avoided famine and starvation.

i. In verse 40 Pharaoh appoints Joseph to a position of great power. He makes Joseph the second most powerful ruler of everything in Egypt. Only Pharaoh is above Joseph.

C. Joseph showed that he was faithful to God because even after he received power and riches, and was blessed with two sons, verses 51 & 52 report that Joseph gave all the credit for his blessings to God.

i. It is important that we remember God when we are suffering and also when we become prosperous. Often people and nations forget God when they become successful. We must remember that God is responsible for our prosperity.

ii. This has happened to America. America is a rich and powerful nation much blessed by God. The United States was founded by Christian men and the laws are based on the Bible. The United States was never made up of all Christians, but for most of its history the United States was ruled by Christian laws. Most of the people believed they should follow Christian principles. The motto of the United States is, "In God we trust" and the pledge of allegiance says, "One nation under God".

ii. After World War II the United States became rich and prosperous and immediately started forgetting God. A big step away from God happened in 1973 when abortion was legalized. Since then the U.S.A. has continued to abandon God. America is now a country with terrible problems. America will not continue to prosper unless it returns to God, 2 Chronicles 7:14.

D. Chapter 41:47 reports that there were seven years of good harvest. Much of the harvest was saved for the time of drought which is reported in verse 54.

E. As we study the life of Joseph we see that he is a type of Christ. This does not mean that Joseph was God. It means that some of his behavior imitated or copied the life of Jesus. Let's study some parallels between the lives of Jesus and Joseph. There are more similarities than are listed here.

i. Both Jesus and Joseph were rejected. Joseph was rejected by his brothers and Jesus was rejected by the Jews.

ii. Joseph was sold by his brothers for twenty pieces of silver and Jesus was sold for thirty pieces of silver.

iii. Both Joseph and Jesus were very loved by their father.

iv. They were both envied and hated without cause.

v. They were both raised up. Joseph from the pit and Jesus from the grave.

vi. They were both servants. Joseph was a servant to Potiphar and Jesus was identified in Isaiah 42:1-4 and Philippians 2:7 as a servant.

7. Chapters 42-45 tell how the dreams of Joseph when he was a boy still living with his family come true. These dreams were first mentioned in chapter 37 of Genesis and they said that one day the brothers would bow down to Joseph.

A. This begins the story about how God moved His people to Egypt. God wanted the family to have a change of heart; He wanted them to change from the wicked self-centered men they were to becoming God's men. He wanted to turn Jacob's family into a nation set apart to be God's chosen people.

A. The first change needed is for the brothers to develop a conscience. All Christians have a conscience and this tells us when we are sinning and it tells us we should stop sinning. It is just as if we have an extra voice inside reminding us that we are doing something wrong. This voice allow us no peace as long as we keep sinning.

B. The brother's conscience is awakened in chapter 42:1-38. The famine predicted by Joseph comes to both Canaan and Egypt so ten of Joseph's brother's travel to Egypt to buy grain for food.

i. Chapter 42:6 tells how the boyhood dreams of Joseph came true as the brothers humbly bowed down to Joseph.

ii. God led Joseph to treat his brothers harshly. This was so that the brother's would be humbled and their consciences would begin to work. Before the brothers moved to Egypt they need to acknowledge their crimes against Joseph. Joseph disturbed them by being harsh and throwing them in jail which made them think about what they had done to Joseph and their consciences began to bother them.

iii. Hebrews 10:22 says, "let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water." This teaches that in order for the brothers to come to God they must have clean consciences. This is true for us also.

B. Chapter 43 tells how the brothers, after returning home, are forced, by the continuing famine, to return to Egypt for more grain. Jacob was forced to send Benjamin who was his favorite to save Simon and the family. This is a testing of Jacob, and we see that Jacob is a changed man as he now trust God enough to send Benjamin to Egypt.

i. The brothers have a pleasant meal. The brothers show no sign of jealousy even when Benjamin receives much more food.

C. Chapter 44:1-17 is a test of the brothers; a plan of Joseph's designed to further humble the brothers. Joseph's goal was to bring the brothers to confess their guilt in what they had done to Joseph years ago, and Judah does this in verse 16.

Confession of sin is required before forgiveness can be given.

i. Judah shows how much the brothers have changed when he confesses their guilt; he also admits that he and the other brothers deserve to be punished.

D. In verses 18-34 Judah speaks for the brothers in a powerful plea as he intercedes for Benjamin.

i. He pleads for the benefit of his father who he says has already lost one son and Judah says the loss of another son would be the end of Jacob. The plea of Judah convinces Joseph that his brothers are new men and that now Jacob has a real family with a bond of love for each other.

E. Chapter 45 reports that the brothers are reconciled.

i. Joseph is now convinced that the brothers have repented and are truly sorry for what they had earlier done to him so in chapter 45:3 he reveals who he is.

ii. Verses 5-15 show how completely sovereign God is, and also how close to God Joseph is. In verses 5,7,8,9 Joseph told how God planned all that happened to him for the purpose of moving the Hebrew people to Egypt where God wanted them.

iii. Even though it was God's plan to move the Hebrews to Egypt, it doesn't excuse the sins of the brothers. They are still responsible for their actions. It is similar to what happened when Jesus was killed. It was God's plan for Jesus to die to save His people, but this still doesn't excuse the people who put Him to death.

a. God uses sinners to do His will just as He uses all people to do His will. There is no blessing for these sinners; only punishment for the sin. This is what we read in Mathew 7:21-23.

iv. In verses 16-28 Jacob is invited to move to Egypt. His moving to Egypt is a new beginning for him so it is appropriate that his name of Israel is used in verse 28.

8. In Chapter 46:1-7 God reassure Jacob.

A. Jacob was a fearful man and he had several reasons to be fearful about moving to Egypt. Some of these are:

i. He was fearful because he was an old man and old people don't like change. I am an old man and I Like things to stay the same. Moving to Egypt was a major change for old Jacob; he trusted God and so he moved.

ii. A second reason for his fear was that Egypt was such a foreign place; it was very different from Canaan. It was very pagan.

iii. Thirdly, the history of Egypt's treatment to Joseph's family was bad. Abraham's lowest point in his life was when he was in Egypt and he gave his wife to Pharaoh see Genesis 12:10-20.

iv. A fourth reason was that Abraham had been warned of future evils back in Genesis 15:13. Abraham knew from this that his descendants were to be mistreated in a foreign land for more than 400 years. Abraham would have been thinking that Egypt was the foreign land God talked about where his people would be mistreated. Jacob knew all this.

B. In Genesis 46:1 Israel shows that he is a new man since he met God, and that Israel worshipped God before he moved to Egypt. We should learn a lesson from Jacob and spend time praying before we make a major change in our lives.

C. God reassures Jacob that he should move.

i. Verse 2 tells how God spoke to Jacob to reassure that He was still Jacob's God and guide.

ii. In verse 3 God reminds Jacob that He is the God of Abraham and Isaac and the covenants He had with these men are still promises that applied to Jacob. God was reminding Jacob that He is faithful to all generations. God's promises are eternal.

iii. In verse 3 God promises to Jacob that it is in Egypt that God will make a great nation out of him.

iv. God also reassures Jacob in verse 4 when He promises that He will be with him in Egypt; God also promises to always be with every Christian.

D. There is application for us in this story. If you are thinking of making a change in your life don't do anything until you have prayed about it and waited for God to direct you. Don't make changes until you think God is directing the change. If you are old don't fear death because God will be with you even in death just as He has been during your life.

9. The story of Jacob's move to Egypt as reported in verses 5-27 tells how all of Jacob's family moved with him to Egypt.

10. Verses 28-34 reports the reunion of Joseph with his father. There are three names we are going to briefly mention:

A. Judah according to verse 28 leads the family into Egypt; he points the way to the good land of Goshen. Later on we will see in Revelation 7:17 that the descendant of Judah, who is Jesus, who will lead his followers to living fountains of water. This is talking about heaven.

B. Joseph despite being such an important and powerful man went to see his father as soon as he could. Jacob had thought that Joseph was dead and verse 30 reports that when Jacob saw Joseph was alive his reaction was that now he could die in peace. Luke 2:29-30 tells us that Simeon said the same thing when he saw Jesus.

C. Joseph told his family to tell Pharaoh that they were shepherds because the Egyptians despised shepherds. This is the way Joseph arranged for his family to live in Goshen. This was a fertile area separate from most Egyptians. The Hebrews prospered there and by being separate from the Egyptians they could grow and develop into their own nation. God did not want His people to become Egyptians.

i. The Hebrews grew into a large number of people while living in Egypt. Genesis 46 reports that they numbered 70 when they moved to Egypt and 430 years later according to Exodus 12:37 they numbered about 600,000 men plus women and children.

11. In Genesis 47 Jacob meets Pharaoh and his family moves to Goshen.

A. In verses 1-6 we see that Joseph presented five of his brothers to Pharaoh. These brothers identified themselves as shepherds and asked to be allowed to settle in Goshen. Pharaoh offered them the land they wanted and even offered them a job.

i. This is an example of divine providence of God as He provides for His people. God did not forget the promise He made to Jacob to be with him in Egypt. The application for us is to go where God sends us and trust for him to provide the things we need. My wife and I have been missionaries for over eleven years and we have learned to trust God for the things we need to live on. He has been faithful.

B. In verses 7-10 Jacob meets Pharaoh. In verses 7 and 10 Jacob blesses Pharaoh. There are two things to note about Jacob's blessing

i. Genesis 12:3 promises blessing to those who bless the descendants of Abraham, and Pharaoh certainly blessed Jacob and his family.

ii. Jacob was doing what Paul later instructed Timothy in 1 Timothy 2:1-2 to do. He was praying for the king; just as we are ordered to pray for our rulers.

C. It is interesting, in verse 8 that Pharaoh commented on the age of Jacob. This may have been because Jacob was much older than the Egyptians. Jacob's reply about his days being few and evil refer to the fact that he was younger than his father and grandfather, and that his life was filled with trouble. Jacob is still a complainer.

D. Verses 11-12 tells how Joseph provides for his family. He makes sure that all of the families including their children were provided for during the famine.

E. Joseph also as reported in verses 13-26 provided for the entire country. He managed things so that a system of property management was set up which pleased the people in Egypt. Verse 25 tells that the people were satisfied with the management of their lives by Joseph. Moses wrote this story over four hundred years later and he reports that the system where the Pharaoh gets one fifth of the harvest was still being used. This proves that Joseph was a wise ruler. All rulers should provide for their people.

F. Verses 27-31 reports about the last years of Jacob's life. We read that the Hebrews prospered and Jacob died seventeen years after settling in Egypt at the age of 147. Verse 30 shows that Jacob had confidence in the promise God made him in Genesis 46:4. God promised that He would bring the Hebrews out of Egypt. God in Genesis 12:7 had promised the land in Canaan for Abraham's descendants.

12. Chapters 48 tells about blessings and prophecies.

A. It is important that when a Christian dies he shows his faith in the future promises of God. We are not to approach death as defeated people. We are to approach our death with the confidence that we are victorious because of Jesus. Death is the beginning of being in heaven for the Christian.

i. Hebrews 11:21 calls Jacob a man of great faith because as he was dying he blessed each of Joseph's sons as he worshipped God.

B. Genesis 48:1-4 tells how Joseph again came to Jacob and how Jacob reported how God had earlier blessed him at Luz which is another name for Bethel. As Jacob was dying he showed that he was a godly man by acknowledging that God was the source of all his blessings.

i. Even though Jacob had been given land in Egypt by Pharaoh, verse 4 reminds Jacob that God had given them their permanent land in Canaan. They were not to stay permanently in Egypt.

C. The next section of verses 5-12 tells how Jacob adopted Joseph's two sons and the importance of his doing this. By adopting these two sons Jacob made Ephraim and Manasseh joint heirs along with Jacob's other sons. Later, when the Hebrews returned to take possession of Canaan both of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh received a portion of the land along with the other tribes. Remember that Jacob regarded Rachel as his legitimate wife and if he had not been tricked into marrying Leah, Joseph would have been his first born son and this would have automatically entitled Joseph to a double inheritance. Jacob thus made sure that through his sons Joseph received his fair share as first born son.

D. Verses 13-20 tells that Jacob blesses Ephraim over the older Manasseh. This is a deliberate act by Jacob. He chose Ephraim over Manasseh by placing his right hand on the head of Ephraim. It is with the right hand that the blessing is given to the one receiving the most important blessing. The blessing is given in two parts.

i. The first part, in verses 15-16, is addressed to Joseph about the two boys.

ii. The second part of the blessing found in verse 20 is given directly to the sons. This is given after Joseph's protest. Here the promise is that the descendants of both brothers would be equally well blessed.

E. Verses 21-22 Jacob announces his soon to be death and reminds Joseph that God will bring the people back to their land in Canaan.

13. Chapter 49 verses 1-28 tells Jacob's last words to his sons. He has something to say about each one.

A. First Jacob talks to the sons of Leah.

i. He tells Reuben that even though he is the first born, his descendants will not prosper. Genesis 35:22 reports how Reuben had sex with the concubine of Jacob. It is probable that Reuben had repented of this sin but the lesson is that while God forgives sin, He still punishes sin.

ii. He tells Simeon and Levi that they were treacherous and violent for their attack on the people of Shechem as reported in Genesis 34. Their punishment was that their descendants would not receive any portion of the Promised Land in Canaan. The tribe of Simeon lived in part of the land of Judah, and the tribe of Levi was allowed to be the priest of Israel.

iii. He next talks to Judah who was probably afraid of what Jacob would say because of the terrible sin Judah did when he slept with his daughter-in-law Tamar. However instead of judgment Judah receives three blessings

a. The first blessing reported in verse 8 refers to the praise that Jesus who is the offspring of Judah would receive.

b. The second blessing mentioned in verse 9 talks about preeminence or being first and refers to the fact that Judah produced the great kings of Israel such as David and Solomon and of course Jesus.

c. The third blessing, verse 10, refers to the prosperity that was enjoyed during the times of the kings of Judah.

iv. Zebulun and Issachar are next mentioned but there is not much to say about them.

B. Genesis 49:10 is the third messianic prophecy found in Genesis. This prophecy says that all power belongs to the Messiah and that eventually all people would bow to Him and He would rule forever.

C. Now Jacob blesses his sons, Dan, Gad, Asher, and Naphtali, who are from his servant girls. These sons are not treated as inferior to the other sons and their descendants play an important part in the Jewish nation.

D. Next in verses 22-27 Joseph deals with the sons of Rachel.

i. Joseph is richly blessed. He was both Jacob's favorite son and the first born of Rachel, who was the favorite wife of Jacob.

ii. Jacob pronounces blessings on Joseph in verses 22-26.

a. Jacob describes Joseph as a blessed man flourishing like a well-watered tree.

b. Even though Joseph suffered from attacks, verse 24 tells how God made him strong.

c. Verse 25 tells how God will continue to bless Joseph.

iii. Verses 24-25 show that Jacob has a good understanding of God.

a. In verse 24 Jacob calls God the Mighty One of Jacob. This shows that Jacob relied on God for his strength.

b. next Jacob calls God the shepherd in verse 24. This is reference to the fact that as a shepherd God cared for Jacob and provided for all his needs.

c. The stone or rock of Israel also found in verse 24 means that we can build our lives on God who never changes. We can always trust him.

d. In verse 25 Jacob refers to God as being his personal God. God knew for certain that he belonged to God.

e. Verse 25 refers to God being strong enough to do all the blessings.

iv. In verse 27 Jacob pronounces his blessing for his last born son Benjamin. He predicts that the descendants will be fierce and warlike. This prophecy came true both for good and also bad.

E. In verse 28 Jacob summarizes what he had just said by using the term, "The twelve tribes of Israel" for the first time in the Bible.

14. Chapter 49:29-50:26 reports the death of believers who died at peace trusting in their future with God.

A. Genesis 49:29-33 report the death of Jacob. Jacob showed that a person who believes in God dies in confidence that all is well. We know that we are going to heaven which is a better place than earth. By requesting to be buried in Canaan Jacob was showing that he believed the promises of God to give Canaan to the descendants of Abraham forever. The way Jacob prepared for death in verse 33 showed also that Jacob knew he was going to join his ancestors and be with God.

B. Chapter 50:1-3 reports how Joseph mourned for his father. There are some Christian leaders who think that Christians should not mourn for the death of another Christian because we know the person is going to heaven. We see it is all right to mourn for loved ones. John 11:35 tells us that Jesus wept at the tomb of Lazarus. A Christian can mourn for a loved one but we mourn because we will miss the person but we know we will see the person again. The non-believer mourns in despair because he knows he will never see the person again; the non-believer has no hope.

C. Verses 15-21 show how much Joseph understands the sovereignty of God and how much Joseph has a heart for God. Joseph's brothers know that they have been terrible in their treatment of Joseph and they are afraid that now that Jacob is dead Joseph will get revenge on them. Verse 20 is a very important verse showing that

Joseph trusted that God in His sovereignty planned all the events of Joseph's life so that good would come out of it. The verse is similar to Romans 8:28 which says that everything that happens to a Christian is for the person's good. A Christian must understand that God is in complete control and that while we will suffer on earth, God has a good reason for this. Nothing can keep us from enjoying heaven forever.

i. Verse 21 shows that Joseph understands that God's people must be able to completely forgive others for any harm they have done to us. We must forgive others just like Jesus forgives us. Forgiving others keeps us from developing a bitter heart which will destroy us.

D. Now in verses 22-26 we read about the death of Joseph. Joseph as well as his father showed how God's children should die. We should die with confidence in the future awaiting us after death. Death for the Christian is just the beginning of our new life in heaven, but for the non-believer death is the beginning of an eternity of suffering in hell.

i. Verses 22-23 tell us that Joseph lived until he was 110 years old and was able to enjoy his family

ii. Joseph showed he was full of faith as he approached death. His words in these verses show that he knew that God would keep His promise to lead the people of Israel to the land He had promised Joseph's ancestors.

iii. Verse 26 reports that the fate which waits for all of us came to Joseph and he died at the age of 110 years. There is significance in the report that his body stayed in Egypt unlike his father's body. Joseph wanted his body to return to Canaan but by waiting until the Hebrew people returned to Canaan Joseph identified himself with the Hebrew people.