

A People of the Book
A Textual Study

A Study of

The Book of

Genesis

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Introduction To The Book

Introduction

The first book of the Bible is apply named Genesis. The name means origin, source or beginnings. This book provides an explanation of the origin of the universe, the human race & the roots of the Hebrew nation. Within it we also find the first glimpse of many of the great themes of the Bible such as – the nature & work of God, the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ & the existence & consequences of sin.

1. Reasons to study Genesis

- a. Only reliable history of that period of time
- b. Gives us a background out of which the New Testament speaks
- c. Shows us a clear picture of God's nature & plans
- d. It's part of the word of God that makes one wise unto salvation

2. Outline of the book

- a. **Creation** – 1:1-2:3
- b. **Beginnings of mankind** – 2:4-5:32
 - 1) Adam & Eve
 - 2) Cain & Abel
 - 3) Adam's descendants
- c. **Story of Noah** – 6:1-11:32
 - 1) The ark & the flood
 - 2) Noah's descendants
 - 3) Tower of Babel
- d. **Abraham** – 12:1-25:18
 - 1) God's call & promises
 - 2) Abraham & Lot
 - 3) A son is promised
 - 4) Sodom & Gomorrah
- e. **Isaac** – 25:19-28:9
 - 1) Jacob & Esau born
 - 2) Isaac & king Abimelech
 - 3) Isaac blesses Jacob & not Esau
- f. **Jacob** – 28:10-36:43
 - 1) Jacob marries & begins a family
 - 2) Jacob returns home & faces Esau
- g. **Joseph** – 37:1-50:26
 - 1) Sold into slavery
 - 2) Judah & Tamar
 - 3) Joseph in prison
 - 4) Joseph rises to power
 - 5) Jacob's sons come seeking food
 - 6) Joseph & his brothers meet
 - 7) Jacob & his family move to Egypt

3. Three great struggles that are revealed in Genesis

a. The visible struggle between God & man

- 1) A conflict that every person experiences – to follow God or self
- 2) Adam & Eve
 - a) Put in the paradise of God with only one responsibility – keep the relationship with God alive by obeying God
 - b) Consequences for disobedience – death both physically & eternally
 - c) For an unknown period of time man walked with God
- 3) The broken relationship
 - a) Man chose to disobey God – live for self
 - b) The fellowship was broken – consequences came upon man
 - c) However, God intervened & seeks man
- 4) Noah & the flood
 - a) Man became increasingly more wicked & violent
 - b) God grieved & sends a flood
 - c) God intervenes & finds a man Noah from which to save man
- 5) The Tower of Babel
 - a) Man selfishly attempts to build an empire
 - b) God intervenes & confuses mans languages
- 6) Abraham
 - a) Man is seen doing nothing worthwhile
 - b) God intervenes & chooses one man Abraham to make a nation
 - (1) A people who would love God supremely
 - (2) A people to be a witness to all the other nations
 - (3) A people through whom to bring the promised seed
- 7) Throughout the rest of the book of Genesis & the Bible we see Abraham's descendents failing God again & again. The book closes with Israel in bondage to Egypt.

b. An invisible struggle between God & Satan

- 1) A spiritual war that is going on for the souls of men where we see Satan behind all the evil & lawlessness in the world
- 2) Satan's purpose
 - a) To receive power & worship by opposing God's work, discouraging believers & arousing God's justice against man by leading him into rebellion against God
 - b) To hurt & cut the heart of God because God has judged & condemned him. He does all he can to get back at God
- 3) See him attempt to corrupt & destroy God's work
 - a) Adam & Eve – gets them to disobey God & focus on selves
 - b) Cain's false worship & murder
 - c) Terrible corruption of whole human race bringing on the flood
 - d) Filling man with pride, & arrogance to seek a name for himself
 - e) Abraham & Sarah being childless
 - f) Jacob's & Esau's worldliness

c. The struggle for redemption between God, man & Satan

- 1) God, because of His great love seeks to provide redemption for man
- 2) Satan seeks to frustrate God's plans
- 3) Man seeks to gain recognition & exalt himself – feels good enough

4. Moses purpose in writing

- a. Historical – to strengthen & encourage Israel in their faith & trust in God
 - 1) Show there is only one true God
 - 2) Show Israel her roots – chose by God Himself
 - 3) Show Israel that promised seed would be coming through them
- b. Doctrinal
 - 1) Teach all men that God is the sovereign creator
 - 2) To teach the origin of sin & death
 - 3) To show God's mercy & grace when man repents
 - 4) To show that God keeps His promises in spite of the failings of man
- c. The promised seed line – Seth, Shem, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah

5. Major arguments demonstrating the existence of God

- a. The existence of the universe
 - 1) The simple statement that God created the heavens and the earth is one of the most challenging concepts confronting the modern mind.
 - 2) The vast galaxy we live in is spinning at the incredible speed of 490,000 miles an hour. But even at this breakneck speed, our galaxy still needs 200 million years to make one rotation.
 - 3) There are over one billion other galaxies just like ours in the universe.
 - 4) Some scientists say that the number of stars in creation is equal to all the grains of all the sands on all the beaches of the world. Yet this complex sea of spinning stars functions with remarkable order and efficiency. To say that the universe “just happened” or “evolved” requires more faith than to believe that God is behind these amazing statistics. God truly did create a wonderful universe.
- b. Design – experience says that design does not come through random mindless chaos. God did not *need* to create the universe; he *chose* to create it.
 - 1) Why? God is love, and love is best expressed toward something or someone else—so God created the world and people as an expression of his love.
 - 2) We should avoid reducing God's creation to merely scientific terms. Remember that God created the universe because he loves each of us.
- c. The existence of life – all existence points to life coming from life
- d. Man – differences from other forms of life – intelligence, art, music, emotion, abstract thought, appreciation of beauty
- e. Human language – speech is not natural to humans the way grunts, moos & clucks are to animals. Human language is learned & taught – conveys concrete thoughts but also abstract concepts, ideas & feelings

The Creation

Introduction

The early chapters of Genesis form a foundation for the entire Bible. Every moral & spiritual principle that follows is built solidly upon the account of God's creative work. For example, idolatry is wrong because it involves the worship of the created thing rather than the creator. Murder is wrong because it is the killing of one made in the image of God. All men should live as brothers, no matter the color of their skin, because we are of one origin. Divorce is wrong because it stands against God's purpose for marriage.

Gen.1:1-2:25

1. God created the heavens & the earth

a. God was personally involved in the creation

1) He simply spoke & things came into being

In NT – word is used to make us into a new creation – 1Pet.1:23

Word is used to grow & mature us spiritually – Acts 20:32

Word is used to bring people to salvation – Rom.1:15,16

2) He did all the creating in six days

Were these 24-hour days?

Word day when it refers to a specific number like 1st or 2nd always means a 24-hour day.

Only days have mornings & evenings – not geological ages

God ended the day with night & the night with day

God created plant life on the 3rd day – not survive without sunlight which was not created until the 4th day

God divided days – seasons & years – 24-hour period not geological ages

God made earth in 6 days & rested on the 7th – if a geological age then God is still resting & not active in the affairs of man & the creation

What about the geological & fossil evidence?

Takes millions of years for coal, oil, diamonds, uranium etc to form

Are fossil - skeletons of plants & animals in the rock formations 100's of feet within earth's crust. Take millions of years to bury them this deep & millions more to uncover them by erosion

God could have created these formations immediately

The account of the flood – catastrophic circumstances –

God violently broke up earth's crust & released the subterranean water – huge waves, violent downpour

Imagine how the earth's surface had to change

3) What did Moses have in mind when he wrote these words?

Creation was underlying reason for 7th day being a day of rest

b. To reject the creation account in favor of another theory of man & the earth's origin means giving up almost everything that is of value in Christianity

- 1) Man made in the image of God – evolutionary theory not allow man to be different from other animals
- 2) Scriptures are inspired word of God – how could God make such a mistake concerning the origins?
- 3) Jesus is deity – He could not be involved in the creation if there was no creation. (Jn.1:1-3) If the Apostles were mistaken about this, how can their writings be trusted?
- 4) Moral & ethical standards – marriage, murder etc

c. Areas where science supports the scriptures

- 1) Archeology has discovered 1000's of things that prove the Bible's historical accuracy
- 2) Astronomy agrees that with scripture that the world had a beginning
- 3) Geology supports the order of creation presented in Genesis (universe 1st, world, life in sea, lower forms, man)
- 4) Physics 2nd Law of Thermodynamics – running down
- 5) Mathematics – Law of probability = not happen by chance; intelligence
- 6) Biology – each creature reproduces after it's own kind
- 7) Anthropology – really only 1 race of mankind – common ancestor

2. Man is created in the image of God

a. Means?

- 1) Gen.5:1-3 – Seth described as being in the image & likeness of Adam
- 2) In scripture we find illustrations of God's nature & character that are very much like our own.
- 3) Man is unlike any of the rest of creation – no others spoken of this way
- 4) Unlikely that it means the soul
 - a) Hebrew word translated soul 1st appears in Gen.1:20 “let the waters teem with swarms of living souls”.
 - b) Indicates what now being created is different & distinctive from what was previously created
 - c) Soul means breath, life, consciousness, and animation
Gen.2:7 – man receives the breath of God (Spirit) not the Animals
- 5) Unlikely it means the ability to reason (animals have some ability to think & solve problems)
- 6) Unlikely means ability to be moral & just – animals have rules that lead to virtuous & moral behavior among themselves

b. Possible answers – God's character & nature

- 1) God is perfect so man originally created perfect
- 2) God is light = full of glory, splendor & brilliance (man created & clothed with the glory of light)
- 3) God is holy – man created without sin – pure & righteous

- 4) God is love – created as a creature love, devotion, mercy & compassion
- 5) God is an eternal Spirit – created man to live forever & relate to God

c. The fact that man is made in the image of God sets him apart from the rest of God's creation.

- 1) Additional ways that we are like our creator
 - a) Creativity, rational thought,
 - b) Appreciation of beauty & harmony & design
 - c) Sense of time, feelings, ethics, communication
- 2) 1 Cor.11:7 – made in the image & glory of God
 - a) Heb.2:5-9 – crowned with glory & honor (not see today)
 - b) Rom.3:23 – sin caused man to fall short of that glory
- 3) Salvation includes the restoration of glory
 - a) 2 Pet.1:3,4 – given all need to participate in divine nature
 - b) Rom.8:29 – destined to be conformed to image of Jesus
 - c) 2 Cor.3:18 – as reflect Lord's glory transformed into His likeness
 - d) 1 Jn.3:1-3 – when He appears we shall be like Him
 - e) 1 Cor.15:49 – we shall bear the likeness of the man from heaven

d. Word study

- 1) **Image** – originally meant - a shadow & came to mean a representation, a resemblance or an idol.
- 2) **Likeness** – means to liken, resemble or compare
- 3) **Image in NT** – meant a genuine likeness or representation; used of statues & coins

3. God's 1st charge or covenant with man

- a. **Covenant** – a specific agreement between two or more persons; an unconditional agreement or promise
- b. **God wanted man to participate in His goodness & grace**
 - 1) Made a garden (a paradise) which met all man's needs (a perfect home)
 - 2) Man's responsibility – care for the garden, look after the garden's needs
 - a) Man was created to work & be active, not idle or irresponsible
 - b) God was giving man a sense of purpose & self worth – to feel that he is worthwhile & significant
 - 3) God gave man the freedom to choose to live with God
 - a) To stay away from the tree of knowledge of good & evil
 - b) The incentive – the entire garden was at his disposal
- c. **Man violated that covenant with God**
 - 1) Satan tempted man by getting him to focus on what was forbidden
 - 2) Man chose to disobey God
 - 3) The consequences – banned from the garden & death

4. God creates a companion for the man – woman

- a. **Reason** – it was not good for man to be alone
 - 1) Alone – incomplete, unfinished, unfulfilled
 - 2) Man was unable to reproduce & subdue the earth alone
- b. **Companion** – a suitable helper
 - 1) **Means** – fit, corresponding to, agreeing with, counterpart, opposite
 - 2) God had Adam name all the animals so that he would realize there was nothing in creation that could fully meet his needs.
- c. **God brings them together**
 - 1) Required a permanent separation from their parents
 - 2) Required that they cleave to one another – intimate & permanent
 - 3) Goal – to become one flesh

Sin & The Fall Of Man

Introduction

Man's history begins with Adam & his wife Eve living in full fellowship with God in a paradise. They were placed in the Garden of Eden & given the responsibility to tend it & enjoy life to its fullest. Soon all that would change as Satan enters the picture & man is tempted to break his fellowship with God. In this lesson our focus will be upon chapters three through five of the book of Genesis.

Gen.3:1-24

1. The serpent was crafty

- a. Some commentators hold that Satan possessed a real living creature called a serpent. Others feel that Satan transformed himself into the form of a serpent.
- b. In Rev.12:9 – Satan is referred to as that old serpent, so this could also just be a picture of Satan himself.
- c. Facts about the serpent
 - 1) Apparently he could walk upright & was a most magnificent creature Gen.3:14
 - 2) The craftiness of the serpent is compared to the craftiness of the beast of the field. Gen.3:1
 - 3) Scriptures gives examples where Satan had the power to use & speak through people – Mt.16:22,23; Acts 16:16-18
 - 4) Jesus tells us that Satan was behind the fall of man - Jn.8:44
 - 5) Paul says that Satan was behind the fall of man – 2 Cor.11:3,14
- d. Some say the prophets referred to Satan in Isa.14:12-15 & in Ezek.28:11-19
 - 1) He wanted to rule over the universe without answering to God
 - 2) He wanted to be his own person & rule his own life
“I will exalt my own throne & be like the Most High”
- e. Why is Satan even in the picture?
 - 1) He is used by God to test man – give man an opportunity to choose God
 - 2) Man has been given a free will & now has the opportunity to obey God
 - 3) Satan was allowed on the scene to provide a suggestive thought

2. Eve & temptation

- a. **Eve was alone & where she did not belong**
 - 1) Around the forbidden tree apparently thinking about it
 - 2) She was not keeping a watchful eye out for temptation
 - 3) Apparently even thinking about the tree & its delicious looking fruit
- b. **Why do I say she was apparently focusing upon the fruit?**
 - 1) Satan's opening statement to her – “Did God really say?”
 - 2) Satan's attack to get her to just continue her thinking
 - a) “You must not eat of any tree in the garden?”
 - b) Man had everything he wanted except fruit from 1 tree

c) Satan wanted man to think that he was missing something

c. Steps into temptation

- 1) Suggestive & enticing thoughts
- 2) Discussing our thoughts (entertaining & harboring them) not rejecting
- 3) Doubting the consequences of sin (rationalizing sin)
 - a) Warning was given to Adam not me
 - b) God not condemn me & leave Adam alone (no companion)
 - c) God is so good He will forgive me
 - d) God surely not condemn me for doing only one thing
- 4) Thinking one will be more fulfilled & benefited if we sin
 - a) We have needs that cannot be met any other way
 - b) You'll never know how great it is until you try it
 - c) You will obtain power & position (be as God)
- 5) Allowing the flesh to lust after it – 1 Jn.2:15-17
 - a) Saw the tree was good for food
 - b) Saw the tree was pleasant to the eyes
 - c) Saw the tree was desirable for gaining wisdom
- 6) Committing the sin (inwardly – in the heart - have already sinned)

d. To defeat temptation one must deal with it when it starts

- 1) Stay away from it – Rom.13:14
- 2) Reject any & all-suggestive thoughts
- 3) Flee temptation – 1 Cor.6:18; 10:14; 1 Tim.6:11; 2 Tim.2:22

e. Eve then led Adam into sin – took him through all the same steps

- 1) Eve was a stumbling block to Adam – a temptress not a helpmeet
- 2) Adam was not deceived – willingly & deliberately sinned

3. The results of their sin

a. Their image of themselves was crushed & devastated

- 1) Sensed that they were naked – imperfect & short of God's glory
- 2) Fearful; shame = attempted to cover themselves & hide from God
 - a) Conceal sin by looking without themselves not within
 - b) Focus on corporate sin rather than personal wrongdoing
 - c) Assuming that time conceals sin
 - d) Thinking there is safety in numbers – everybody is doing it

b. Alienation & separation from God

- 1) God's question – Adam "where are you?"
 - a) God already knew what had happened
 - b) God is demonstrating His love by seeking Adam
(Not the call of a judge but a Father)
- 2) God was bringing conviction upon Adam
- 3) Man was banned from the presence of God & His garden
 - a) No more access to the tree of life
 - b) Bodies began to experience death

c. Severe divisions in relationships

- 1) Between man & God – feared God (no longer like God – perfect)

- 2) Between man & woman
 - a) Adam blames Eve for his actions
 - b) Also blaming God – you gave me = sees her as an inferior gift
 - c) Eve blames the serpent (not accepting her responsibility either)
(God to blame for allowing serpent into garden)
 - d) Are now blaming & criticizing each other & everything else
- 3) Hatred between the woman & the serpent
 - a) Tempter cursed above creatures (never freed from his judgment)
 - b) Must crawl on belly all the days of his life (defeated-humiliated)
- d. Pain in childbearing greatly increased**
- e. Desire will be for her husband but he will rule** (see Gen.4:7)
- f. Hard work necessary for food & survival**
 - 1) Ground cursed – world be imperfect & full of corruption (home)
 - 2) Have to struggle for survival (produce thorns & thistles – sweat to eat)
 - 3) Return to the ground – death
- g. All man’s descendents affected** – death comes to all (Rom.5:12,13)

Genesis 4 & 5

1. Cain & Abel

- 1. After leaving the garden Adam & Eve have two sons**
 - a. Abel is a shepherd; Cain is a farmer
 - b. Both bring a sacrifice to God
 - 1) No record God told them what to bring (had be blood sacrifice)
 - 2) Abel’s is accepted; Cain’s is rejected
 - c. Cain becomes angry & kills Abel (though warned about his response)
 - d. Cain cursed & driven from family – a marked man
- 2. Why was Cain’s sacrifice rejected?**
 - a. Heb.11:4 – by faith Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice
 - b. Possible suggestions
 - 1) Wrong sacrifice – had to be a blood sacrifice
 - 2) Offered the wrong way – resentful or disrespectful – 1 Jn.3:12
 - 3) Attitude – not understand reason for the sacrifice – Jude 10,11
 - c. Scripture shows God more concerned about the heart & attitude shown
 - 1) Hosea 6:6,7 – desire mercy not sacrifice
 - 2) Micah 6:6-8 – act justly, love mercy & walk humbly with God
 - 3) Isa.1:11-17 – learn to do tight, seek justice, encourage oppressed
 - 4) Ps.51:15-17 – broken & contrite heart
- 3. Cain’s attitude toward what he had done**
 - a. Allowed his heart to become hardened & consumed with sin
 - b. Denied responsibility for his brother – tried hide his sin from God
 - c. Refused to repent even though confronted with his sin
- 4. Consequences upon Cain for his sin**
 - a. Cursed from the earth - Ground no more produce for him
 - b. Be a restless wanderer all his life

Development & Corruption Of Mankind

Introduction

As we read Genesis chapters 4:1-5:32, we see the development of the descendants of Adam & Eve. Sin had entered the world, a curse was upon all creation & now we see the results of the tragic consequences of man's choice to live apart from God. In these chapters we see the descendents of Adam & Eve branch out into both a godly & an ungodly way. Cain & his descendents will choose to live apart from God, while Seth & his descendents will chose to live in closer communion with God.

Geneses 4:1-7

1. Cain & Abel

- a. **Professions** – Cain a farmer; Abel a herdsman (met basic needs of man)
- b. Learned their professions from their father
 - 1) God had shown Adam how to clothe himself – skins of animals – 3:21
 - 2) God had instructed Adam to till the ground – 3:17-19,23
- c. **Approached God to worship Him**
 - 1) **Specific time & place**
 - a) In the course of time = the end of the days
 - b) Evidently Adam had a place designated for worship
Some commentators say at the entrance of Garden of Eden
Adam would have wanted fellowship to be restored &
would have taught his family to seek that fellowship too.
 - 2) **Cain did not seek to please God**
 - a) Wanted God to accept whatever he brought
 - b) As if his labor & effort were sufficient
 - c) God rejected Cain's offering
 - 3) **Cain's response** – anger & rage
 - a) Angry at God for not accepting his offering
 - 1) Not allowed to approach God, as he wanted
 - 2) Not angry at self for own hypocrisy
 - b) Angry with his brother
 - 1) Envy & jealousy because sacrifice accepted
 - 2) Resented & despised him
- d. **God in His mercy warns Cain**
 - 1) See His love & compassion – willing to forgive Cain
 - 2) Warns Cain
 - a) If do right will be accepted
 - b) If not do right – sin crouches at door (1st time sin mentioned)
 - c) Sin desires to have you
 - d) You must master sin
- e. **Note** – no response is mentioned – Cain silently broods

2. Cain murders Abel

a. Premeditated murder

- 1) Lures Abel into field away from everybody
- 2) His bitterness against God & his brother has festered into hate
- 3) Sin has consumed him

b. God confronts Cain about his brother

- 1) See sin multiply – lies to God; tries to deceive God
- 2) Refused to take responsibility for his sin
 - a) Tries to hide sin – not responsible for brother
 - b) Complains about his judgment – no hint of repentance, remorse
 - c) Accuses God of being unfair – too harsh in judgment

c. God's mercy again seen

- 1) Cain is totally rebellious – not seeking please or walk with God
 - a) Wants to live as he wants
 - b) Complaining about judgment not repenting
- 2) God decreed that vengeance was not to be executed upon Cain
 - a) 7 fold curse
 - b) Symbol of complete & final judgment
- 3) God placed a mark on Cain to assure & protect him (visible sign)

Genesis 4:16-24

1. Cain went from the presence of the Lord

- a. Heart hardened & refuses to repent – rejected God & all He stood for
- b. Sought to get as far from God's presence as he could
 - 1) Left his godly parents & their influence
 - 2) Left the place of worship
 - 3) Went to another country to live as he wanted
 - 4) Became the father of a secular ungodly society

2. Land of Nod

- a. **Means** = land of wanderings, restlessness, quaking, trembling & shaking
- b. Became a contractor – build a city
- c. **Cain's wife**
 - 1) **Scripture is clear** – Adam & Eve had other children
 - a) Adam lived 930 years
 - b) **Potential population enormous** – if only ½ the children lived; ½ the living got married; ½ the married had children population number still be in millions when Adam died.
 - 2) **No danger to deformity because of harmful genes**
 - a) God's plan – reproduce & replenish earth
 - b) Was beginnings of human race – genes no polluted

3. Ungodliness thrives

a. Lamech takes two wives

- 1) 1st bigamist
- 2) Took only 7 generations for man to violate God's plan for marriage
- 3) Focus seems be beauty & sex
 - a) Names of wives means – ornament, attractive, shadow
 - b) He is attracted by their beauty & the pleasure of the flesh

b. Were culturally gifted & wealthy people

- 1) Jabal is a rancher
- 2) Jubal is a musician
- 3) Tubal-cain was worker in brass & iron
- 4) Noamah – Tubal-cain's sister name means beautiful, attractive or pleasant. Apparently her beauty was so striking she caught everyone's attention (women usually not mentioned)

c. Notice - throughout these verses nothing is said about people living for God

- 1) See the pride & arrogance of Lamech – vs.23,24
- 2) Saw self as so powerful could avenge self 77X

Genesis 4:25-5:32

1. The birth of Seth

- a. Adam & Eve had lost both sons – one died & the other has left
- b. Seth means set, settled, placed or appointed (some say means substitute)
- c. Saw Seth as seed line – vs.25

2. Note vs.26 – at that time men begin to call upon the Lord

- a. Each generation only lists one descendent
- b. These descendents were contemporaries (lives overlapped)

Godly seed line

	Year born	Year died	Total years
Adam	1	930	930
Seth	130	1042	912
Enosh	235	1140	905
Cainan	325	1235	910
Mahalaleel	395	1290	895
Jared	460	1422	962
Enoch	622	987	365
Methuselah	687	1656	969
Lamech	874	1651	777
Noah	1056	2006	950

The Great Flood – 1656

c. Notice

- 1) Many of them lived at the same time (Lamech knew Adam)
- 2) Flood was 1656 – all the godly seed line had died except Noah

3. Enoch walked with God

- a. **Name means** dedicated; initiator & teacher
- b. More is said about Enoch in NT than in Genesis – Heb.11:5,6; Jude 14,15
- c. **Walked with God**
 - 1) Indicates forward movement & steady progress. Did not stop or fluctuate, was steadfast & persevering. He walked with God consistently.
 - 2) Walked with God after he begat Methuselah (after his son's birth)
 - 3) **Idea** – he repented & changed his life to walk with God
- d. He believed God diligently – Heb.11:5,6
- e. Was taken into God's presence without dying

4. Methuselah

- a. Lived longer than anyone else 969 years
- b. Was a testimony to God's grace & judgment that was to come
 - 1) **Name means** – man of the weapon or “when he dies it will come”
 - 2) Vs.22 – Enoch's conversion took place when Methuselah born
 - 3) Perhaps God revealed to Enoch a coming judgment & named the child
 - 4) Methuselah died in very year 1656 (year flood came)
 - 5) See Jude 14,15 – prophesied of a coming judgment

Corruption Of The Godly Seed

Introduction

In chapter four we saw the birth, growth & corruption of the seed line of Cain. Then we saw the descendents of Seth, a godly seed line who focused more upon the Lord than upon the flesh. Two streams of people were developing upon the earth. In chapter six we see those two lines merge as believers intermarry with unbelievers & the godly are pulled down & begin to live an ungodly lifestyle, so corrupt that God is moved to destroy the whole human race.

Gen.6:1-8

1. The sons of God – who are they?

a. Some interpreters say they are angels

- 1) In Job “sons of God” refers to angels
Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7
- 2) Giants were born as a result
 - a) Ancient mythology speaks of half human – half divine beings
 - b) See this verse as historical basis for these myths
- 3) Angels have appeared in bodily form of man – Gen.19:1-5
- 4) Jewish writers such as Josephus say this refers to angels
- 5) Apocryphal book of I Enoch

b. Other interpreters say this refers to the godly seed line of Seth – believers

- 1) Must be believers because it’s the only way to understand the sequence of thought in the early chapters
- 2) Term “sons of God” refers to believers in scripture
 - a) Deut.32:5 – Israel called God’s sons
 - b) Ps.73:15 – godly referred to as the generation of God’s children
 - c) Ps.80:17 – Israel called “the son whom God had made strong”
 - d) Hosea 1:10 – Israel called “the sons of the living God”
- 3) Context refers to the sons of God as men
 - a) Vs.3 – “MY Spirit shall not always strive with man”
 - b) Vs.5 – God saw that the wickedness of man was great
 - c) Vs.6 – It repented the Lord that He had made man
 - d) Vs.7 – The Lord said I will destroy man
 - e) Notice that every verse deals with man not angels
- 4) If the sinners were angels marrying human women, why are the godly men being destroyed?
 - a) Justice would be to punish the ungodly angels & women
 - b) Passage never mentions judging angels, just man
- 5) Jesus referred to this time & spoke of man, not angels – Mt.24:37,38
- 6) Jesus said that angels do not marry – Mt.22:30
 - a) The sons of God took wives – vs.2
 - b) No scripture indicates that angels are sexual beings

2. The human race begins to multiply

- a. **Notice** – when the ungodly increase so does sin & evil.
- b. The ungodly begin to outnumber the godly – evil & sin increases more than godliness & righteousness
- c. **The godly become worldly & immoral**
 - 1) Godly began to notice the daughters
 - 2) Emphasis is upon the exterior – beautiful, pleasant to the eye
 - 3) Married any of them they chose – no restraints – lust & the flesh ruled
- d. **Lust was running wild & believers were turning away from God**
 - 1) Vs.5 – every inclination of man’s heart was wicked
 - 2) Heart is the root of sin in man’s life
 - a) Mt.15:19 – out of the heart proceeds evil thoughts
 - b) Rom.1:21 – man’s descent into reprobation began in the heart
 - c) Titus 1:15 - to corrupt nothing is pure –heart, mind, conscience
 - 3) Only Noah & his family followed God

3. God becomes disturbed & warns man of his coming destruction

- a. **Remember there was great preaching going on in those days**
 - 1) Adam lived 930 years – no doubt spoke of the perfection of the original creation, his own sin & fall & the necessity of obedience in life & worship
 - 2) Enoch walked with God & warned of evil & the coming judgment (Jude 14,15)
 - 3) Methuselah’s name stood as a reminder of coming judgment
 - 4) Noah was a preacher of righteousness – 2 Peter 2:5
 - 5) Most people refused to heed these warnings & lived as they wanted
- b. **God’s warnings**
 - 1) **He would withdraw His Spirit from man**
 - a) **People were resisting & quenching God’s Spirit**
 - b) Spirit was convicting man, but his heart was hardened
 - c) **Statement** - “man is flesh” = mortal or corrupt
 - (1) Had given himself over to the flesh completely
 - (2) Was now enslaved by the flesh – lived only for it
 - (3) Was about to reach the point of no return (never repent)
 - d) **Consequently God had no choice** – would withdraw His Spirit & allow man to reap the consequences of his ungodliness
 - 2) **God’s grace had a limit** – man was given 120 years to repent
 - a) Man had one last chance to repent
 - b) 2 Pet.3:3,4,8,9
- c. **Man’s wickedness had become great**
 - 1) Mankind had become a lawless & crime ridden society
 - 2) Sin became more extreme & terrible
 - 3) Man became more & more embolden to sin
 - 4) Every imagination & thought was evil continually - His mind flooded with self centeredness & self seeking

4. God grieved over man

- a. **Means** – to pant, groan, lament or grieve because of the misery of others or oneself.
- b. **Man was multiplying sin** – multiplying the pain, misery & destruction & death that sin causes
- c. **Man's sin was cutting into the heart of God** as a disobedient child grieves their parents
- d. **Sin was bringing on God's wrath** – had to be punished
- e. **Man was condemning himself** – separating himself from God forever
- f. God was not an unconcerned spectator but a loving Father

5. God condemned man to be wiped off the face of the earth

- a. **God determined that man would be wiped out** – wickedness too great
 - 1) There was only one godly family left = all others totally corrupt
 - 2) There was a possibility that this family would be influenced to turn away from God too
 - 3) The worldly could react & kill Noah & his family – needed them to carry on the seed line
- b. **Man had abused God's grace too long** – the earth was a cesspool of immorality & violence
 - 1) Man was living to fulfill the desires of his flesh
 - 2) Man was working against the very purpose for which God had created him & destroying both himself & the earth
- c. **One man & his family found favor in the eyes of God** = grace
 - 1) God remembered His promises – a godly seed to redeem man
 - 2) Noah believed God's promises & strove to live righteously
 - 3) One man stood toe to toe with the rest of the world – he alone stood faithful to God when all others were opposed to God

6. The generations of Noah

- a. **Noah was righteous** – blameless among the people of his time
 - 1) He walked with God & reared a godly family
 - 2) In God's eyes Noah was head & shoulders above the people of his day
 - 3) The people of Noah's day no doubt despised & persecuted him
 - a) His godly life & preaching bothered them
 - b) They reminded them of their guilt – pricked their consciences
 - c) They reminded them of their wickedness – wanted him stopped
- b. **Noah's character**
 - 1) **Was just or righteous**
 - a) Justified before God – counted righteous
 - b) Lived righteously, treated others fairly & justly
 - 2) **Blameless among his people**
 - a) Not sinless, but without blemish. Looking at Noah one saw a man of integrity, honesty & truthfulness
 - b) Phil.2:14,15; Col.1:22,23; 1 Thess.3:12,13; 2 Pet.3:14

3) **Noah walked with God**4) **Noah reared a godly family**

- a) When Noah was born six of his grandfathers & great grandfathers were still living (godly heritage)
- b) Their godly influence was bound to have an influence upon him
- c) Deut.4:9' 6:6,7; Prov.22:6; Isa.28:9

7. **Can we believe the flood really happened?**

- a. All scripture confirms the Genesis account
 - 1) Job 22:15,16 – believed to have been written before writings of Moses
 - 2) Ps.104:6-9
 - 4) Lk.17:26,27
 - 5) Mt.24:37-39
 - 6) Heb.11:7
 - 7) 1 Peter 3:20
 - 8) 2 Peter 2:5; 3:5,6
- b. The Genesis account leaves no room for misunderstanding
 - 1) Gen.6:17 – everything on earth will perish
 - 2) Gen.7:4 – will wipe out every living creature
 - 3) Gen.7:19,20 – every mountain covered
 - 4) Gen.7:23 – only Noah & those with him in Ark left
- c. Is sufficient circumstantial evidence to corroborate the Genesis account
 - 1) Millions of elephants frozen in ice & soil in Siberia
 - 2) Died with fresh food in their stomachs
 - 3) Giant fossil deposits in France
 - 4) Dinosaurs & other reptiles in the Rocky Mountains
 - 5) All these point to some cataclysmic event (Greek word for flood)
 - 6) Over 270 cultures refer to a great flood
 - a) 88% say one family saved
 - b) 70% refer to a boat as means of salvation
 - c) 66% speak of animals saved too
 - d) 66% speak of cause as human wickedness
 - e) 57% speak of saved ending up on a mountain

Genesis 11:1-91. **Whole earth was of one language – one speech**

- a. One speech = one vocabulary; same meaning for the same things
- b. **Idea** – their concepts & thoughts were the same – expressed by the same words
- c. Enabled them to live & work together without hindrance
- d. Had the ability to advance as a society & civilization unhampered
- e. Evidently everyone was migrating in mass – as a whole civilization

2. As people settled down they wanted to do something to hold all of them together

- a. People challenged with a vision – a great city with a great tower
- b. People were excited & gave themselves wholly to the task
- c. The people were united in a secular purpose – not God’s purpose
 - 1) Out to gain a name for themselves
 - 2) They wanted fame & recognition
 - 3) Future generations would hail their efforts – boast in them
- d. Notice – nothing is said of God
 - 1) God & His ministry is completely left out
 - 2) Their purpose – to act independently of God
- e. The people were seeking to not be scattered = disobeying God’s directive
- f. They sought to reach heaven on own
 - 1) Not literal – built at sea level (better to use mountain if literal)
 - 2) Tower was a symbol of reaching unto heaven

3. God’s judgment – confuse language so not understand one another

- a. Throughout history God has allowed man’s evil purposes to continue & just run their course (Hitler, Stalin & etc. who sought to build world wide empire)
 - 1) This time the unity was unique – single minded purpose (as one)
 - 2) Able to communicate & understand fully – same concepts, thoughts & mind processes that enabled them to plan & execute them efficiently & effectively
 - 3) Man had tremendous capabilities – nothing impossible
 - 4) Their purpose was totally evil – in rebellion to God – pure selfishness
- b. God confused their languages
 - 1) Language is learned & as it is learned the mind arranges & organizes thoughts in a certain manner
 - 2) As humans we differ in the way that we think & process information
 - 3) God confused man’s mind so that he no longer thought the same or communicated the same
- c. As a result man began to separate – drift apart
- d. God in His mercy had stopped man’s evil intentions thus averting disaster (Imagine the wickedness man could achieve if allowed to continue)

God Calls Abram

Introduction

A dramatic change now takes place in the book of Genesis that would change human history forever. God will choose one man to give birth to an entirely new race of people. Before, God had dealt with the human race as a whole, but now His attention would be directed at one man & his heritage. From this point on in scripture the focus would be upon the people of Israel & the bringing into the world a promised seed who would save mankind from their sin.

Genesis 12:1-13:4

1. Abram

a. One of the most important persons in the Bible

- 1) Bible devotes great deal of space to Abraham
 - 14 chapters in Genesis
 - One whole chapter in Romans
 - One whole chapter in Galatians
 - 12 verses in Hebrews
- 2) Fathered 2 great races of people – Arabs & Jews
- 3) See titles given to him
 - Friend of God – James 2:23
 - Prince of God – Gen.23:6
 - Prophet – Gen.20:7
 - Servant of God – Ps.105:6
 - Our father – James 2:21
- 4) His life is the picture of a believer's life
 - Called to forsake his old way of life
 - Called to believe in & diligently seek God
 - Great example of salvation by grace
 - Illustration of need to constantly be on guard against temptation
- 5) Three great religions trace their roots back to Abram
 - Judaism
 - Christianity
 - Islam

b. Used by God to bring Messiah into the world

2. God calls Abram to separate from his family & country

a. Why?

- 1) People & things of the world meant too much to him
 - a) Was God's second calling of Abram
 - 1st calling – Gen.11:31,32 – left & went to Haran
 - b) Apparently Abram had allowed himself to be diverted
 - Stayed in Haran for 5 years

- 2) Some reasons he may have chosen to stay in Haran
 - a) His father became ill & he chose to stay & care for him
 - b) Lost some of his zeal & commitment for God
 - c) A good business opportunity
 - d) Family pressures
- 3) Not told why, so can't be absolutely sure
- b. Remember** - people of the world had become idolaters, immoral very wicked
 - 1) It is impossible to live for God & the world at the same time
 - 2) Abram needed to start his whole life over again
- c. Our calling**
 - 1) Acts 2:40 – save selves from this perverse generation
 - 2) Rom.12:2 – be not conformed to this world
 - 3) 2 Cor.6:17,18 – come out from among them & be separate
 - 4) Eph.5:11 – no fellowship with unfruitful works of darkness
 - 5) James 4:4 – friendship with world is enmity with God
 - 6) 1 Jn.2:15,16 – love not the world
- d. Hebrew wording – one commentary said = “go for yourself”**
 - 1) **Idea** = leave for your own benefit & welfare
 - 2) See blessings promised in verses 2&3
 - a) Guide them, secure them
 - b) Make his name great
 - c) Make Abram a blessing to others
 - 3) **Promises to us**
 - Mt.6:33 – seek 1st His kingdom – all things added to you
 - Mt.10:28-30 – will receive 100X & eternal life

3. Abram's faith tested

- a. See his faith**
 - 1) Is 75 years old – secure, settled & comfortable in his life
 - 2) Didn't hesitate, argue or qualify his decision
 - 3) Sarah & Lot are strongly influenced to follow him (not forced)
 - 4) Not allow his wealth to hold him back (workers come along too)
 - 5) Risked everything to follow God
- b. Gets there & land is inhabited by the Canaanites**
 - 1) Did he expect that land would be free & ready to be possessed?
 - 2) Should he continue to believe God; trust He would remove them?
 - 3) Builds an altar & worships
- c. Abram exhibits weak faith**
 - 1) Eight basic needs that constantly confronts man
 - a) Food; water; clothing; housing; life & health;
love & companionship; purpose; light
 - b) When one of these is threatened, man has to act to remedy the situation or he faces tragic consequences

- 2) **Abram's trial** – severe famine comes upon the land
 - a) Faced with the possibility of starvation – families & herds
 - b) Seemed reasonable to make a temporary trip to Egypt
 - 3) **Abram turns to the world for answers instead of God**
 - a) Nothing is said about Abram asking God for advise
 - b) No thought as to what exposure to these people would cause
 - 4) **Abram's sin compounds**
 - a) **Abram thought & suggested evil** to Sarah (say I am his sister)
 - (1) Thought had been consumed with fear
 - (2) Lived in a godless time – life was cheap – common practice that if desired something then kill to obtain
 - (3) Abram was handling another problem as world would
 - (4) Abram was failing to trust in God to protect him
 - b) **Abram was acting selfishly** = thinking only of himself
 - (1) Misled Sarah into thinking was doing this for her sake
 - (2) Have time to negotiate & reject dowry offered
 - (3) If not do this they kill him & she at disposal of them
 - (4) Abram was rationalizing his behavior
 - c) **Allowed Sarah to dress & expose her beauty to men**
 - (1) Could have kept her from being seen
 - (2) For some reason the princes of area saw her beauty
 - d) **Allowed Sarah to be taken into Pharaoh's court**
 - (1) Failed to stand up for his wife
 - (2) Accepted goods & riches for her
- d. **God rescues Abram & Sarah**
- 1) **Abram is in a mess** that seems impossible to be free from
 - a) Couldn't free her himself
 - b) Seemed to be little hope God would still bless him
 - 2) **God judges Pharaoh**
 - a) Plague that kept him from marrying Sarah (problem was Sarah)
 - b) Stricken with fear & not harm Abram or Sarah
 - c) Allows them to keep the riches given them
 - 3) **God judges Abram**
 - a) Publicly exposed his lying etc
 - b) Publicly exposed willingness of both to wicked scheme
 - c) Public rebuke from the unrighteous
 - d) Evicted from Egypt
 - e) Had to return to Canaan & face the famine
 - f) Intense guilt - sense of unworthiness (how God ever bless again)
 - g) Everyone knew of their shameful behavior
 - 4) **Abram repents before God**
 - a) Could have gone back to Ur
 - b) Goes to Bethel – builds an altar & calls upon the Lord

Abraham & His Nephew Lot

Introduction

God has called a man named Abram to follow Him. Abram has accepted this calling & is presently wandering in the land of Canaan, a land that God has promised to give to Abram's descendents. God's goal is to make a great nation out of Abram & through that nation bless the whole world through Jesus Christ. As we examine Abram's life there are many lessons that we can learn about faithfully walking with God. In this lesson we will see the difference between being focused our lives on worldly things verses focusing them upon spiritual things.

Genesis 13, 14

1. Abram treated Lot like a son

- a. Lot was the son of Abram's brother Haran
- b. When Haran died Abram took Lot into his own family & educated him & gave him his start in the ranching business.
- c. We know from other scriptures that Lot became a believer (2 Pet.2:6-8)
- d. However, Lot lived a carnal life that is easily seen in these verses
- e. **Contrast – Spiritual believer verses worldly believer**
 - 1) Abram lived by faith – Lot lived by sight
 - 2) Abram was giving & unselfish – Lot was greedy & selfish
 - 3) Abram was humble & respectful – Lot was prideful & self-exalting
 - 4) Abram sought God & His promises – Lot sought possessions & pleasures
 - 5) Abram became the father of the believing – Lot lost everything

2. Problems develop between Abram & Lot

- a. They had unwisely stayed together
 - 1) Even though the land could not support them
 - 2) Though both are intelligent men – not told why stayed together
 - 3) May have been security reasons – family ties etc
- b. Conflict arose between workers – best pasture & water holes
 - 1) Not yet a problem between Abram & Lot, but petty arguments divides
 - 2) Were becoming a poor testimony before the world
 - 3) Remember – one reason God called Abram was to be a witness to other nations
- c. Abram sought to solve the conflict
 - 1) As brothers they needed to care & look after one another – be at peace
 - 2) Offered to give the best land to Lot
 - a) To sacrifice his right to the best
 - b) He was older; God had made the promises to him
- d. **Notice several facts**
 - 1) Abram's concern for the relationship – strife had to be settled
(NT emphasis - Rom.12:18; Phil.2:3,4; Heb.12:14; James 3:14-18)

- 2) See Abram's attitude
 - a) Uses the word "please" twice in the original ("I pray thee" KJV)
 - b) He is pleading not demanding
- 3) See Abram's wisdom
 - a) Knew if chose best for himself – Lot would react & be bitter
 - b) If Lot given 1st choice no reason for harsh feelings
- 4) See Abram's faith
 - a) Trusted God would take care of him
 - b) Willing to seek God & His righteousness first
 - c) Sacrificed his rights to accomplish God's will
 - d) Sought peace above all else
 - e) Humbled himself & acted unselfishly

3. Lot's choice

a. His worldly focus was his downfall

- 1) Was misled by his eyes – by what looked good on the surface
- 2) Jumped at the chance to get the best for himself = selfish greed
- 3) No record that he ever thanked or appreciated Abram for the opportunity to choose first (no right to choose 1st)
- 4) After all that Abram had done for him – focus was self – best for self
- 5) Focus was surface – plenty of water; lush - garden of God
- 6) Ignored the ungodly behavior of Sodom & Gomorrah
- 7) Never offered Abram even a part of this fertile plain

b. Had no concern for the spiritual impact this have on him & his family

4. Abram lived where would prosper spiritually; Lot lived where prosper materially

a. Abram continued his pilgrimage of faith

- 1) Herds large & the need for more pasture
- 2) Canaanites settled in land – dangerous to stay because local residents feel threatened if stay too long
- 3) Not want the wickedness of the people to influence his family (called to live an exemplary life – example of godliness)

b. Lot settled in plain of Jordan

- 1) Wanted to prosper & enjoy his possessions
- 2) Chose to be close to the cities – in the midst of the ungodly
- 3) Settled close to Sodom (market & opportunity for position)
- 4) Chose live among those who sinned openly before God (unashamed)

c. Warnings from scripture

- 1) Mt.16:26 – what profited is gain world & lose soul?
- 2) Lk.21:34 – take care lest heart overwhelmed by pleasure
- 3) Rom.12:2 – be not conformed to the world
- 4) 2 Cor.6:7,8 – come out from among them
- 5) Col.3:2 – set your affection on things above
- 6) Titus 2:12,13 – grace teaches us to deny ungodliness
- 7) James 4:4 – friendship with world is enmity with God

5. God again speaks to Abram

- a. **Notice** - this was after he made the choice to separate himself from the world
 - 1) Abram needed to be separate from Lot (focus was the world)
 - 2) God not bless believers that are unequally yoked (1 Cor.5:11; Ps.1:1)
- b. **God rewards Abram's faith**
 - 1) Assures him of His promises
 - 2) Promised land & promised seed

7. War breaks out & Lot taken captive

- a. Invaders were from Babylon & Persia
- b. Kings in Palestine revolted against their rule (conquered 12 years earlier)
- c. Lot taken captive – has lost everything & now a slave
- d. Abram acts to save his family
 - 1) Knew the odds & anticipated the dangers
 - 2) Was prepared (318 trained men) – went after them immediately
 - 3) Launched a surprise attack from many different vantage points
 - 4) Not stop until enemy completely defeated – all enslaved freed

8. Melchizedek

- a. **Only time appears in human history**
 - 1) Just three verses devoted to him – yet extremely important
 - 2) Is a type of Christ
- b. **See importance**
 - 1) David prophecies about Jesus & Melchizedek – Ps.110:4
 - 2) David declared that his priesthood was eternal
 - 3) Jesus made a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek – Heb.5:5,6
 - 4) Abram gave him a tenth of everything
- c. **Melchizedek had no genealogy as far as we know**
 - 1) No record of his roots or origin (most unusual for a priest)
 - 2) His priesthood spoken of as greater than Aaron's
 - 3) No mention of his roots or his death in scripture
(as if no beginning & no ending – Heb.7:1-3 = eternal)
- d. **Names**
 - 1) Melchizedek = righteousness
 - 2) Salem = peace
 - 3) Referred to as the king of righteousness & peace – Heb.7:2

9. Abram tempted to compromise

- a. **Told to keep what he had gained for himself**
 - 1) King of Sodom wants to rebuild his kingdom
 - 2) Offers for Abram to keep all the possessions – just give me the people
 - 3) Poses a serious threat to Abram's spiritual welfare – compromise
- b. **See the temptation**
 - 1) Abram was the conqueror – had right keep spoils of war
 - 2) There was a great deal of wealth being offered

c. Abram's commitment to God

- 1) Before going into battle – prayed – committed all to God
- 2) Made a vow to God would take nothing for himself
(no personal ambitions – wanted all glory to go to God)
- 3) No obligations to compromise his convictions for the king of Sodom

Genesis 15**1. Abram experiences fear & disappointment**

- a. See God's message opens with "do not be afraid"
- b. See Abram's concern about remaining childless
- c. God's message
 - 1) I am your shield
 - 2) I am your great reward
- d. Why Abram fearful & disappointed?
 - 1) Been in the Promised Land for 10 years & nothing to show for it
 - 2) Spiritually he was alone – perhaps he misunderstood God
 - 3) Was he falling short & God not make good on His promises?

2. God reassures Abram

- a. Every time look at stars = remind you of what descendants be like
- b. Abram believes God – counted as righteousness (still undeserved)
- c. Gives Abram a visible sign of His covenant with him
- d. God reaffirms His promises – will keep His word

Abram & Ishmael

Introduction

Abram has walked with God for about 10 years now in the land of Canaan. As we read chapter 16 we see the birth of another great nation of people upon the earth – the Arab nation. Sarai & Abram were becoming impatient with God & began to take matters into their own hands. As a result terrible consequences would begin to happen both to Abram & Sarai as well as to the whole world.

Genesis 16

1. Sarai has no children.

- a. **God had promised Abram a seed line** – a son to carry on his heritage.
- b. **Sarai was 75** & had no children & impatience was gripping her spirit
- c. **Reasons**
 - 1) In her society children were a sign of God's blessings & being childless was a dishonor & a reproach.
 - 2) Her time for bearing children was passing & she felt desperate
 - 3) Perhaps God's plans for Abram's seed never included her
 - 4) Perhaps God was waiting for them to act
- d. **Sarai blames God** for her dilemma – vs.2
 - 1) Feels she has been left out – begins to question God's promises
 - 2) She expresses her disappointment in God to Abram
 - 3) Promises of God must not include her – take my handmaid
- e. **Sarai allows worldly thoughts to fill her mind**
 - 1) **Custom of the day** – man's wife not give him a son, take her handmaid & make her your 2nd wife.
 - 2) Polygamy was the custom & practice of the day
 - 3) **Sarai's motives were commendable** – wanted Abram to have a son
 - 4) **Sarai was making a tremendous sacrifice** – allowing him to have another woman
 - 5) **However, she was following the way of the world**

2. Abram's test

- a. **For several years now Abram had been walking with the Lord**
 - 1) Learned lesson in Egypt
 - 2) See his character with Lot
 - 3) Learning to trust God
 - 4) God had just reconfirmed His covenant with Abram
- b. **See Satan work on Abram**
 - 1) Sarai questions God's intentions – strong arguments
 - a) God never mentioned her in the promises
 - b) Therefore promises must not include her
 - 2) Test struck at very core of Abram's purpose in Promised Land – seed
 - 3) Test appealed to Abram's flesh – sex

3. Abram agrees – sin multiplies

a. **Abram Commits adultery** – unfaithful to his marriage covenant – vs.3,4

b. **Hagar despises Sarai**

- 1) Projects a haughty spirit – scorns Sarai
- 2) She had been misused for Sarai’s own end & despised her for it
- 3) Saw Sarai differently – was her problem she had no children

c. **Sarai blames Abram for Hagar’s behavior**

- 1) Abram was favoring Hagar now – she having a child
- 2) Should have corrected her for her spiteful attitude

d. **Relationship between Abram & Sarai is disrupted**

- 1) **Abram gives in to her anger** – servant is in your hands
- 1) **Sarai mistreats Hagar**
- 2) **Hagar flees** – tries to return home to Egypt

4. God intervenes

a. **Angel of the Lord finds Hagar**

1) **Who is this?**

- a) Hagar calls Him God – vs.13,14
- b) Moses calls Him Lord – vs.13
- c) Ex.3:2-6 – Moses at burning bush (angel says – “I am God”)
- d) Definite article used (not usual when speaking of an angel)

2) Questions her to get her to convict her – sense her wrong

b. **Hagar comforted by giving her great promises**

- 1) **Given a great heritage** – increase your descendents
- 2) Assures her that **God hears & cares about her misery** – vs.11
- 3) **Son Ishmael be special**
 - a) **Like a wild donkey** – independent, stubborn, obstinate, determined, head strong, unyielding, self willed
 - b) **Be violently aggressive**, constantly at odds with others around him; in constant conflict with others
- 4) **Both her & her child would survive if she would obey God**

c. **Hagar obeys God**

- 1) Though mistreated, she returns to her mistress Sarai
- 2) Abram & Sarai also repent – take her back & name child Ishmael just as God instructed (wonder if they sensed the consequences?)

5. Lesson for us on impatience

a. **Causes of impatience**

- 1) **Unfulfilled desires** (Sarai wanted a son)
- 2) **Mistaken thoughts** – God’s fault, not keeping His promises; not care (promised a son & not following through)
- 3) **Accepting the worlds answers** (considering them & listening to them)

b. **Consequences for impatience**

- 1) **Disobey God’s instructions** (word) – devise own plans; rationalize sin
- 2) **Fail to walk by faith** (trust God & His word)

Genesis 17

1. God renews His covenant with Abram

- a. **Thirteen years after Ishmael was born** – Abram is now 99
- b. **Reveals Himself as God almighty** (El Shaddai)
 - 1) Abram needed to believe in the impossible
 - 2) Sarai who was barren would have a child (she is 89)
 - 3) Name reveals God as one who has both the power & the sufficiency
 - a) No matter how great the need He is sufficient
 - b) Eph.3:20
- c. **Challenges Abram to walk before Him & be blameless**
 - 1) **Walk in step with God** in His presence
 - 2) **Walk in unbroken consciousness & fellowship** – always aware of His presence; conscious that He sees us & has the power to look after & care for us; aware that He will judge us for all that we do
 - 3) **Blameless** – single minded devotion; wholly devoted to God; make no excuses for sinful behavior; accept responsibility for your actions & stop blaming others or society for your actions
 - 4) **God promises He will fulfill His promises** made earlier

2. Abram humbles himself before God

- a. **Abram was ready to listen & obey God fully**
 - 1) Falls prostrate before the Lord - worship
 - 2) No hesitation or resistance
- b. **God changes Abram's name to Abraham**
 - 1) Abram = exalted father
 - 2) Abraham = father of a multitude
 - 3) Change is to always remind him of his experience with God
 - 4) In God's mind Abraham is the father of many nations – vs.5
 - a) God calls things that are not as though they are – Rom.4:17
 - b) Father of the Arabs, Israelites & descendants of Keturah
Gen.25:1-4
 - 5) Abraham called upon to believe God's promises – live by them
- c. **Promises to make Abraham very fruitful**
 - 1) From him come nations, kings (heritage be great)
 - 2) Covenant with you be everlasting covenant – you & your descendants
 - 3) Be your God & the God of your descendants
 - 4) Whole land of Canaan given to you – everlasting possession
- d. **Challenges Abraham to keep covenant of circumcision**
 - 1) For every male among you
 - 2) Be a sign of the covenant with them & God
(dedicating & committing their life to God)
 - 3) Done when 8 days old (best time surgically today)
 - 4) Refusal to share in this ritual meant being cut off from this covenant
- e. **God changes Sarai's name to Sarah** – have a son; mother of many nations

3. Abraham's response

- a. **Falls face down before the Lord** - worship
- b. **Laughs within himself** (questions & doubts)
 - 1) I'm nearly a hundred years old – Sarah is 90
 - 2) If only Ishmael was to be this promised seed
 - a) In his mind he has accepted the reality that he & Sarah are to old to have children
 - b) He is willing to accept Ishmael as the answer to God's promise
 - c) He needs to realize & accept the power of God
- c. **God promises to bring the seed through Sarah**
 - 1) **Call him Isaac** – “he laughs”
 - 2) Abraham called upon to see his son Ishmael differently (not the one)
 - 3) Promises to bless Ishmael greatly, but not the seed line
 - 4) Abraham called upon to accept & obey God's will
 - 5) Isaac to be born next year
- d. **Abraham obeys God** – he & his whole house are circumcised

4. Our circumcision of the heart – Col.2:11,12

- a. **A sign of spiritual truth** – one truly belonged to God
 - 1) Rom.2:28,29 – Jew inwardly – circumcision of the heart
 - 2) Phil.3:1-3 – worship by the spirit & put no confidence in the flesh
 - 3) Far more than a ritual to keep

b. Compare circumcision & baptism

Circumcision

Cutting away flesh

Becoming people of God

Sign one in covenant relationship

Baptism

Dying to self

Raised to newness of life

Sign one in Jesus

God Visits Abraham

Introduction

Abraham has experience a lot over the past 24 years in his walk with God. There have been good times & also some very troubling times. Abraham has just been told that his son Ishmael is not the promised son. Sarah will have a son in the next coming year that will be named Isaac. Abraham is sitting in the doorway of his tent with his head bowed, perhaps praying & pondering his latest revelation from God. All of a sudden God pays Abraham a visit.

Genesis 18

1. Abraham is referred to in scripture as the friend of God

a. Scriptures

- 1) 2 Chron.20:7 – Jehoshaphat’s prayer
- 2) Isa.41:8 – God calls Abraham His friend
- 3) James 2:23 – Abraham believed God & called a friend of God

b. Jesus even refers to His followers as His friends

- 1) Jn.15:14,15 – if you do the things I command you
- 2) Jn.11:11 – My friend Lazarus sleeps

c. In the context God appears to Abraham to strengthen him & use him

- 1) God wants to draw him closer
- 2) **How do we become God’s friend?**
 - a) **Friend** = one who holds affection & respect for another
 - b) **Problem** = man by his nature is an enemy of God - Col.1:21
 - (1) Our respect & affection for God is not deep enough
 - (2) We don’t care & respect God enough to become intimate & submissive to Him in everything
 - (3) We continually fail to elevate God to the position He rightfully deserves

2. Abraham expresses friendship toward God

a. Abraham runs to meet God

- 1) Not have to – he was a great sheik (send servants)
- 2) Shows his concern for people – travelers tired & thirsty
- 3) Bows – demonstrates his humility & courtesy
- 4) Invites them in – hospitality (offers the best for his guests)
- 5) See humility – stands nearby, as they eat (not eating with them)

b. Apply

- 1) Mt.25:34-40 – do for the least = do for Me
- 2) Gal.6:7-10 – as have opportunity
- 3) 1 Tim.6:17-19 – be rich in good works, ready to give

3. God again promises Abraham a son

- a. This time next year Sarah will have a son
- b. Sarah's response – laughter
- c. **God confronts Sarah's doubt** – why did she laugh?
 - 1) **Reasons for her doubts** – age & impossible physical situation
 - 2) **Reasons to believe** – “is anything to hard for the Lord?”
 - 3) **Sarah is afraid** to admit her doubts – lies to God
- d. **See God's grace**
 - 1) Sarah has doubts & lies to God about them
 - 2) Could have rebuked her sternly, but performed the miracle anyway
 - 3) **Question** – are we truthful before God about our doubts & fears?
Jn.3:16-21 (afraid to come to light lest deeds exposed)

4. Abraham invited to intercede for Sodom & Gomorrah

- a. **God wants Abraham to do something very special** – wrestle in prayer
 - 1) 2 Pet.3:9 – patient with us not wanting any to perish
 - 2) Wants us to intensely pray, plead for the souls of others – 1 Tim.2:1-3
- b. **God knew what was going to happen before he spoke to Abraham**
 - 1) He knew Lot & his family were the only righteous in the city
 - 2) **Why God shared His mission** with Abraham
 - a) Teach Abraham to intercede for both the righteous & the wicked
 - b) Teach that God's justice must be executed
 - c) Teach Abraham the need to be a stronger witness
(so not choose to live in sin)
- c. **See Abraham's intercession**
 - 1) **He desires to stay near God** – walks with them (not behind them)
 - a) Are walking toward Sodom – not say how far walked
 - b) Lord had appeared at door of tent – Abraham chooses walk with
 - c) Abraham does not want the experience to end
 - 2) **God's plans for Abraham**
 - a) To influence many throughout the ages (all nations)
 - b) To teach his heritage to follow the Lord so promises fulfilled
 - 3) **God reveals His pain & grieving over Sodom**
 - a) The outcry against their sin was great
 - b) Their sin was very grievous
 - c) Wants to check it out for Himself (graciousness, patience)
 - 4) **Abraham draws close**
 - a) Notice the two men proceed on to Sodom – God remains
 - b) Abraham approaches = Hebrew word = come to court to argue
 - c) Idea is intercession – plead like an attorney
 - d) His concern = the righteous in the city (Lot in the city)
 Part of his family stands among the condemned

- 5) **Abraham appeals to God's justice, not His mercy**
 - a) Would you destroy the righteous with the wicked?
 - b) Vs.25 – will not the judge of the earth do right?
 - c) **God's response** – not destroy for the sake of 50 righteous
- 6) **Abraham seeks (appeals to) God's mercy**
 - a) In mind Abraham wonders are there 50 righteous?
 - b) Continues appealing down to 10 righteous in city
 - c) Abraham has done all that he could – ceases his appeal

Genesis 19

1. Lot

- a. **He had every chance to live life to the fullest**
 - 1) Reared by Abraham – given a start in life
 - 2) Given 1st choice in land
 - 3) Rescued from slavery by Abraham when kings overpowered them
 - b. **Yet still chose to live in Sodom** – among the wicked
 - 1) 1st toward Sodom, then in city – Gen.13:10,11; 14:12
 - 2) Now sits at the gate of the city (city official or sitting with ungodly)
 - c. **Greets the angels** – offers them hospitality
 - 1) Not safe on streets after dark
 - 2) See the danger – man want have sex – insist they come out – vs.5
 - 3) Lot tries to appease the crowd – can't (despise his hypocrisy)
 - d. **Angels begin the judgment**
 - 1) **Crowd struck with blindness**
 - 2) **Urges Lot & his family to get out** (family thinks it's a joke)
 - 3) **Forces Lot**, his wife & daughters to leave
 - 4) **Lot's hesitation**
 - a) Fearful of the mountains
 - b) Requests to go to a small town nearby
 - c) Lot's wife looks back longingly – turned to pillar of salt
 - 1) **Notice she was behind him** – Lot reached city of Zoar before judgment began
 - 2) **Pillar of salt** – perhaps volcanic eruption buried her & she was petrified in the ash
- 5) **Lessons**
- a) **Compromising believers**
 - (1) Lot lost everything – wealth, possessions, but most of all his family.
 - (2) He had trusted in the world & now his world was gone
 - b) **Depraved unbelievers**
 - (1) God brought destruction on all the cities in area except Zoar & that was for the sake of Lot

(2) Vs.25 – **overthrew** = idea is that the people were standing against God cursing Him with their immorality & rebellion. Therefore God cast them down in judgment.

2. Sodom in the scriptures

- a. City located at southern tip of Dead Sea (ruins perhaps underwater)
- b. Known in scripture for the sin of sexual perversion
Gen.13:13; 18:20; 19:13,24

3. Lot & his daughters

a. Lot delivered from destruction by Abraham's intercession

- 1) Vs.29 – God remembered Abraham
- 2) What would have happened if Abraham had not interceded?
- 3) Was no reason for God to save him
 - a) He lived for the world – not a good witness for God
 - b) In fact, he damaged & disgraced God's name before unbelievers
- 4) James 5:16 – fervent prayer of righteous avails much

b. Lot's fear escalates

- 1) Becomes fearful in Zoar – not say why
 - a) Perhaps they looked on him with suspicion blaming him for the destruction
 - b) Perhaps Lot feared more judgment from God because of the wickedness of the people in Zoar. (spared because of Lot)
- 2) Flees with his daughters & lives in a cave – imagine the humiliation
 - a) Was one of the city officials in major city of world
 - b) Lost everything – bottom had fallen out from under him

c. His daughters begin to worry about themselves

- 1) Never marry – shame & disgrace of no children
- 2) Plot a scheme – get father drunk & have children by him
- 3) Lot's compromising had brought tragic results on everything he had – wealth, possessions, family & even future generations.
- 4) His grandchildren would become bitter enemies with Israel (Moabites & Ammonites)

4. Lesson on backsliding

a. Lot had same heritage & opportunities as Abraham

- 1) A believer – righteous man – 2 Pet.2:7
- 2) Walked with Abraham for a while – Gen.12:1-4
- 3) Chose to live among the worldly – Gen.13:12,13
- 4) Refused to heed the warnings - Gen.14:16

b. Lot allowed his faith to degenerate

- 1) Acted selfishly – Gen.13:10,11
- 2) Chose to live among the immoral – Gen.14:11,12
- 3) Refused to break away from the immoral – Gen.14:16

God Fulfills His Promise – Sarah Has a Son

Introduction

As we examine the life of Abraham, many lessons stand out. Abraham has been called to walk before God – to be the one through whom God would bring about all His plans for the redemption of mankind. Abraham needed to be a man of great faith & needed to exhibit that faith in his lifestyle. However, Abraham is also a human being with many weaknesses & character flaws that God must work through. In this lesson we see God fulfill His promise that Sarah would bear a son, but first God must deliver Abraham from his misjudgments & fears.

Genesis 20

1. **This chapter shows** a clear picture of God working out all things for good – Rom.8:28
 - a. Abraham is on the eve of one of the greatest moments of his life
 - b. His long awaited son is about to be born
 - c. Abraham's doubts & fears are about to jeopardize everything God has been planning.
 - d. What Abraham does forces God to intervene & shows us the extent of His love & mercy for mankind.

2. **Abraham makes the decision to forsake the Promised Land**
 - a. **Been 20 years** since Abraham last made this mistake
 - b. **For some reason he decides he must leave** – a decision he makes on his own
 - 1) Perhaps area is so devastated he feels he can't stay
 - 2) Perhaps to painful & emotionally upsetting to look on the devastation
 - 3) Perhaps he needed new markets for his livestock business
 - 4) Scripture doesn't say why, just that he made the decision
 - c. **Abraham has a lapse of faith** – not trusting God to care for him
 - 1) Not go all the way into Egypt – just to the border – capitol city
 - 2) Weak faith & human reasoning has led him to ignore God's will
 - 3) Abraham has forgotten – “The Lord Almighty” – that nothing is too hard for the Lord

3. **See his sin compound**
 - a. **In his heart Abraham allows his doubts to turn into fear** – must move
 - b. Fears for his personal safety – would God protect him here?
 - 1) Has Sarah lie – she is his sister
 - 2) Abraham acts selfishly – no concern for others – Abimelech – Sarah etc
 - 3) Puts Sarah in harms way – risks her safety, honor & purity
 - 4) Willing for Sarah to be sexually abused, even commit adultery & be endangered physically if she displeased the king
 - c. **Remember** – Sarah is pregnant at this time with the promised son
 - d. It seems unbelievable that Abraham would do such a thing at this stage in his life, as spiritually mature as he seemed to be, but that's human nature

4. God intervenes to prevent His purpose from being destroyed

- a. **Abraham is in a mess** – one too big for him to wiggle out of himself
 - 1) The king has sent for Sarah – now a part of his harem
 - 2) Abraham & Sarah were outside God's will – walking after the flesh
 - 3) They were helpless & all seemed lost because of their sinful decision
- b. **God begins to work on Abimelech**
 - 1) Appears to him in a dream – in danger of judgment
 - a) You are as good as a dead man
 - b) See the seriousness of adultery in God's eyes
 - (1) Even though Abimelech not a believer = condemned
 - (2) God's Law still supreme regardless the perversion of society – polygamy; doing their own thing etc.
 - (3) Adultery was still a sin & deserved judgment
 - 2) King appeals to the Lord
 - a) Claims innocence – unaware she was married; not gone near her
 - b) God recognizes his innocence in the situation – yet still judged
 - c) Shows him he must repent or face the consequences
 - 3) See God's graciousness
 - a) Prevented Abimelech from touching Sarah
(perhaps a sexual disease that prevented them having sex)
 - b) Allows Abraham to pray for the health of Abimelech = live

5. Abimelech's response

- a. **Early next morning** – original is very early before daylight
 - 1) Calls in all his staff & shared the crisis – king, his family & servant about to die
 - 2) Shares the judgment & shame Abraham has brought upon their nation
- b. **Calls in Abraham & rebukes him sharply**
 - 1) **Lesson** – Gal.6:7,8 = reap what sow
 - 2) Believer Abraham (God's child) is being rebuked by the world
 - a) Had sinned & caused others to sin too
 - b) Had brought guilt & judgment upon a nation
 - c) Had shamed & disgraced Sarah
 - d) Was fearful & distrusting of God & others
 - 3) Asks him – why would you do such a thing?
 - a) Abraham had failed God miserably
 - b) Abraham had brought shame & reproach upon God's purpose

6. Unknown to Abraham – God was taking care of him

- a. On the outside it looked like Abraham being rebuked by king
- b. Reality – God was using the king to chastise Abraham
 - 1) Keeping him from participating in a greater sin
 - 2) Stopping Abraham's foolishness before it was too late
 - 3) See 1 Sam.13:13; 2 Sam.12:7,9; 1 Kings 21:20; 2 Chron.24:20

7. Abraham's response

a. Abraham did not know that God had spoken to Abimelech in a dream

- 1) In his mind only one way to save self – tell truth
- 2) Trust that God would so move king as to spare him
- 3) Abraham's confession was not only to the king – it was to God also

b. Abraham's confession

- 1) I was afraid – not trusting God to take care of him & Sarah
- 2) Why he feared the Philistines
 - a) Did not sense a fear of God among them
 - b) His fear was greater than his trust in God
- 3) His sin of lying – twisting the truth
- 4) His sin of misusing & exploiting people – made same claim everywhere

8. God worked all for Abraham's good

a. In spite of the terrible sin & harm they had done

b. Notice - nothing occurred until Abraham repented & confessed his sin openly

- 1) Abraham had to first suffer the discipline
- 2) Then & only then would God work all things out for his good

c. Blessings

- 1) Family restored
- 2) Given herds & workers to tend them
- 3) Given the right to settle anywhere he wished in the land
- 4) 1000 pieces of silver for whatever harm or shame that came to Sarah

d. Abraham prayed & all is restored to Abimelech

Genesis 21

1. Sarah has a son

- a. God was faithful to His promises – nothing deterred Him
- b. Abraham's long wait was over – he had an heir
 - 1) Imagine the joy that had to be in his heart
 - 2) Surely all the suffering & hardships were worth it
 - 3) Named him Isaac – “he laughs”
- c. Notice what stressed – Abraham's obedience not his joy (name & circumcision)
(we must also obey God to receive the promises of God)

2. Struggle in household with Hagar & Ishmael

a. Abraham throws a great celebration for Isaac

b. Ishmael mocks Isaac – jealousy for attention shown him

- 1) Was refusing to accept Isaac as the promised child
- 2) Had a mean spirited attitude toward Isaac (Ishmael is about 18)

c. Sarah overreacts – get rid of the slave woman & her son

- 1) Took matters into her own hands – demanded Abraham do this
- 2) Failed to trust God's vengeance
- 3) Remember – Hagar had been Sarah's personal servant for decades

d. Situation greatly distressed Abraham – loved Ishmael

- 1) God's answer – send Ishmael away
- 2) Ishmael's mocking & ridicule was too imbedded – not change
(stubborn & live in hostility toward all his brothers – Gen.16:12)
- 3) God reminds Abraham of His purpose – Isaac the promised son
- 4) God promises to look after Ishmael

Abraham Offers Isaac

Introduction

Abraham has been walking with God in the Promised Land more than 25 years. He has experienced the power of God on several occasions as God has cared for him & fulfilled several of His promises, one of which was that Sarah would have a son. Isaac, (you laughed) is now a young man & God tests Abraham's faith again. In this lesson we see the faith that Abraham demonstrates before God & all mankind. He truly loves God to the uttermost.

Genesis 22

1. God tests Abraham

- a. Vs.12 – wants to see how much Abraham fears God & is willing to submit
- b. Several times before God has asked Abraham to demonstrate his faithfulness
 - 1) Called to leave his relatives & go to the Promised Land
 - 2) Crisis with a famine
 - 3) Lot's separation
 - 4) Invading army from the East
 - 5) Not having a son
 - 6) God's judgment
 - 7) Sending Hagar & Ishmael away
 - 8) Now - Offering Isaac as a sacrifice to God
- c. **The test** – in Abraham's day human sacrifice was accepted as a way of demonstrating one's love & devotion to their god.
 - 1) A supreme sacrifice – act of worship
 - 2) Abraham was being asked to demonstrate his love & devotion for God
- d. **Why would God do this?**
 - 1) Does He condone human sacrifice?
 - 2) Doesn't God forbid murder? Gen.9:5,6

2. Abraham obeys God

- a. Arises early & begins to make preparations
 - 1) Saddles the donkey & cuts the wood himself
 - 2) Takes Isaac & two of his servants with him
 - 3) Could have had others do this for him – like us when pondering great decision – work out with hard labor
 - 4) Imagine the questions he had to be pondering – Why?
- b. See Abraham's faith – vs.3-5
 - 1) Believed God would raise Isaac from the dead - Heb.11:17-19
 - 2) Absolutely believed in God's word – keep His promise – seed line
 - 3) Trusted God would provide the sacrifice
 - 4) He had no idea what God would do, but trusted Him & obeyed

- c. Abraham follows through – prepares the altar & binds Isaac
 - 1) Not allow excuses, questions etc to hinder him
 - 2) Isaac willingly allowed his father to bind him & place him on the altar
 - a) Probably around 20 – easily overcome his father
 - b) So confident in his father – knew father not harm him
 - 3) Abraham took the knife & raised it to kill Isaac
 - 4) Abraham loved God more than anything
 - 5) **Question** – do we love God this much? Trust Him this completely?
 - 6) Lk.14:25-33

3. God accepts the sacrifice of Abraham's heart

- a. God knew that Abraham's heart belonged to Him totally, absolutely
- b. Abraham was allowing nothing to stand between him & God – no matter the cost, Abraham would obey God
- c. Within his heart, Abraham had offered the supreme sacrifice
- d. **Remember** – God is after the hearts of people, not the slaying of their bodies
- e. Rom.12:1,2; 1 Sam.15:22,23; Isa.1:11-18; Micah 6:6-8

4. God provides a substitute sacrifice

- a. A ram caught in the thickets
- b. God has provided a substitute sacrifice for all in His Son Jesus
 - 1) Abraham asked to give his most cherished possession – Jesus best
 - 2) Abraham believed God would raise Isaac from the dead – Jesus arose
 - 3) Isaac willingly allowed himself to be the sacrifice – Jesus emptied self
 - 4) Isaac carried the wood – Jesus carried the cross
 - 5) Sacrifice on Mt. Moriah – place Jerusalem built
- c. Abraham memorialized the place forever – called it “The Lord will provide”
- d. God renews His promises to Abraham

Genesis 23

1. Sarah dies

- a. 127 years old
- b. She had been faithful to Abraham all those years – by his side through it all

2. Abraham purchases a tomb for Sarah's body

- a. Done in the presence of many witnesses
- b. Wanted it to be in the Promised Land

Genesis 24

1. Abraham is advanced in years

- a. Abraham is 140 & Isaac is 40
- b. Knows that he will eventually die – wants his son to marry a believer
(not one of the Canaanite women)
- c. Sends his chief servant to seek Isaac a wife

2. Abraham's concern – Isaac not leave the Promised Land

- a. Trusts that God would provide a wife for Isaac
- b. See servant's faith – asks God for certain type girl (a sign)
- c. God answers his prayer – Rebecca (servant praises God)
- d. Servant conveys information to Rebecca's family – led there by the Lord

4. Rebecca agrees to be Isaac's wife

- a. Family accepts that this is God's will
- b. Family hesitates – wants 10 days to ponder
- c. Rebecca accepts this is God's will
- d. Isaac accepts Rebecca as his wife

Genesis 25

1. Abraham takes another wife - Keturah

- a. She bears six sons for Abraham
- b. God had promised that Abraham would be the father of many nations
- c. Abraham left everything to Isaac – sent others away to the East

2. Abraham dies at age of 175

- a. Isaac & Ishmael bury their father
- b. Buried him in same cave as Sarah was buried in – in Promised Land

3. Isaac has two sons – Jacob & Esau

- a. Esau was a man of the open country – self-centered & shallow spiritually
- b. Jacob was quiet & stayed at home
- c. Esau sells his birthright to Jacob – despised it (worthless to him)
- d. Do we despise our birthright?
 - 1) The lure of the world keeps us from fully committing to Jesus
 - 2) To busy to spend time & energy growing spiritually

Genesis 26

1. Isaac faces the trial of a famine

- a. Lord appears to Isaac & encourages him to stay in the Promised Land
 - 1) Isaac had taken his family & herds toward the South
 - 2) God intervenes – instructs him not to go into Egypt
 - 3) Renews His promises to Abraham
- b. Isaac is fearful & says that Rebecca is his sister
 - 1) Isaac stays in Gerar – not go back into heart of Promised Land
 - 2) See consequences of this decision
 - a) Sin of lying – Rebecca his sister
 - b) Trouble with Philistines over water rights

2. God exposes Isaac's sin – seen caressing Rebecca

- (Isaac forced to leave area – returns to heart of Promised Land)

Jacob & Esau

Introduction

God has finished His work through Abraham. A promised son was born to Sarah whose name was Isaac & now we see God working through Isaac to fulfill His promises to Abraham. Isaac has been chosen to carry on the seed line of the promised Messiah. Future generation of his descendents would inherit the Promised Land & be known as God's people.

Genesis 25:19-34

1. Isaac we 40 years old when he married Rebecca

- a. Genesis 24:62-67 – Isaac accepted Rebecca as his wife
 - 1) Followed the customs of the time & were married
 - 2) Isaac found comfort from the hurts of life in Rebecca
 - 3) Both loved one another deeply
- b. Great difficulty in society today is people living together outside marriage
 - 1) Living in constant emotional insecurity
 - a) Never knowing when other grow tired of them – disinterested
 - b) No commitments so leaving is easy
 - c) Results in unwed mothers & fatherless children
 - 2) Bringing down God's judgment upon themselves
 - a) 1 Cor.6:9 – fornication keeps one out of God's kingdom
 - b) Gal.5:19-21 – fornication one of the works of the flesh
 - c) Eph.5:3 – fornication not to be among God's children
 - d) 1 Thess.4:3 – God's will we abstain from fornication
- c. Isaac prays for Rebecca
 - 1) They had tried to have children for 20 years & unsuccessful – vs.26
 - 2) Over the 20-year span he sought the Lord concerning this matter
 - 3) They never lost heart – knowing the promise to Abraham
- d. The babies struggle with one another in the womb
 - 1) So much movement that Rebecca inquired if God – Why?
 - 2) God's answer – 2 nations in her womb – younger be dominant
 - 3) At birth – Jacob comes out grasping Esau's heel
 - 4) God has chosen to work through the younger – Jacob

2. Jacob & Esau in their early years

- a. Esau was the outdoorsman – focus - sports, hunting, roving the open country
 - 1) Loved the freedom of the outdoors – license to do as he wanted
 - 2) Not want to be tied down with responsibilities
 - 3) Pictured as a self centered irresponsible man
- b. Jacob was quiet, settled – looking after the family affairs
 - 1) Stayed with the tents & the family affairs
 - 2) Willing to accept the responsibilities of the family affairs
- c. Parents played favorites – showed favoritism & partiality to the boys

- d. Jacob seeks his brother Esau's birthright
 - 1) Esau returns home famished – exhausted & hungry
 - a) Wants his brother Jacob's stew
 - b) Quick – urgent request (could barely restrain himself)
 - 2) Jacob takes advantage of the situation – suggests terms
 - a) Sell me your birthright
 - b) Wanted to be the head of the family – responsible for the estate
 - 3) Esau's interest & focus - satisfying his physical urges
 - a) Shows how irresponsible & spiritually insensitive he was
 - b) His focus – the pleasure of the moment
 - c) He wanted what he wanted & when he wanted it
- e. Question – are we like Esau – despising our birthright?
 - 1) Choosing to focus on the world – not fully committed to Jesus?
 - 2) Remember – In Heb.12:16 – Esau called a godless person
 - 3) Too engrossed in the world to take on the spiritual responsibilities of God's kingdom

Genesis 26

1. Isaac tempted to leave Promised Land

- a. Famine threatens everything – great monetary loss
- b. Lose everything he had inherited
- c. Moves South toward Egypt
- d. God intervenes – stay in the Promised Land - I will be with you

2. Isaac is fearful & seeks to live a lie – Rebecca his sister

- a. Feared the men where he had chosen to live
- b. Isaac's sin exposed – publicly ridiculed

3. Isaac blessed with prosperity

- a. Plants crops & reaped 100X
- b. So wealthy the Philistines envied him – begin to try to harm him
 - 1) Fill the wells so there is no water for his herds
 - 2) King sees Isaac as a threat & asks him to leave
- c. Isaac not return to Promised Land
 - 1) Plans to settle in valley of Gerar
 - 2) God moves him closer to Promised Land by strife with his neighbors
- d. God appears to Isaac & reassures him
 - 1) Renews His promises to Abraham
 - 2) Isaac builds an altar & worships God
- e. Isaac's enemies seek peace with him
 - 1) Abimelech seeks to make a treaty with him
 - 2) Prov.16:7 – when man's ways please Lord – enemies at peace

Genesis 27:1-28:9

1. Isaac attempts to bypass God's will

- a. Attitudes toward God's will
 - 1) Uncaring – do own thing regardless – own boss
 - 2) Seeking & being open to God's will – searches & seeks for
 - 3) Seeking & being closed minded – hesitant & apprehensive toward it
(fearful might affect his life too much – wants control)
- b. Isaac has ulterior motives
 - 1) Isaac favored Esau & wanted him to have his blessings
 - 2) Devised a plan to carry out his desire
- c. Rebecca learns of his plans & counters them
 - 1) While Esau hunting – gets Jacob to agree to deceive his father
 - 2) Jacob receives the blessing from his father – birthright

2. Esau seeks to change things

- a. Learn of his brothers' deception
- b. Refuses to accept responsibility for his failures – all Jacob's fault
- c. Saw Jacob as just a deceiver – he's just an innocent victim
- d. It has been determined – Jacob gets the blessing – Esau will serve him
 - 1) Esau live in a barren & infertile land
 - 2) Live in conflict & be servant to Jacob
- e. Esau holds a grudge & plans to kill Jacob when his father dies

3. Jacob's deception brings consequences

- a. Must leave – his brother wants him dead
 - 1) All his deception has broken down family relationships
 - 2) Forced to live as a fugitive
 - 3) Lost the wealth & influence deception brought him
 - 4) Never see his mother again
 - 5) Forced to serve a man who deceives him for 20 years
 - 6) Own sons will deceive him concerning Joseph
- b. Rebecca was forced to lose her son – never see him again
- c. Rebecca forced to deceive Isaac again to save her son Jacob
- d. Esau took out his revenge on Isaac & Rebecca
 - 1) Learns that Isaac not want sons marry heathen women
 - 2) Marries Ishmael's daughter – spite his father

Jacob & Laban

Introduction

As we begin chapter 28 we enter a new section of the book of Genesis; a discussion of one of the great patriarchs Jacob. Many things are brought out in these chapters about his life, but the one thing that seems to stand out the most is a clear picture of the struggle of the spirit with the flesh. Jacob was a man who knew what he ought to do, but lacked the courage & strength to accomplish what was right. As Abraham's grandson, he was chosen by God to carry on the seed line & become the head of God's people, but he lacked the moral fiber to live as his grandfather Abraham.

Genesis 28

1. An overview of Jacob

a. In spite of his carnality, God was able to use Jacob mightily

1) He is a great example of God's mercy & grace

- a) Jacob was not worthy of God's grace. Perhaps the only really good thing he ever did was be the father of 12 sons who became the heads of a great nation of God's people.
- b) He did not even rear these sons in a godly atmosphere.
- c) God had to intervene in his carnal life again & again to save him from utter failure.
- d) Shows us that any person can serve God to the utmost if they will only turn to God & commit their life fully to Him.

2) He is a great example of God's choosing

- a) God chose Jacob & used Jacob in spite of himself.
- b) Even though he was carnal & self centered – was chosen
- c) **Truth** – no one is ever chosen by God because of any personal merit or goodness. We are chosen because of God's grace.

3) He is a great example of why we should never give up.

- a) Jacob failed God time & again. Hardly any good can be found in his life, yet he was not a failure spiritually.
- b) Jacob believed God & held onto that faith. Although we find him often doing the questionable thing, if not the wrong thing, he never gave up that faith.
- c) Whenever severe trials struck his life he always turned to God in his desperation & recommitted his life to God.
- d) In every instance God always met his needs.

b. Significant facts in Jacob's life.

1) Beyond any question Jacob was God's choice

- a) Gen.25:23 – chosen before he was born
- b) Gen.28:10-15 – God personally gave His promises to Jacob
- c) Gen.31:1-16 – God calls him to return to the Promised Land
- d) Gen.32:1,2 – Given a vision of God's protective angels
- e) Gen.32:24-32 – given a new name & physical handicap

- f) Gen.35:2,3 – called to rid household of idolatry
- g) Gen.46:1-4 – Assured of God’s care as he left for Egypt

2) **Jacob’s carnal fleshly life**

- a) Gen.25:29-34 - Securing the family birthright from Esau
- b) Gen.27:1-28:9 - Deceiving his father Isaac to get his blessing
- c) Gen.27:39-28:9 – fleeing for his life
- d) Gen.29:1-30 – committing bigamy & not standing for what right
- e) Gen.29:31-30:24 – failing to discipline & playing favorites
- f) Gen.30:25-43 – scheming to get inheritance while trusting God
- g) Gen.35:2,3 – allowing false gods in his household
- h) Gen.42:36-38 – continuing to cause division by favoring Rachel

3) **Jacob’s great faith**

- a) Gen.28:10-22 – responding to the vision of the ladder
- b) Gen.28:1-9 – obeying his parents & not marrying a Canaanite
- c) Gen.30:25-43 – acknowledging God as his source of blessings
- d) Gen.31:1-55 – responding to God’s call to return to land
- e) Gen.32:1-21 – seeking God in prayer when gripped with fear
- f) Gen.35:1-15 – obeying God & riding house of false gods
- g) Gen.46:1-27 – obeying God & going to Egypt
- h) Gen.47:7-10 – witnessing to Pharaoh
- i) Gen.47:28-48:22 – passing on the promises to his sons

2. **Isaac’s charge to Jacob – do not marry a Canaanite woman**

a. **Background**

- 1) Isaac is about 77 years old
- 2) Jacob has just deceived his father & stolen the blessing from Esau
- 3) Esau wants Jacob dead & is biding his time until his father dies
- 4) Rebecca has requested that Isaac send Jacob away

b. **Jacob is full of fear**

- 1) His brother Esau wants him dead
- 2) Haran is 500 miles away – traveling alone (robbers)
- 3) As travels – spends the night in open country not in towns along way

c. **Jacob is also overwhelmed with shame**

- 1) Dishonored himself before his family & friends
- 2) Forced to flee & face the unknown

d. **Isaac sends Jacob to Paddan-Aram**

- 1) To his mother’s father’s place – wife from Laban’s daughters
- 2) Extends God’s blessing upon him (obeys God even though deceived)
- 3) Jacob obeys his father
- 4) Esau marries the daughter of Ishmael’s son

3. Jacob's dream

a. Ladder – stairway from earth to heaven

- 1) Huge – wide enough for angels to pass one another
- 2) Symbolizes the vast separation between heaven & man

Isa.59:1,2; Lk.16:26

- 3) Jn.1:51 – Jesus is that ladder (Jn.14:6)

b. Angels ascending & descending

- 1) God had a host of messengers looking after things
- 2) Heb.1:14; Mt.18:10; Acts 27:23-25

c. God's presence above the ladder

- 1) God was there with Jacob in spite of his troubles
- 2) God renewed His promises to Abraham – with him as with forefathers
- 3) **Promises** – presence; protection; leadership & fulfill promises
- 4) Same promises made to us – Mt.28:20; 1 Pet.1:5; Rom.8:14; Rom.8:28

4. Jacob's reaction – worship & dedication

a. Jacob now saw as never before – one who cared for His people & Jacob

b. He knew the Lord was present – Bethel be special place to him now

c. Jacob's vow

- 1) God always be his God
- 2) Always worship God at Bethel
- 3) Be faithful & tithe

d. Question – was Jacob trying to strike a bargain with God?

- 1) Tone of passage is commitment
- 2) God had just made a promise to protect, provide for & lead Jacob
- 3) All Jacob wants is the necessities of life

Genesis 29 & 30

1. Jacob begins his new life

a. Jacob, now sure of God's protection journeys to Haran

b. Immediately searches for his relatives (asking shepherds about them)

c. Notice – God had led him to the right people – knew of his family

Rachel's coming – was that just a coincidence or providence?

d. Jacob is accepted wholeheartedly – even without a dowry

- 1) **Dowry** – not a purchase price, but assurance that he was financially secure & could support a wife
- 2) **Jacob immediately began to work** – showing himself both capable & worthy of wages
- 3) Attitude opened the door for discussion of marrying Laban's daughter

2. Laban's daughters

a. Leah – the oldest who had weak eyes

- 1) Cross eyed or very bad eye sight
- 2) Eyes not attractive – lacked a gleam, sparkle or luster

- b. **Rachel** – the youngest was attractive in looks & form
- c. Jacob loves Rachel & bargains to work 7 years in place of doery

3. Laban deceives Jacob

- a. Jacob about to reap what he had sown at home
 - 1) Approaches Laban for the hand of Rachel
 - 2) Laban deceives him – wants Jacob to stay on
 - 3) Brings Leah to Jacob instead of Rachel
- b. Jacob outraged & confronts Laban
 - 1) Excuse = custom of the people – oldest marries 1st
 - 2) Give you Rachel if work another 7 years
- c. Jacob agrees & takes Rachel as his wife too – now a bigamist

4. Jacob's children

- a. **Jacob's decision brings great tension into his home**
 - 1) **Expresses favoritism** – loves Rachel not Leah (neglected her)
 - 2) **God intervenes** & opens Leah's womb – Rachel barren
- b. **Leah's children**
 - 1) **Reuben** – “see a son” (now Jacob love her, be pleased with her)
 - 2) **Simeon** – “hearing” (Lord had heard her prayers)
 - 3) **Levi** – “attached” (felt sure Jacob be more attached to her)
 - 4) **Judah** – “praise” (Jacob began to love her & give her more attention)
(perhaps she began to focus more on the Lord than pleasing Jacob)
- c. **Rachel's jealousy**
 - 1) Beauty probably made her haughty & conceited (most attention)
 - a) Naturally flaunt Jacob's love for her
 - b) May be reason God made her barren (learn humility)
 - 2) Blames Jacob for her barrenness
 - a) Jealous of Leah's ability to have children
 - b) Jacob probably spending more time with Leah & her children
 - c) Rachel feeling the shame of no children – gossip
 - 3) Jacob refuses to accept the blame – her problem
 - 4) In desperation gives her handmaid to Jacob – children through her
 - a) No discussion of taking the matter before the Lord
 - b) See Jacob's weakness – lacks courage to do the right thing
- d. **Bilhah's children**
 - 1) **Dan** – “judged or vindicated”
 - a) Felt vindicated & worthy to have children
 - b) Truth – she still self sufficient & boasting
 - 2) **Naphtali** – “struggling or wrestling”
 - a) Named in honor of her struggle with Leah & please Jacob
 - b) Felt she had finally won – now pleasing to Jacob
- e. **Leah's response**
 - 1) Gave Jacob her handmaid Zilpah
 - 2) Jacob again gives in to his weaknesses – no courage or commitment

f. Zilpah's children

- 1) **Gad** – “good luck or fortune”
 - a) Leah attributes this to luck not the Lord
 - b) She is focused on her struggle with her sister over Jacob
- 2) **Asher** – “happy”
 - a) Leah is ecstatic; she is victorious over her sister
 - b) No longer praising God

g. Rachel & Leah & the mandrakes

- 1) **Leah's oldest son finds some Mandrakes**
 - a) Small orange berry used to excite sexual desire & fertility
 - b) Rachel wants some – perhaps end her barrenness
 - c) Rachel bargains with Jacob – he sleep with her tonight
- 2) **Leah's additional children**
 - a) **Issachar** – “reward”
 - 1) Felt God rewarding her for giving maidservant to Jacob
 - 2) Had been praying for additional children
 - b) **Zebulun** – “honor or dwelling”
 - 1) Honoring God who had given her 6 sons
 - 2) Now assured Jacob turn to her & dwell with her
 - c) **Dinah** – “judgment or vindication”
 - 1) One girl among all those sons
 - 2) What a joy she must have been to both Jacob & Leah

h. Rachel's prayer answered

- 1) Rachel has learned to depend on God not herself
 - a) Not a result of the mandrakes – many years later
 - b) Finally trusting God not human methods
- 2) **Joseph is born** – “to take away or to add”
 - a) God was taking away her reproach or adding a child
 - b) Rachel is no longer self sufficient, but humble before God

5. God blesses Jacob's flocks

a. Jacob seeks his freedom

- 1) Had been working for Laban over 14 years
- 2) However this was not his home – wants return to Promised Land
- 3) Had been unable to get ahead working for his uncle

b. Laban not want Jacob to leave

- 1) Knows Jacob is reason for his success (God blessed him through Jacob)
 - a) Ready to do anything to get Jacob to stay
 - b) Knew had treated Jacob unfairly & never paid wages deserved
 - c) Now ready to pay him anything if he would stay
- 2) Agreed to Jacob's plan
 - a) Laban would own all the existing stock – vs.32
 - b) Speckled & spotted be separated from the pure or solid animals
 - c) Jacob only receive spotted or speckled thereafter
 - d) Only receive speckled or spotted born to solid colored animals

- 3) Agreement was totally in Laban's favor
 - a) Jacob would start with nothing
 - b) Jacob receive only streaked or spotted born to solid animals
 - c) Knew the odds were in his favor

c. Jacob trusts God to prosper him

- 1) Laban does not trust Jacob
 - a) Separates the animals himself
 - b) Moves the spotted & speckled away – his sons care for them
- 2) Jacob uses the latest breeding methods of his day
 - a) Placed stripped branches in watering troughs
(Chemicals in water affect breeding)
 - b) Place newly born spotted in front of solid animals
(bear whatever colored animal viewed)
 - c) Mated the strong only with the strong
- 3) Jacob was trusting God to bless his hard work

Jacob Returns To The Promised Land

Introduction

Jacob has been away from home for 20 years. He has acquired a family & has 11 sons & 1 daughter. In spite of the deception of Laban & through hard work on his part, Jacob has become a very wealthy man. God has truly blessed him as He had promised. Now it's time for Jacob to return to the Promised Land & we see many obstacles that want to get in his way as he strives to obey God.

Genesis 31:1-55

1. Grumbling against Jacob's prosperity

- a. Six years earlier Jacob had wanted to return, but Laban did not want him to leave & had offered him a full partnership.
 - 1) Jacob refused the partnership, but saw in the offer an opportunity & entered into a working relationship with Laban.
 - 2) In exchange for his labor, Jacob was to receive all the spotted livestock born from the pure solid colored animals.
 - 3) Now Jacob is very prosperous – God has blessed him greatly
- b. Laban's sons are jealous – this could have been their inheritance
 - 1) Jacob had started with nothing & all his would have been theirs
 - 2) Their reaction – Jacob has stolen our father's livestock
- c. Jacob hears about the false accusations
 - 1) Also notices a change in Laban – a suspicion, he had begun to question his agreement with Jacob
 - 2) Jacob sensed that Laban could move against him at any moment
 - 3) Feared Laban would break his contract & take the herds & his family

2. God calls Jacob to return to the Promised Land

- a. If Jacob agreed, God would be with him & protect him
- b. Jacob's responsibility was to obey & follow God's guidance
- c. If Jacob would obey & follow God, then he would be saved from this threatening situation. If he did not obey, then he would lose everything.
- d. We must learn that there are always threatening situations that will arise in our walk with God, but we must be willing to truly follow Him & He will always be with us.

3. Jacob shares the situation with his wives

- a. Sends for them – they are handling things, as he has to work for Laban
- b. Shares the change he sees in Laban
 - 1) Attitude of suspicion
 - 2) Cheated Jacob 10 times concerning wages

- c. Shares God's deliverance
 - 1) God has not allowed him to harm me
 - 2) No matter how he changed his wages, more & more livestock were born that went to Jacob
 - 3) God has taken away Laban's livestock & given them to Jacob
 - 4) Angel of Lord appeared to me in a dream – told me of situation
 - 5) God has called me to return to my home land
 - d. Jacob's wives respond positively
 - 1) They knew of their fathers' ways – had even mistreated them
 - 2) We have no inheritance in his estate – regards us as foreigners
 - 3) Had sold them to Jacob for 14 years labor & had spent the money instead of setting it aside as a dowry for his daughters future security
 - 4) Saw God's blessing of Jacob as fair enough – their reward too
 - 5) Encourage Jacob to obey God – do exactly as He says
- 4. Jacob leaves without telling Laban**
- a. Laban finds out three days later
 - 1) Pursues Jacob & caught up with him 7 days later
 - 2) God warns Laban in a dream not to harm Jacob
 - b. Challenges Jacob's decision to leave
 - 1) Why did you do this secretly?
 - 2) You have acted foolishly – I have the power to harm you
 - 3) Fear had driven Jacob to leave without notice – lacked trust in God
 - c. Asks why he stole Laban's gods
 - 1) Rachel had taken them, we don't know why. Perhaps they were valuable or as some suggest whoever held them were recognized as the owner of the estate.
 - 2) Whatever the reason it made for a bad situation – Jacob looked guilty
 - d. Jacob's response
 - 1) I was fearful that you would take my family from me by force
 - 2) Denied taking the gods & pronounced death on the one that did
 - e. Laban searches Jacob's tents – not trust him
 - 1) Rachel has hidden them under herself
 - 2) Excuse for sitting – her period prevents her from standing
 - f. Jacob expresses his anger for Laban's attitude & actions
 - 1) Think about what has happened the last 20 years
 - a) Sheep & goats not miscarried
 - b) Not taken any rams as my food
 - c) I took all losses – animals torn or maimed; paid for all that were stolen
 - d) Worked for you 14 years for your daughters – 6 years for the flocks – yet you changed my wages 10 times
 - 2) If God had not intervened – would have sent me away empty handed

5. Laban & Jacob make a covenant with one another

- a. Piled up stones – called witness heap both in Aramaic & Hebrew
- b. Laban swore by both the God of Abraham & the god of Nahor (idol)
- c. Jacob swore by the Fear of Isaac (God Himself was the object of Isaac's fear)

6. Lessons

- a. See the problems a lack of communication causes
 - 1) Eph.4:25-32 – we are brothers
 - 2) James 3:13-18 – speak God's wisdom, not Satan's
- b. Don't allow fear & threatening situations motivate you to disobey God
 - 1) God always keeps His promises – Heb.13:5,6
 - 2) Trust Him & always do what is right – Rom.12:17

Genesis 32:1-32

1. Jacob seeks to be reconciled to his brother Esau

a. Jacob's dilemma

- 1) Jacob had wronged his brother & was terribly fearful of Esau
 - a) Stolen the family birthright blessing
 - b) Deceived his father Isaac into blessing him instead of Esau
- 2) Esau was extremely bitter & wanted Jacob dead
 - a) Planned to kill him when their father Isaac died
 - b) Jacob had to run for his life to Laban
- 3) Jacob could not go back to Haran
 - a) Had made a treaty with Laban
 - b) God had called him to return to the Promised Land
 - c) Had to face Esau & his vengeance

b. Jacob witnesses God's protection – vs.1,2

- 1) God knew the strain upon Jacob & met his need
 - a) Apparently Jacob had been pleading for God's help
 - b) God allowed Jacob to see His angels (host or army of angels)
- 2) Jacob is impressed – names place Mahanaim = host or large group

c. Jacob sends out advanced messengers to Esau

- 1) Begins to confront his problem with Esau head on
 - a) Wants Esau to know he seeks peace
 - b) Gave sincere honor to Esau – calls him master, Jacob his servant
 - c) Wealthy in & of himself – not want Esau's possessions
- 2) Humbly asks to be able to return to the land

d. Messengers return with bad news – Esau coming with 400 men

- 1) Esau had heard of Jacob's returning & was coming with his men
 - a) Had no idea of Jacob's intentions
 - b) Was prepared to fight for what was his
 - c) Apparently out to get even with Jacob

- 2) Jacob is terrified & seeks to save his family
 - a) Divides the group into two – people & animals
 - b) This way if Esau attacks one the other can escape
 - c) Calls upon the Lord
 - 1) Expresses his unworthiness
 - 2) Admits his fears
 - 3) Pleads for God to keep His promises

e. Jacob sends gifts of good will ahead of him to Esau

- 1) Divides the livestock & sends each group separately
- 2) Instructs workers to address Esau as Lord – Jacob his servant
- 3) Inform Esau that Jacob was coming behind the gifts

2. Jacob wrestles with God

a. Jacob sends his family & possessions on across the ford at Jabbok (brook)

- 1) Jacob is alone – just him & God
- 2) Hosea says that he is weeping & crying out to God – Hos.12:4

b. A man appears & wrestles with him

- 1) Hos.12:4 – called the angel of the Lord
- 2) Gen.32:30 – Jacob calls Him God
- 3) God refused to let him go all night – exhausted
- 4) God dislocated Jacob's hip – crippled him
 - a) Jacob needed to be helpless, totally dependent upon God
 - b) All his life he had been independent, self-sufficient
 - c) Had worked hard & God had blessed him – made a great team
 - d) Never again able to trust his flesh – totally dependent on God

c. Jacob refuses to let go until God blesses him

- 1) God not use His supernatural strength to get free
 - a) Wanted Jacob to cling to Him
 - b) Wanted Jacob close
- 2) God changes Jacob's name
 - a) Jacob was a changed man – new nature, character
 - b) Israel – one who fights with God & prevails
- 3) Jacob wants more – asks God's name
 - a) Wanted God to show more of Himself to him
 - b) God pronounces a blessing on him, but doesn't reveal more
- 4) Jacob names the place Peniel = face of God
 - a) He had seen God & survived
 - b) From that point on he limped – reminder of his ordeal

Jacob Meets Esau

Introduction

In our last lesson Jacob was returning to the Promised Land full of fear concerning the meeting with his brother Esau. He had wrestled with God all night and had sent gifts ahead to soften up his brother. He knew Esau was coming with 400 men, that he was so angry 20 years earlier that he wanted Jacob dead, yet still wondered how Esau might receive him.

Genesis 33:1-20

1. Jacob looks up & here comes his brother Esau with 400 men

- a. Takes one last precaution to protect his family
 - 1) Assigned the children to their mothers & separated them in a procession
 - 2) Maidservants & their children first
 - 3) No doubt to give the favorites a better chance to escape
- b. Jacob walks ahead of them in a spirit of humility
 - 1) Stopping seven times to bow
 - 2) A sign of respect & courtesy
 - 3) Custom of the day – how approached kings in that day

2. Esau does an astonishing thing – runs & embraces Jacob

- a. What changed Esau's heart?
 - 1) Scripture doesn't say
 - 2) Somehow God had worked on Esau during those 20 years – changed
- b. God had prepared the way for Jacob to return in peace
 - 1) Prov.16:7 – mans ways please Lord – even enemies be at peace
 - 2) Rom.8:28 – all things work together for good

3. Lesson – how to achieve reconciliation with an offended brother

- a. Follow Jacob by being humble
 - 1) Made the first move to achieve peace = humble request & gifts
 - 2) Bore the full responsibility for his actions – admitted wrong & not blaming some of the wrong on his brother
- b. When we offend people we need to apologize & ask for forgiveness
 - 1) Without declaring that both were equally wrong
 - 2) We must accept full responsibility for our wrong actions
- c. The benefits of reconciliation
 - 1) Maintaining your faith – 1 Tim.1:18,19
 - 2) Ability to be an effective witness for Jesus – 1 Pet.3:15,16
 - 3) Peace with the Lord – Ps.32:1-4

4. Esau wants Jacob to return with him but Jacob declines

- a. Can't travel as fast as the men – young die
- b. Remember – Esau lives in Seir which is in the land of Edom
(Southeast of Dead Sea)
 - 1) Jacob has been instructed to return to the Promised Land
 - 2) Promised Land is north & west of the Dead Sea
- c. Jacob travels as far as Succoth & built shelters for himself & the livestock
- d. Arrives in Shechem & buys property & pitches his tent there

Genesis 34:1-31

1. Jacob's daughter Dinah is violated

- a. Dinah seeks worldly companions
 - 1) She is about 14–16 years old at this time - teenager
 - 2) Young women of the land = unbelievers, women of the world
 - 3) Going out alone made her fair game for men to flirt with & seduce
- b. Why would she do this?
 - 1) Lonely & needed companionship? There were many families with Jacob & there was bound to be plenty of girls for her to have as Companions.
 - 2) Curious about young women of world – actions & dress etc
 - 3) Was she rebelling against her parents & their standards?
 - 4) Was she looking for a man herself?
 - 5) Bible doesn't say, but she knew better than to go alone. For some reason she felt that she could take care of herself. She was wrong.
- c. Dinah had exposed herself to the world & now has to pay the consequences
 - 1) Perhaps at a place where the young people gathered
 - 2) Young prince notices her & rapes her
 - 3) Did she play along & entice him?
 - a) Not know – the exposure of herself to world put her in danger
 - b) A prince paying attention likely thrilled & excited her
 - c) Being a prince made him feel he could do whatever he wanted
 - d) Vs.26 – takes & keeps her at his house

2. Shechem's heart is drawn to Dinah

- a. For some reason he wants her as his wife
 - 1) Spoke tenderly to her – comforting & assure her
 - 2) Wants his father to make a deal with Jacob for her
- b. Shechem's father makes a proposal for marriage
 - 1) No apology or confession of wrongdoing
 - 2) No sympathy or suggestion that Shechem would be disciplined
 - 3) Totally insensitive to wrong that has been done – as if routine, accepted
 - 4) Eph.4:19; Rom.1:32

- c. Hamor lists the benefits of such a union
 - 1) Unite them & if intermarry become a great nation of people
 - 2) Provide mutual security & peace
 - 3) Provide greater trade markets & business opportunities
 - d. Shechem offers a large dowry – anything they wanted
- 3. Jacob's sons respond with deception & the misuse of religion**
- a. Reject the offer because people are uncircumcised
 - b. Lay down the condition – acceptable if all men are circumcised
 - c. If not agree to terms – will take our sister & go
 - d. Reality – had no intentions of allowing the marriage – wanted revenge
- 4. Men of Shechem agree to the terms**
- a. Are greedy & looking for monetary gain
 - b. Thought would eventually gain all the property of Israel
- 5. Third day Simeon & Levi kill all the men of Shechem**
- a. Was day of greatest pain & weakness – were helpless
 - b. Jacob's other sons show up & loot the city
 - c. Jacob rebukes them for their actions – now he has to leave
 - d. Sons justify their actions – no sense of remorse

Genesis 35:1-29

- 1. God urges Jacob to fulfill his vow**
- a. Gen.28:20-22 – when asked for safety & needs
 - b. Jacob had been back in Promised Land nearly 10 years by now
 - c. Situation
 - 1) Jacob was in desperate need
 - a) Sons had killed all men & looted Shechem
 - b) No doubt other city nations be angry – seek destroy him
 - c) Jacob expected them to join forces & march against him
 - 2) Jacob had also not been a good spiritual example for his family
 - a) Demonstrated weak character – not stand against evil
 - b) Lived a carnal life before them
 - 3) Had to be a deep sense of conviction – not fulfilled vow
 - a) No excuse – Bethel was only a day away – 20 or 30 miles
 - b) After encounter with God – settled down
 - 4) Had allowed idolatry into his house
 - a) Gods Rachel had taken – Gen.31:19,30-35
 - b) Gods taken from the looting of Shechem – Gen.34:27-29
 - c) Gods of his servants
 - 5) **Question** – How many of us still hang onto the gods of this earth?
 - a) What do we allow to consume us; dominate us?
 - b) What do we look to for help; put before God?

c) Examples – money; property; wealth; business; power; fame; family; sex; alcohol; drugs; clothes; vehicles; astrology; sports etc - Ex.20:4; 1 Jn.5:21

2. Jacob urges his house to get rid of all their idols

- a. Demands obedience from all – not just Jacob
- b. Gladly give up idols – Jacob buries them
- c. **Notice** – when obeyed – God put fear in hearts of all who would harm them

3. Deborah – Rebecca’s nurse dies

- a. Evidently Jacob had seen his father & she had come to live with Jacob
- b. An indicator that Jacob’s mother Rebecca is dead

4. God reaffirms His promise

- a. Reconfirmed Jacob’s new name = Israel
- b. Assures Jacob of His special presence & promises

5. Rachel dies in childbirth

- a. Had difficulty in birthing process
- b. Names son Ben Oni = son of my sorrow
- c. Jacob renames him Benjamin = son of my right hand

6. Reuben’s immorality

- a. Jacob’s 1st born sins against his father
 - 1) Has sex with Bilhah – mother of two of his brothers (Dan & Naphtali)
 - 2) Not rape, but an affair
 - a) She is much older (mature enough to withstand any advances)
 - b) Knowing she would have told Jacob was enough to stop it
- b. Says Jacob heard of it – not say what he did about it

7. Isaac dies

- a. Lived 180 years
- b. Esau & Jacob bury him

Genesis 36 – Esau’s descendants

God Begins To Work Through Joseph

Introduction

Joseph the favored son of Jacob now begins to take center stage in the book of Genesis. He becomes the dominant figure that God uses to save His people. God's people are in danger of becoming like the people they live among. Now God would send them into Egypt where they would be despised & considered unacceptable. Therefore the temptation to intermarry & intermingle would be diminished & His people would keep to themselves & retain their identity.

Genesis 37:1-11

1. Joseph

a. A lot like Jesus

- 1) Loved by his father & hated by his brethren
- 2) Favored by his father & abused by his brothers
- 3) Adversity did not harden his character
- 4) Prosperity did not ruin him
- 5) Was the same in private as he was in public

b. Raised in a wealthy home & ended up as a slave

- 1) So responsible & worked so hard that he was promoted to be the manager of his masters entire estate
- 2) Accused of rape & imprisoned for years. In prison he was so responsible & worked so hard that he was put in charge of the entire prison.
- 3) Gained the reputation of being a godly & righteous man
- 4) Was exalted & called before Pharaoh to give spiritual guidance
- 5) Counsel before Pharaoh was so helpful he was exalted to be Prime Minister of Egypt
- 6) Was second in power only to Pharaoh himself

c. Remained faithful to God in spite of all his hardships

- 1) Brothers hatred & cruelty in selling him as a slave
- 2) Masters wife's seduction & accusations of rape
- 3) Forgotten by those who promised to help him in prison
- 4) Through it all he never forgot God or His principles
 - a) Rejected sexual advances
 - b) Faced adversity without cursing, griping or grumbling
 - c) Forgave those who did evil against him
 - d) Used his gifts to serve God & help people
 - e) Believed in & held close God's promises

d. Joseph had one big flaw – pride

- 1) Jacob favored Joseph all his life
 - a) Joseph's brothers were mean & rough, subject to outbursts of lawlessness & violence
 - b) Jacob could not trust them in a position of authority & influence

- c) Jacob made Joseph supervisor over his brothers
 - (1) Vs.2 – tending the flocks with his brothers
 - (2) He was one tending them & his brothers helped him
 - d) Jacob had Joseph bringing reports on his brothers to him
 - (1) Most overseers handled the problems themselves
 - (2) Joseph was too young – 17
 - e) Jacob favored Joseph because he was born to him in old age
 - (1) He was the 1st born of Rachel
 - (2) Was a believer, a godly young man
 - f) Jacob gave Joseph a coat (robe of superiority)
- 2) All this favoritism went to Joseph's head
- a) Joseph had a cocky arrogant attitude
 - b) Had a dream & shared it with his brothers – showing his superiority over them (all bow before him)
 - c) Shared another dream with them & also his father
(Jacob's reaction = rebuked him – Hebrew “screamed at”)

2. Joseph's brothers hatred of him

- a. Sensed that their father loved him more
- b. Could not say a kind word to him
- c. Jealousy & hatred so bad talked about killing him
- d. Refused to care as he pleaded for his life – Gen.42:21

Genesis 37:12-36

1. Joseph's brothers were grazing the livestock near Shechem

- a. About 50 miles from where Jacob lived
 - 1) Was city where they had killed all the men & taken people as slaves
 - 2) Was dangerous – Joseph not go with them
 - 3) OK for them to be in danger, but not Joseph
- b. Finally sends Joseph to find out about them
 - 1) Not to stay, just find out & come back
 - 2) Could not find them = told were at Dothan (20 miles north)
- c. Brothers reaction
 - 1) See him at a distance & plot to kill him
 - a) Refer to him as “that dreamer” (Mocking him & his pride)
 - b) So disgusted & bitter they want him dead
 - c) Then see what happens to his dreams
 - 2) Reuben the oldest tries to save Joseph
 - a) Suggests throwing him in a pit & not killing him
 - b) Let the desert kill him then we not guilty

2. God intervenes – Midianite caravan comes along

- a. Are traders bound for Egypt
- b. Judah suggests they sell Joseph as a slave

- c. Brothers driven by hatred & greed – make a profit & rid of him too
 - 1) Sold him for 20 pieces of silver
 - 2) Uncaring as he pleaded for his life – Gen.42:21

3. Brothers set out to deceive their father Jacob

- a. Dip coat in blood – say found it this way
- b. Act as if unsure is Joseph's coat
- c. Result – deeper alienation between Jacob & his sons
 - 1) Refused to be comforted – grieve to his grave
 - 2) No matter what they did Jacob refused to stop grieving

4. Lessons

- a.

The sins Of A Wayward Young Man

Introduction

Some might ask – why would Moses put this story of Judah in the midst of a discussion about the life of Joseph? At least two reasons stand out immediately. First - to see the beginnings of the tribe of Judah, the tribe through which God would bring His Messiah into the world. How amazingly God's grace could be extended to a man who struggled with sin in his life & use his descendants in such a vital position. Secondly - to explain to us why God would need to have His people taken from the Promised Land & brought into the land of Egypt – a place He had previously kept them from entering.

Genesis 38:1-30

1. Judah forsakes his family

- a. Judah left his brothers
 - 1) He has had enough of their lies & Jacob's grief concerning Joseph.
 - 2) Coupled with his own guilt, he just has to get away
- b. Instead of fleeing, he should have gone to his father & confessed their sin
 - 1) Launched a search for Joseph to free him
 - 2) Now he is leaving the only godly influence he had in his life
- c. **Question** – what do we do when we find ourselves in sin?
 - 1) Do we run away from God & our spiritual family?
 - 2) Do we allow guilt to overwhelm us & become spiritually defeated?
 - 3) Jer.2:13 – Israel's response
 - 4) 2 Chron.15:1-4 – God's promise

2. Judah marries an unbeliever

- a. Moved into a Canaanite village & into a worldly influence
 - 1) He had no godly influence & acted on his own
 - 2) God's nor his father's wisdom were ever considered
- b. Our need to marry believers
 - 1) 2 Cor.6:14 – be not unequally yoked
 - 2) See Abraham's & Isaac's concerns (Gen.24:3; 28:1)
 - 3) God's warnings to His people
 - a) Ex.34:12 – make covenant with unbelievers & be a snare
 - b) Ezra 9:12 – blessings for listening

3. The wickedness of Judah's sons

- a. Raised in a wicked environment – mother an unbeliever
 - 1) No mention of ever visiting family (no godly influence)
 - 2) Judah named 1st – wife named other two (Dominant influence)
- b. Er was so wicked that God caused him to die
 - 1) Judah followed the custom – gave Tamar to his 2nd son
 - 2) He was to raise children in the name of his brother
 - 3) This would make his son the heir of the estate (1st born greater amount)

- c. Onan took her, but refused to raise up children in his brother's name
 - 1) Had sex with her, but allowed his seed to spill upon ground
 - 2) This angered God & he too was killed
 - d. Sins of Onan
 - 1) Not care or love enough to take care of his brother's family
 - 2) Greedy & selfish & wanted the inheritance for himself
 - 3) Tried to prevent children being born to Tamar
(interrupt seed line to Messiah)
 - 4) Perverting the purpose of his marriage to his brother's wife
 - e. Ungodly homes influence children to be ungodly & vice versa
 - 1) 1 Kings 22:52 – did evil as forefathers did
 - 2) 1 Kings 9:4,5 – walked in the ways of his father David
 - 3) 2 Chron.26:4 – did what right as his father did
- 4. Judah's spiritual blindness – vs.11**
- a. Concerned last son would die if takes Tamar
 - 1) As if she is bad luck – the source of the problem
 - 2) Makes her think that when last son old enough – be given to him
 - b. Unable to see God at work
 - 1) Sees the tragedy – like bad luck
 - 2) Unable to see the reason all this was happening
 - 3) Unable to see or acknowledge the wickedness of his sons
 - 4) God knew they would never repent
 - c. **Question** – how blind are we to godliness & righteousness?
 - 1) Do we see the hand of God in the occurrences of our lives?
 - 2) Are things just by chance? Luck? Destiny?
 - 3) Mt.6:23 – eye evil = whole body full of darkness
 - 4) Jn.3:17-19 – men love darkness & refuse to come into the light
 - 5) 2 Cor.4:3,4 – gospel veiled to those who allow self be blinded by Satan
 - 6) Eph.4:18 – understanding darkened by hardness of heart
 - 7) 1 Jn.2:11 – hate brother walks in darkness
- 5. Judah commits immorality**
- a. When wife dies, goes be with the sheep shearing
 - 1) Time of festivity & partying
 - 2) In midst of festivities wants sex
 - b. Tamar has come to realize that Judah has not intention of keeping his word
 - 1) Learns that he has come to the festivities
 - 2) Dresses as a prostitute – makes herself available to him
 - 3) She asks for payment - requests his staff & the seal of Judah & its cord
 - c. Judah is not ashamed of his actions
 - 1) Had his friend take the goat to the prostitute
 - 2) Concerned about becoming a laughing stock not in fulfilling pledge
 - 3) Feared men more than God

6. Judah is quick to judge others but not himself

- a. Three months later he learns that Tamar is pregnant
 - 1) Not only has she caused the death of his two sons, but has brought shame upon the family
 - 2) In his anger he pronounces the sentence of death upon her (burned)
- b. As Tamar is being brought out – she identifies the father
 - 1) Sends the staff, seal & cord to Judah
 - 2) Judah recognizes them & acknowledges his sin
- c. **Question** – how many of us quickly condemn the sin in others while excusing our own sins?
 - 1) Mt.7:1-5 – judge not that you be not judged
 - 2) Rom.2:1-11 – no excuse when pass judgment & we too are guilty
 - 3) Rom.14:4 – who are we to judge another man’s servant?
 - 4) Rom.14:13 – stop passing judgment
 - 5) James 4:12 – one Law giver & judge

7. A clear demonstration of God’s sovereignty

- a. God overrules Judah’s immorality – Tamar’s sons become believers
 - 1) Tamar is listed as an ancestor of Jesus – Mt.1:3
 - 2) Tamar’s son Perez is listed in Jesus’ genealogy
 - 3) Zarah becomes one of the prominent families in tribe of Judah
(2 Chron,2:6)
- b. Judah’s total repentance will not come until he is confronted with Joseph

Joseph's Spiritual Maturity

Introduction

God has a work for Joseph to accomplish. The need for Israel to leave the Promised Land has been established. Israel must be isolated for the world to prepare them to be God's nation. However, the way needs to be prepared for their care & protection. God will use Joseph to accomplish this task. But before this can happen, Joseph needs to be spiritually mature. The next two chapters in Genesis show us the process God used to accomplish this & gives us insight into God's use of trials & hardships today.

Genesis 39:1-23

1. Joseph is sold to Potiphar

a. Joseph needs to learn leadership & hard work

- 1) Joseph comes from a pampered background
 - a) Favorite son of Jacob
 - b) Always given special treatment
 - c) About 17 years old & had everything he needed & wanted
 - d) Everyone catered to him, indulged & pampered him
- 2) Now the reality has totally changed
 - a) He is a slave – in a foreign land, language strange to him
 - b) His brother's hatred has taken him miles from home
 - c) Has to be crushed & broken hearted
- 3) Easy target for Satan
 - a) Wallow in self-pity
 - b) Angry with God & the world

b. Joseph is blessed by God

- 1) Placed in Potiphar's house – high official in Pharaoh's court
 - a) Captain of Pharaoh's personal guards
 - b) Extremely important position guarding the life of Pharaoh
- 2) Potiphar notices Joseph's skills & attitude
 - a) God blessed all that he did
 - b) Joseph turned to God & worked hard
 - c) Potiphar is impressed & moves him into his house
- 3) Joseph is promoted to supervisor
 - a) Everything Potiphar has prospers – house, fields
 - b) Joseph in charge of everything except food Potiphar eats
 - c) God is teaching Joseph to be a leader – manage a large estate

2. Joseph learns discipline & self-control through temptation

- a. Joseph is a well-built & handsome man
- b. Potiphar's wife takes notice of him
 - 1) She wants to have sex with him
 - 2) Makes suggestive remarks & invitations

- c. See the strength of the temptation
 - 1) Joseph is a young man with fleshly passions
 - 2) She was an important woman & probably beautiful
 - 3) It was to Joseph's advantage to not upset his master's wife
 - 4) Joseph was between a rock & a hard place
 - 5) He could have had her any time he wanted her & received great advantages from being in her favor
 - 6) This temptation went on day after day
 - 7) Joseph had to avoid being in her presence
- d. Why did Joseph resist her?
 - 1) His master trusted him & he did not want to break that trust
 - 2) He saw illicit sex as wicked & a sin against God
- e. See the extent of her lust for Joseph
 - 1) She got all the other servants out of the house
 - 2) She surprised Joseph as he went about his duties
 - 3) She grabbed him & assaulted him
 - 4) Joseph had to run out of the house leaving his coat behind

3. Any sex outside marriage is wicked & sinful

- a. No matter what man calls it -
(experimentation, legitimate expression of one's nature)
- b. Illicit sex destroys self-control, discipline, trust & eventually ones life
- c. 1 Cor.6:18; 7:2

4. Joseph proves himself trustworthy

- a. For months he faced this temptation day after day
 - 1) Imagine the mental strain & frustration
 - 2) Eph.5:3 - But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity,
- b. Again Joseph loses everything
 - 1) Not only has his family turned against him – now Potiphar's wife
 - 2) She accuses him of trying to rape her (her crime)
 - 3) Joseph has no one to come to his aid
 - 4) Faces the trial of lies & false accusations
 - 5) Potiphar's wife's lust turns to rage – rejected & now Joseph must pay
 - a) Mocks Joseph – arouse racial prejudice = Hebrew
 - b) Accuses Joseph of being a danger to all in the house
(wants to make sport of us)
 - c) Even blames Potiphar – “slave you brought into the house”

5. Joseph is imprisoned in a political prison

- a. Ps.105:16-19 - He called down famine on the land and destroyed all their supplies of food; and he sent a man before them — Joseph, sold as a slave. They bruised his feet with shackles, his neck was put in irons, till what he foretold came to pass, till the word of the LORD proved him true.

- b. Jn.15:2 – every branch is pruned
- c. 2 Cor.4:17,18; 1 Pet.1:6,7; 4:12,13
- d. God teaches Joseph to have a positive attitude – vs.21,22
 - 1) Grants him favor in the eyes of the warden
 - 2) Soon Joseph is in charge of the prison (responsible for all that went on)
 - 3) Joseph had obeyed God & now the blessings came
- e. 1 Pet.5:10,11 - And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

6. God was preparing Joseph to be the administrator in Egypt.

- a. He would face stiff opposition in the years of plenty as well as in the years of famine that were coming.
 - 1) Tough decisions would have to be made.
 - 2) He needed the discipline & self control that he learned in Potiphar's house & the prison.
- b. It may not appear on the surface that God is working, but we can but assured that He is – Rom.8:26-30

Genesis 40:1-23

1. Some time later

- a. **How long?** Perhaps months or even years.
 - 1) Joseph was in chains when 1st imprisoned
 - 2) After that he was assigned certain duties
 - 3) After this his hard work & abilities were noticed by the warden & Joseph was given even greater responsibilities.
 - 4) All this speaks of Joseph being in prison for a long time – even years
- b. **Remember ancient prisons were horrible** – dungeons
 - 1) Joseph was there not because of what he had done – false accusations
 - 2) Perfect breeding ground for Satan to harden him

2. Pharaoh's cupbearer & baker are imprisoned

- a. They had offended Pharaoh
 - 1) Scripture doesn't say why
 - 2.) Henry Morris commentary suggests – poison found in palace & an investigation was launched
 - a) Where from & who responsible unknown
 - b) Most likely persons those in charge of kings food & drink
 - c) Later chief baker executed – part of the plot
- b. Part of Joseph's duties were to care for them
 - 1) They were in prison for some time – no say how long
 - 2) They each had a dream the same night – wondered about interpretation

- c. Joseph notices they are highly upset – asks why
 - 1) God was behind their dreams because they would later be used to get Joseph released
 - a) Coincidence that both had dreams same night?
 - b) Coincidence that both were interpreted & came to pass?
 - 2) Note – Joseph’s focus is not on himself but others
 - a) He was imprisoned for a crime he never committed
 - b) Could have been a grumbler, complainer, angry with the world
 - c) These officials were the very people who enslaved him & imprisoned him
 - d) Easily could have taken his anger out on them & cared less

3. Question – are all dreams omens of future events?

- a. Many peoples & cultures put a lot of stock in dreams
 - 1) See them as meaningful & useful in life
 - 2) See some supernatural power behind them
- b. Should believers be seeking dreams & finding strength & guidance from them?
 - 1) There are times God has used dreams in the lives of His people
 - 2) However, God has given us His Spirit & His word for our guidance
 - a) Satan can use dreams & visions too – Zechariah 10:2
 - b) 2 Thess.2:9-12 – deceived because refuse to listen to truth
 - c) 2 Tim.3:16,17 – scripture makes one complete
 - d) 2 Pet.1:3,44 – given all need for life & godliness

4. Joseph acknowledges the power of God

- a. Declared that God knew everything & therefore what dreams meant
 - 1) Reveals his absolute trust in God & His knowledge
 - 2) Also reveals his trust in God using him to reveal the dreams
 - 3) Notice – he did not say that he had the power to interpret dreams
 - 4) Joseph’s trust was in God not himself
- b. Joseph interpreted the cupbearers dream positively
 - 1) He would again serve the king
 - 2) In three days he would be released & begin his service again
 - 3) He then requests help from the cupbearer – remember me
 - a) Mention me to Pharaoh
 - b) Tells how unjustly imprisoned
- c. See Joseph’s humility
 - 1) In earlier days he flaunted his skill & position
 - 2) Readily & enthusiastically shared the dreams that he was ruler

5. See Joseph’s courage

- a. The bakers dream had a negative meaning – would be hanged
- b. How difficult would it be to tell the truth in this situation?
 - 1) Adding to the mans burdened heart
 - 2) Easily want to make truth easier to swallow – false hope

6. Joseph learns to be forgiving & wait for God's timing

- a. The cupbearer does not remember Joseph
 - 1) Excitement of being released
 - 2) Immediate pressures of his duties
 - 3) Joseph is not important enough – just a slave
 - 4) Afraid of Pharaoh &* not want bring up his prison experience
 - 5) Just waiting for an opportune time
- b. Whatever the reason Joseph spends another 2 years in prison
 - 1) Could have easily become depressed & given up all hope
 - 2) Everyone who was closest to him had failed him
- c. God was using these disappointments to teach him to forgive & develop patience & to wait for God's timing
 - 1) Notice – Joseph never complained or revealed any bitterness
 - 2) In addition he never even defended himself against the false accusation of Potiphar's wife – he chose to save her honor

The Power Of God In Action

Introduction

Scripture tells us that God has the power to work all things out for the good of those who love Him & are called according to His purpose (Rom.8:28). Look closely at Genesis 41:25,28,32 & see this truth clearly. God was working out events in people & nature so that He could fulfill His promises. He moved both in small events such as the cupbearer's memory as well as in worldwide events in the years of abundance & famine.

Genesis 41:1-57

1. God's power to strengthen men

a. God has the power to work within men as He chooses – Phil.2:12,13

- 1) Never arbitrary, unjust or evil – James 1:13,16,17
- 2) God always wants the best for us & for all mankind
- 3) In this chapter we see Him use His power to help everyone involved, the believer as well as those who worshiped false gods.

b. God strengthens Joseph to endure 2 more years in prison

- 1) The cupbearer forgot his promise to Joseph
- 2) Joseph's disappointment & discouragement could have turned into anger, bitterness & hatred, even broken his spirit.
- 3) Joseph maintained his faith & continually cried out to God
 - a) He knew God cared & helped His people
 - b) God encouraged his heart & strengthened him to endure prison for 2 more years. (2 Cor.12:9)

2. God's power to disturb men

a. Pharaoh is disturbed through a dream

- 1) 7 fat cows are devoured by 7 gaunt cows
- 2) 7 full ears of grain devoured by 7 lean ears

b. Pharaoh is confused & uneasy concerning the dream

- 1) Calls for his wise men & magicians to interpret the dream
- 2) Felt sure there was some significance to the dream

3. God's power to make men ineffective

a. Notice that not a one of them could interpret the dreams

- 1) The river was bound to be the Nile
- 2) Fat cows & full ears easily seen as abundance or productivity
- 3) Gaunt cows or lean ears easily seen as famine

b. God had to be blocking or confusing their minds

- 1) Mt.13:11-15 – never see or understand
- 2) 2 Thess.2:11,12 – strong delusion so believe a lie

4. God's power to make men remember

a. Cupbearer suddenly remembers Joseph

- 1) Had forgotten, allowed situation to slip his mind
- 2) Recalls situation that happened 2 years earlier

b. Tells Pharaoh

- 1) Hebrew who interpreted our dreams – happened just as he said
- 2) Felt Joseph had special insight & understanding

5. The power of God to deliver His servants

a. Joseph is summed & brought before Pharaoh

- 1) 1st must be groomed & prepared
- 2) Now all this preparation & training will pay off

b. Why was Joseph delivered from his trials & circumstances?

- 1) To serve others who were in great need
 - a) Most powerful ruler in world about to face a crisis
 - b) Entire nation was totally unaware of the coming danger
 - c) However, God knew & was using His servant to warn them
- 2) To acknowledge God as the source of all knowledge & power
 - a) Joseph acknowledged he had no ability, but God did
 - b) Declared that God would help Pharaoh & give him the meaning
- 3) Because the wise of the world were inadequate (1 Cor.1:20-31)

c. God put Joseph through trials to prepare him & now delivers him to serve

- 1) Jn.15:2 – every branch pruned so be more fruitful
- 2) 1 Pet.1:6,7 – faith tried with fire
- 3) 2 Cor.1:3-7 – comforted so can comfort others

6. Joseph reveals Pharaohs' dreams

a. One basic truth – God revealing to Pharaoh what about to happen

- 1) Both dreams are in unison
- 2) Same thoughts throughout – reinforce the other

b. God has determined 7 plentiful years & 7 years of famine

- 1) Firmly established – no question about it
- 2) The earth will be ravished by severe famine – so bad forget good years

7. The power of God to endow His servants with wisdom

a. Joseph not only interprets the dreams, he offers counsel & advice

- 1) Great trouble was ahead for Egypt. What was this leader to do?
- 2) Surely Pharaoh was pondering these thoughts

b. Advise

- 1) Find a qualified administrator (discerning & wise man)
 - a) Put him in charge over Egypt
 - b) Human nature to spend what they get – even more
(very few save & those who do are tempted to oppress others)
- 2) Collect a fifth of the harvest of the plentiful years & store it
- 3) Store the grain in centralized areas under Pharaoh's authority

c. Application

- 1) We may feel inadequate & ill equipped to help others
- 2) If belong to God – He will help us
 - a) Phil.2:12,13
 - b) Give us understanding & wisdom – Ex.4:12; Jer.5:14; Mt.10:19; 1 Cor.2:13

8. The exaltation of Joseph

- a. **Pharaoh is impressed** – none like Joseph
 - 1) Joseph has shown wisdom & insight
 - 2) Joseph's plan sounded good – even if no famine make Pharaoh rich
- b. **Rags to riches story unfolds**
 - 1) Joseph made 2nd in command in Egypt
(wonder what Potiphar & his wife thought?)
 - 2) Given the ring of Pharaoh
 - 3) Clothed in royal linen
 - 4) Given a gold chain to wear around his neck
 - 5) Rides in 2nd chariot behind Pharaoh
 - 6) No person able to lift hand or foot without Joseph's approval
- c. **Realize this would never have happened unless Joseph was faithful**
 - 1) He had to be willing to allow God to use him – prepare him
 - 2) If he had turned from God during his trials this never happen
 - 3) What does God want to do through us? Will we allow Him?
 - 4) Jn.15:16; 1 Cor.4:2; 1 Tim.1:12-15
- d. **Joseph given what needed for Egyptian society**
 - 1) An Egyptian name – publicly accepted
 - 2) A wife & family so be more sociably accepted
- e. **Joseph is still a young man** – 30 years old
 - 1) Endowed with wisdom well beyond his years
 - 2) Rom.12:3-8 – each gifted; 1 Pet.4:10,11

9. Things happen just as Joseph predicted

- a. 7 years of plenty – food stored
- b. Economic collapse, shortages & hunger
- c. Joseph sells the grain to the people – no free handouts
(People buy the grain & are put to work for Pharaoh)

God Stirs The Conscience

Introduction

It has been nearly 20 years since Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery. Joseph now sits at the pinnacle of power in Egypt – supreme administrator, second only to Pharaoh. God has placed Joseph in this position that he might preserve Israel, God's chosen family through whom He would bless all nations. Joseph's brothers will now have to confront Joseph & God will use the situation to stir their hearts to repentance.

Genesis 42 :1-38

1. Jacob hears that there is grain in Egypt

a. Physically they are hurting – the famine is great – all over the Middle East

- 1) No doubt they were losing livestock
- 2) They were also running low on supplies for their families
- 3) Situation was becoming a crisis
- 4) Were one of the largest ranches in area & a great deal of pasture was needed to care for their stock. That pasture was dwindling daily.

b. Notice reaction of Jacob & his sons

- 1) Jacob hears the news & is shocked by his sons reaction
 - a) No enthusiasm of excitement
 - b) Seems they are just standing around looking at one another
- 2) Jacob snapped at them – “why are you just standing there?”
- 3) Why this reaction?
 - a) Perhaps God was convicting them – remembered Joseph
 - b) Wondering what happen if ran into Joseph

c. Application

- 1) God will often use a physical situation to stir us spiritually
- 2) Disease, accident, financial difficulties, loss of job etc
- 3) Stirring us to evaluate life – see what might have done to cause crisis
- 4) Lk.13:1-3

2. 10 of Jacob's sons go to Egypt

a. Benjamin not allowed to go – fearful some harm might come to him

- 1) Jacob's sons had done a terrible wrong – God wants them to face it
- 2) Their wrong needed to be faced & corrected = repentance

b. God was stirring their hearts that they might repent & confess their sin

- 1) Ps.32:1-4
- 2) Ps.51:3
- 3) Acts 2:37-39

3. Joseph recognizes them & treats them harshly

a. They were not looking for Joseph to be in such a position

- 1) He had been sold as a slave – never think be in this position
- 2) Joseph was overseeing all the distribution of grain to foreigners

- b. **Joseph remembers his dreams** – brothers bow down
 - 1) God was reminding him of his purpose
 - 2) Dream was of God – purpose for what happening
 - 3) Now aware more than ever that God was behind circumstances
 - c. **Accuses them of being spies** – there to look for weaknesses
 - 1) Brothers defend selves – deny charge, just there for food
 - 2) Charged them a 2nd time – defense = all are sons of one man
 - 3) Charged them a 3rd time – must prove innocence
 - 4) Imprisons them for 3 days – time do some soul searching
 - d. **Imaging their thoughts, emotions & fears those 3 days**
 - 1) Not knowing where to turn or what to do
 - 2) Strange country – not know language, customs – alone
 - 3) Was God punishing them for their actions?
 - e. **Joseph released all but one** – others must bring back youngest brother
 - 1) Brothers conscience is filled with guilt – God punishing us
 - 2) Discuss sin in Joseph's presence – unaware he understands them
 - 3) Joseph deeply moved – wept
 - 4) Their previous sin repeated in Simeon – imprisoned
 - 5) Brothers given food & silver returned & they unaware of it
4. **Brothers tell Jacob of the happenings in Egypt**
- a. **Accused us of spying & imprisoned Simeon**
 - 1) Test for innocence – bring youngest brother
 - 2) As emptying sacks – find silver they took to pay for grain
 - b. **Jacob accuses them of depriving him of his children**
 - 1) 1st Joseph
 - 2) Then Simeon
 - 3) Now you want to take Benjamin from me
 - c. **Jacob feels that everything is against him** – overwhelmed
 - 1) Reality – God was working everything out for his good – just unaware
 - 2) From his vantage point all appeared hopeless – yet wasn't
 - 3) Needed to trust God – more struggles
5. **Reuben offers his sons as surety for Benjamin**
- a. Wanted his father to know they were telling the truth
 - b. Jacob refuses to allow Benjamin to go – fearful

Genesis 43:1-34

1. And the famine was severe in the land

- a. **The willingness to change** – one of the most difficult things to accept
 - 1) Keeps us from progressing, learning
 - 2) Keeps us from prospering spiritually
 - 3) Jacob's sons were refusing to change
 - 4) God had no choice but to put them through the events in this chapter

- b. **God made them face their problem**
 - 1) Famine kept getting worse – losing part of herd daily – ration food
 - 2) Why not return to Egypt?
 - a) Facing charge of being spies = killed; executed
 - b) Jacob not wanting to allow Benjamin to go
 - c) Felt little hope & kept looking for rain
 - c. **Too many of us are like Jacob** – procrastinate, ignore & put off facing our problems head on – hoping they will just go away
 - 1) Hoping someone else will handle it
 - 2) This only creates more difficulties – tension, strain, stress, anxiety etc
 - 3) 2 Cor.12:7-9 – seek God’s grace
 - d. **Jacob finally has to face the truth** – must go back to Egypt
 - 1) Procrastinates to the end – eaten all the grain
 - 2) Judah speaks out – must allow Benjamin to go
 - 3) Governor had been insistent – only way prove not lying
 - 4) If Jacob allow Benjamin go - they go; if not they not go
 - e. **Jacob’s dilemma**
 - 1) Send all 11 sons – something happen – no seed line
 - 2) If kept Benjamin home – he could carry on seed line
 - 3) Jacob had to learn to let go – trust God – James 5:13
2. **Judah’s sacrifice**
- a. **Was a matter of life & death** – near starvation
 - 1) Something had to be done & done quickly – delayed 12 weeks already
 - 2) Judah pledges himself guaranteeing Benjamin’s safety
 - b. **Willing to sacrifice himself for the good of the family**
 - 1) Rom.14:21; 15:1
 - 2) Phil.2:3,4
3. **Jacob sends gifts**
- a. In spite of the famine
 - b. Double the amount of silver too
 - c. Lk.6:38; Prov.22:9; 2 Cor.9:6
4. **Joseph’s reaction**
- a. **Has them sent to his house** – meal prepared for them
 - 1) Brothers fearful – was because of the money - confess
 - 2) Told – was a blessing from God – knew had not stolen anything
 - b. **Brothers present gifts & bow before Joseph**
 - 1) Grateful they believed & Simeon returned to them
 - 2) Bowed low to pay him honor
 - c. **Joseph is overwhelmed with emotion**
 - 1) Finds a place to weep alone
 - 2) Has the men seated before him according to their ages
 - 3) Brothers astonished

Genesis 44:1-34**1. Brothers tested – is family important?**

- a. 20 years earlier it wasn't – willing to sell Joseph as a slave
- b. Now be tested again – with Benjamin
- c. Joseph has silver put in sacks & his cup put in Benjamin's sack (at night)
- d. Allows them to get out of town – sends servants after them
 - 1) Charged with returning evil for good
 - 2) Charged with stealing Joseph's personal cup
- e. Strongly declare innocence
 - 1) All standing together – all be slaves if one did this
 - 2) Refused to leave one behind as a slave – all returned to face Joseph
 - 3) Sense that God has uncovered their sin (punishing them)

2. Judah begs for mercy

- a. Explains the situation fully – Jacob's fears
- b. Offers himself as a slave in the place of Benjamin
- c. Cannot bear the thought of Jacob's misery over the loss of Benjamin

Forgiving Those That Hurt Us

Introduction

The time has come for the restoration of Joseph with his family. His brothers have suffered enough & the elements of their repentant attitude are very evident. They have shown the depths of their regret & refuse to allow their father to suffer anymore. They will not abandon Benjamin although it may cost them their lives. Joseph can take no more; he must reveal himself to his brothers. In this lesson we will see that reunion & make application to our lives.

Genesis 45:1-28

1. Joseph reveals himself to his brothers

a. Notice Joseph's reaction

- 1) Could contain himself no longer – before had been able to hide his emotions
- 2) Burst out into tears – so loudly heard in other room
- 3) Joseph wanted this restoration – no bitterness

b. See brothers reaction – stunned

- 1) Not seen or heard from Joseph in over 23 years
- 2) Never even dreamed would be in position he was in to Pharaoh
- 3) Confusion, terror & fear had to be filling their hearts
- 4) Had treated Joseph with envy, hatred & bitterness – expecting the worst

c. Immediately Joseph tries to set their hearts at ease

- 1) Asks about the well being of his father
- 2) Calls for them to come close – apparently had backed away
- 3) Points out their sin, but holds no grudges
 - a) They were brothers
 - b) Assures them of his forgiveness
 - c) Not want them to be angry with selves for actions
(natural to run self down or blame others)
- 4) They need fear no retaliation from Joseph – wants only their best
- 5) Whole issue is to be forgotten – God behind circumstances

d. Sheds new light on past

- 1) God behind circumstances – used their anger & hatred
- 2) God preparing things so family is saved from famine
- 3) Joseph chosen – exalted for this purpose

2. Joseph urges them to get rest of family

a. Don't delay – famine is great – be so for another 5 years

- 1) No way they or livestock could survive there
- 2) Canaan be barren another 5 years – lose everything

b. Joseph wanted everyone to know – he was well & that he forgave them

- 1) Absolutely no bitterness or regrets
- 2) Throws his arms around them expressing his love

3. The news reaches the ears of Pharaoh

a. Pharaoh shows his gratefulness for Joseph

- 1) Orders Joseph to bring his family to Egypt
- 2) Promises to supply them abundantly
- 3) Sends wagons to make journey there easier
- 4) No need bring furniture – all be provided – best in Egypt

b. Gifts are given to brothers

- 1) New clothes for all (Benjamin gets 5 sets)
- 2) 300 pieces of silver for Benjamin
- 3) 10 male donkeys with finest of Egypt for Jacob
- 4) 10 female donkeys loaded with grain, bread etc

4. Joseph orders his brothers not to argue with one another

- a. No need to blame one another for the past (human nature wants to lay blame)
- b. See Gen.3:12, 13; Ex.32:22-24

5. Jacob gladly receives the news

- a. At 1st stunned – couldn't believe his ears
- b. All the evidence convinced him – knew God not punishing him

6. Lesson on forgiveness

a. We have been reconciled to bring reconciliation to others

- 1) 2 Cor.5:16-21
- 2) 1 Pet.3:8-10

b. Problem – forgiveness not come to us naturally

- 1) Want retaliation, revenge – make them regret what they did to us
- 2) Flesh wants satisfaction – suffer like we suffered (eye for an eye)

c. Hindrances us to forgiving others

1) We take our forgiveness for granted

- a) Not fully appreciate what God is doing for us – 1 Jn.1:7
- b) Feel deserving of God's grace – easy for Him to forgive us
- c) Forget how sinful we really are (3X day = 1200/yr)
(Isa.64:6 – righteousness as filthy rags)

2) Satan uses our pride against us

- a) Some wrong OK – up to a point (don't go too far)
- b) Lose face with others
- c) Take their actions personally – did on purpose – have to retaliate
- d) Allow bitterness to take root in life – Heb.12:14,15

3) Not realize destruction bringing to ourselves

a) Personally

- (1) Unable receive forgiveness – Mk.11:25,26
- (2) Bring tormentors upon selves – Mt.18:35

b) As a church

(1) Destroys our witness

- (a) Church in Kansas – marching against 9/11 workers = spreading hate
- (b) Unforgiving & hateful = just like world

(2) Are to be known by our love

- (a) Jn.13:34,35
- (b) 1 Jn.4:7,8
- (c) 1 Cor.13:1-3

c) Brethren fight & hold grudges = world mocks

7. Learning to forgive

a. Learn to see beyond – the bigger picture

- 1) God using situation to get our attention – see their needs
- 2) Eph.6:10-12 – struggle is not with flesh & blood (Satan manipulate)
- 3) 1 Cor.10:13 – God controls our temptations (He allowed it to happen)
- 4) Remember things are not always as they seem on surface

b. Remember to always live by the golden rule – Mt.7:12

- 1) Rom.12:17-21 – don't repay evil for evil
- 2) 1 Pet.3:8-12 – revenge takes away blessings
- 3) 1 Cor.13:7 – Love bears all things

c. Learn what it takes to deal with the emotional hurt

- 1) **Don't deny it or try to suppress it**
 - a) Never go away on own (time doesn't heal all wounds)
 - b) Like building over a garbage dump – trash comes to surface
- 2) **Confess the hurt**
 - a) To Jesus – Mt.11:28; 1 Pet.5:7
 - b) Promise – Phil.4:4-7 (peace of God fill heart)
 - c) James 5:16 – healing comes through confession (1 Jn.1:9)
- 3) **Deal with source of hurt**
 - a) Importance we place on temporal things – 2 Cor.4:16,17
 - b) Pride – I deserve to be treated better

d. Deal with the hate & bitterness

- 1) **Destroys us spiritually – 1 Jn.3:15; 4:20**
- 2) **Comprehend the magnitude of our debt to God**
 - a) Mt.18:21-35 – man thought could repay debt (impossible)
 - b) Rom.3:10ff – none righteous (we put Jesus on cross)
- 3) **See situation in different light = positively**
 - a) Can make situation whatever we want – my choice how I react
 - b) James 1:2-4 – count struggles a joyous thing – mature us
 - c) Attach a new meaning to situation – God in control
 - d) Voluntarily invest treasure in them
(Mt.6:21 – where treasure is heart is)

Maturing In Forgiveness

Introduction

God has called us as Christians to join Him in reconciling the world to God through Jesus Christ. He wants to use us to bring a blessing to mankind not a curse. To accomplish this mission we need to learn to have a forgiving spirit. In this world we have troubles – circumstances & people that will irritate & hurt us. God wants us to react to these situations like Jesus would act in a similar situation. This requires that we grow in patience & forgiveness.

1. Forgiveness does not come to us naturally

- a. **Are prone to want revenge** – to retaliate & make them wish they had never hurt us. Our flesh wants satisfaction – they suffer as we suffered
- b. **Why – what hinders us?**
 - 1) **Take our forgiveness for granted**
 - a) Somehow we deserve to be forgiven – easy to forgive us
 - b) Never really realize how sinful we are
 - c) Not fully appreciate how much God is forgiving us
 - 2) **Pride**
 - a) They have gone too far – will lose face if forgive
 - b) They will take advantage of my generosity & mercy
 - c) Feel justified in being bitter – they deserve my wrath
 - 3) **Not realize harm doing to selves**
 - a) **Personally**
 - 1) Unable to receive forgiveness from God – Mk.11:25,26
 - 2) God send tormentors into my life – Mt.18:35
 - b) **As a church**
 - 1) Destroys our witness to the world
 - (a) Church in Kansas spreading hate message
(marched against 9/11 workers – deserved it)
 - (b) When unforgiving & hateful = just like world
 - 2) God wants us to be known for our love, not our hate
 - (a) Jn.13:34,35; 1 Jn.4:7,8
(evidence God is among us)
 - (b) Not say – want you known by judgmental attitude – speak truth in love
 - (c) See 1 Cor.13 – how love behaves
 - (d) 2 Tim.2:24-26 – not argumentative
 - c) **World mocks Christians that fight & hold grudges**
 - 1) Gal.5:13-15 – devouring selves
 - 2) Phil.2:14,15 – right attitude – shine in midst of darkness

2. Basic aspects of forgiveness

a. God wants us to have a positive attitude concerning the offence, not a negative attitude toward the offender.

- 1) When we focus on the offender – easily become bitter
- 2) God wants us to see the bigger picture & focus upon our reaction
- 3) God wants us to see the offender as an instrument in His hand
2 Sam.16:11 – Lord has bidden him to curse me
Lk.23:34 – Father forgive – they know not what they do
1 Cor.10:13 – God allowed this to happen (in control)
- 4) God wants to get our attention – uses situation
Acts 16:16-18 – she needed to be freed from evil spirit
Eph.6:10-12 – our struggle is not with flesh & blood

b. We never have the right to harbor bitterness

- 1) Rom.12:17-21 – Only God has the right to avenge
- 2) 1 Pet.3:8-12 – doing evil removes God’s blessings from us
- 3) 1 Cor.13:7 – love bears all things

c. Must learn to deal with the emotional hurt

- 1) **Don’t deny it or try to suppress it**
 Not go away on own – time doesn’t heal all wounds
 Like building over a garbage dump – trash comes to surface
- 2) **Confess it to God**
Mt.11:28; 1 Pet.5:7
Phil.4:4-7 – promises His peace guard heart
James 5:16 – confession brings healing (1 Jn.1:9)
- 3) **Deal with the source in your heart**
 (Offended because of what allow in heart)
 Importance we place on temporal things – 2 Cor.4:16,17
 Pride – I deserve to be treated better

3. Viewing forgiveness from God’s perspective – Mt.18:21-35

a. Peter’s perspective - retaliation

- 1) How many times must I forgive?
- 2) To him it was just a matter of time before get revenge

b. God’s perspective

- 1) Man was hopelessly in debt – could never repay his master
 (we are hopelessly indebt to God – never able repay)
- 2) The man thought he could repay his debt – unwilling admit helplessness
 (Rom.3:10-21 – none righteous)
- 3) Man’s refusal to forgive others is repulsive to God
 - a) Wicked & hard hearted – insensitive to God’s graciousness
 - b) Brings His wrath upon us – sends tormentors

c. Consequences of bitterness

- 1) **Physical** (book – None of these diseases)
Ps.32:1-4 – hand heavy on me – bones wasted away)

2) **Spiritually**

1 Jn.4:20,21 – inability to love God

Mt.6:12 – unable to receive forgiveness from God

3) **We become conformed to our focus**

a) We begin to measure ourselves by their actions

b) Produces in us – pride, selfishness & bitterness

c) Other people see same attitudes we condemn in them in us

4. **Basic steps in gaining a forgiving spirit**

a. **Realize God is working through the circumstances & people that offend us**

1) Gen.50:20 – you meant it for evil; God meant it for good

2) We have the choice to make whatever we want – chose our reaction

b. **Thank God for the benefit He plans through each offense**

1) 1 Thess.5:18 – thankful in all things

2) James 1:2-4 – count struggles as joyful

c. **Discern character qualities God wants to develop in you**

1) Mt.5:3-12

2) Gal.5:22

d. **Voluntarily invest yourself in your offender – Mt.6:21**

e. **Expect to suffer for doing right = normal part of Christian walk**

1) Phil.1:29

2) 2 Tim.3:12

3) 1 Peter 1:5-7

Making Sure One Is Doing God's will

Introduction

God's greatest blessings are reserved for those who willingly do His will. When one is focused on a life of selfishness, immorality & greed they lose the opportunity of participating in these blessings. However, before one can do God's will they must know God's will. In this lesson we will see Jacob as he seeks to know God's will in his life.

Genesis 46:1-27

1. Jacob offers sacrifices to God at Beersheba

a. Jacob felt that his decision to go to Egypt was right – Gen.45:27,28

- 1) Famine not enough reason in Abraham's day – brought trouble
- 2) God wanted them to stay in land – best for them
- 3) Yet with severity of famine & wagons from Egypt – ought go

b. Jacob wanted confirmation from God

- 1) God speaks to Jacob in a vision – last vision given to patriarchs
- 2) God had spoken to Jacob eight times in visions

c. God's message to Jacob

- 1) **Do not fear** (reasons Jacob might be fearful)
 - a) Egypt full of worldliness & false worship
 - b) Family tempted to adopt idolatry
 - c) Family had been in Promised Land for 200 years (3 generations)
 - d) God had prophesied they be in slavery for 400 years
- 2) **God would take care of everything**
 - a) Make you into a great nation
 - b) I will go with you & bring you back
 - c) You will be with Joseph as you die

2. Seeking God's will

a. Jacob did this through worship – God appeared to him in a vision

b. We too must come humbly seeking

- 1) Prov.2:3-5 – seek excitedly
- 2) 2 Chron.7:14 – humbly repent & seek with whole heart
- 3) Prov.8:17 – truly love Him
- 4) Lk.11:9 – ask, seek knock
- 5) James 1:5 – ask confidently
- 6) Jn.7:17 – obey what you know is God's will (see also Phil.3:12-16)

c. Questions to ask when seeking God's will

- 1) **Will this decision bring glory to God?**
 - a) 1 Cor.10:31 – do all for God's glory
 - b) David wanted to build God a temple, but not God's will because he was a man of blood – 1 Chron.22:8
 - c) On surface may seem to glorify Him, but we may not be the one He chooses to accomplish the work

- 2) **Is this goal just to feed my ego?**
- How pure are my motives
 - 1 Sam. 17:28 – David’s brothers saw conceit in David
- 3) **Can I put God 1st in this endeavor?**
- Can I handle the dangers attached?
 - Is this secondary to my absolute devotion to God?
 - Can I keep this in perspective as I pursue it or will it make everything else suffer including my relationship with Jesus? Even a ministry can become an idol when it interferes with our personal walk with the Lord.
- 4) **Will others benefit or suffer as I pursue this goal?**
- James 3:16,17 – God’s wisdom benefits not destroys
 - Illus. – attempt build church at expense of other congregations
- 5) **Will this bring out the best or the worst in me?**
- Power can make one a tyrant; wealth can bring out covetousness, greed & dishonesty.
 - Moses 1st attempt to deliver Israel was disastrous
 - When it was God’s timing Moses was successful
- 6) **Am I to do this or just be the catalyst to make it happen?**
- A late-seventeenth-century youth named Antonio who loved good music and dreamed of becoming a great concert violinist.
 - Soon it became painfully clear to him, that he lacked the talent to make the beautiful music in his soul come out through the violin. What sort of cruel joke - such love for great music but no ability to create it?
 - Painstakingly, he began to create violins capable of the sounds that he, Antonio Stradivari, could not coax out of them. Over the next seventy-one years until his death at age ninety-three, he made over one thousand violins.
 - The great musicians of Antonio’s day have long since relinquished their skills and fallen silent. But throughout the world, wherever great music is loved, some five hundred Stradivarius violins are still being played.
 - You may be like Barnabas, who, although a missionary himself, made his greatest contribution to the spread of the gospel when he befriended an obscure preacher from Antioch named Paul.
- 7) **Is this the right time or should I wait**
- Timing is everything
 - Pursue your dream actively now. At the same time, wait patiently for the Lord to open doors, signal opportunities, and develop your character. Your time will come.

- d. **Paul's prayer** – Col.1:9 – filled with knowledge of God's will
- 1) **God's will ought to permeate every aspect of our being**
 - a) Nothing is to flow through us, or out of us that is not God's will.
 - b) 2 Cor.10:5; Mt.6:10; Jn.4:34
 - 2) **Learn His principles & apply them** – wisdom & understanding
 - a) Jn.20:31 – written so believe & have life
 - b) Acts 20:32 – commend to word able build you up
 - c) 2 Tim.3:16,17 – scripture inspired & profitable
 - d) 1 Pet.1:22 – purified soul by obeying truth
 - e) 1 Pet.2:2 – are to crave word like newborn craves milk
- e. **Man's struggle in seeking God's will**
- 1) **Overcoming our will** – Rom.12:1,2; Gal.5:16-18
 - 2) **Overcoming other peoples will** – 1 Pet.4:1-6
 - 3) **Overcoming Satan's will** – Jn.8:44
 - 4) **Many call God King, but they do not honor Him as a King.**
 - a) They do not do His will.
 - b) Their profession is false, and tragically it creates an image of a false and meaningless King to the world.

3. **Jacob immediately obeys God**

- a. His fear is gone; his spirit is relieved
- b. He had found the assurance he needed to make the journey
- c. He left nothing behind to lure him back – total commitment
- d. We too should obey God immediately – Mt.7:21-23; Jn.7:17

God Takes Care Of His People

Introduction

Trials, difficulties, temptations & severe circumstances come upon all mankind. We live in a cursed world & hard times are a reality. Question – what would happen if during these times we truly followed God? Scripture says that good would happen & God would deliver us & make us stronger no matter how extreme those circumstances happened to be. In this lesson we find that Jacob & his family have given their lives to God & now God will follow through with His promises to care for & strengthen them.

Genesis 46:28-47:27

1. Jacob's family is reunited – Gen.46:28-30

- a. He had not seen Joseph for 22 years
- b. Division was rampant in the rest of the family too
 - 1) Favoritism, jealousy & anger had ripped them apart
 - 2) Sons sought revenge against the city of Schechem = killed men & enslaved the women & children
 - 3) Sons had over reacted against pride & arrogance of Joseph = sold him as slave
 - 4) Reuben committed incest with Bilhah
 - 5) Judah became so fed up he left godly influence of his father – married unbeliever & lived as world did
- c. Now God has intervened & the family is being brought back together
 - 1) Sent Joseph ahead – made him a great leader
 - 2) Joseph was taught humility, kindness & compassion as well as how to be diligent & hard working
 - 3) Joseph was now in a position to save both his family & all of Egypt
- d. Judah is now accepted by his father Jacob
 - 1) Chosen to go ahead & meet Joseph – guidance as to where to camp
 - 2) Judah has repented of his worldliness
- e. Joseph comes to his father
 - 1) Not send someone to show where – goes himself
 - 2) Beautiful scene as father & son embrace for a long time
- f. Application – Unity comes, as all are willing to follow God's will
 - 1) 1 Cor.1:10 = all speak same; same mind & judgment
 - 2) 2 Cor.13:11 – one mind
 - 3) Eph.4:1-3 – working to keep unity of spirit
 - 4) Eph.4:32 – kind, tenderhearted & forgiving as God forgives us
 - 5) 1 Pet.3:8 – one mind, compassionate, loving & courteous

2. God brings Jacob help, guidance & direction – Gen.46:31-34

- a. Joseph shares guidance in meeting Pharaoh
 - 1) Was frank & honest – concealing nothing
 - 2) Were shepherds & have brought all herds with them

- 3) Had come to settle permanently & needed a large area to live
 - b. Instructs them as to how to respond to Pharaoh
 - 1) If asks of occupation – shepherd & have always tended livestock
 - 2) Want to settle in region of Goshen
 - c. Why Goshen?
 - 1) Most fertile region of Egypt – plenty of pasture & farm land
(where Pharaoh kept his livestock – few Egyptians lived there)
 - 2) Shepherd were repulsive to the Egyptians, so this would keep them segregated & protected from worldly ways of Egypt
 - 3) Was in Northeast corner of Egypt = closer to land of Canaan
 - d. Application – when follow God’s will we too receive guidance
 - 1) Ps.25:9 – meek He will guide & teach
 - 2) Prov.3:5,6 – will make paths straight
 - 3) Jn.16:13 – sending Spirit to guide unto all truth
- 3. All Jacob’s needs are met – Gen.47:1-6**
- a. Joseph appears before Pharaoh & informs him of his actions
 - 1) Presents five of his brothers to Pharaoh
 - 2) Pharaoh asks about occupation – see how fit into society; benefit nation
 - b. Brothers are respectful & bold
 - 1) Call selves Pharaoh’s servants
 - 2) Stand unashamed & bold as shepherds – proud of heritage
 - 3) Request to live in Goshen – only to sojourn (stay briefly)
 - 4) Had no plans to permanently settle – leave after famine over
 - c. Pharaoh allows them all they need
 - 1) Settle wherever like – in best part of the land
 - 2) Wants them in charge of his livestock too
 - d. Application – when follow God’s will all our needs met too
 - 1) No reason to ever have a need go unmet
 - 2) Mt.6:33 – seek 1st His kingdom & righteousness
 - 3) Heb.13:5,6 – no need fear what man do to you
- 4. Jacob meets Pharaoh – Gen.47:7-10**
- a. Greatest king of his time meeting God’s chosen
 - 1) On surface Pharaoh appears to be the greatest – in God’s eyes Jacob is
 - 2) Jacob blesses Pharaoh
 - a) Much more than a greeting or being polite
 - b) Means asking God to richly bless as Melchizakek did Abraham
 - c) Less is blessed by the greater
 - b. Pharaoh questions Jacob
 - 1) Age - 130
 - 2) Jacob shares his life – a difficult pilgrimage (sojourn)
 - 3) Never owned much or settled anywhere long

5. Joseph's ministry – Gen.47:11-27

- a. To his family - given best of the land of Goshen
- b. To the Egyptians
 - 1) Allowed people to purchase grain with money
 - 2) Allowed people to purchase grain with their livestock – barter system (meant government took over responsibility of feeding livestock)
 - 3) Allowed the people to swap their land & personal labor for grain
 - a) Some say that Joseph was scheming to get their wealth & make them slaves
 - b) Notice several things
 - (1) Was their proposal not Joseph's
 - (2) Whatever gain involved was Pharaoh's not Joseph's
 - (3) Made a federalist economy, but the alternative was a charitable system that would have destroyed personal & national morale & eventually bankrupted the nation
 - (4) This plan allowed the people to keep their self-respect
 - 4) Moved the people into the cities – economical distribution of food
 - 5) Left the priests alone
 - a) Pharaoh wanted them to keep possession of their land
 - b) Used them to keep the people encouraged in crisis
 - 6) Make a contract with people
 - a) Government gives them seed & in return taxes them 20%
 - b) Amounts to a permanent 20% income tax
 - c) Notice
 - (1) Farmers paid no rent, made no investment & had no costs or upkeep
 - (2) Government financed all functions
 - (3) There was little or no complaining about the terms – still in force in Moses' day 400 years later
- c. Result – Israel prospered & grew & the nation of Egypt survived the famine
- d. Application – when we follow God's will we are able to minister too
 - 1) Gal.6:9,10 – will reap if not give up
 - 2) Mk.10:43,44 – greatest is to be servant of all

6. Some of God's promises to the faithful

- a. 2 Tim.2:11-13 – always be faithful
- b. Phil.1:6 – will finish work He has started
- c. 1 Cor.1:8,9 - will keep you strong to the end
- d. 1 Cor.10:13 – takes your ability into account & provides a way of escape
- e. Heb.11:11 – Abraham given ability to have children
- f. 2 Thess.3:1-5 – protect you from the evil one
- g. Jn.10:28,29 – no one can snatch you out of His hand (never perish)
- h. 1 Pet.1:5 – shielded by God's power (place in heaven reserved)

Dealing With Death

Introduction

A universal truth that all must face is death. If we exist we will die, there is no escape. We live in a world of corruption & deterioration & decay. All things waste away, even man, however, dying is not what is important, but the way one dies is important. How we die determines our destiny - whether we will be rewarded or suffer eternally. In this lesson we will focus on Jacob preparing for & facing death.

Genesis 47:28-48:22

1. Scripture is very clear – all men will die

- a. Ps.89:47-48 - Remember how fleeting is my life. For what futility you have created all men! What man can live and not see death, or save himself from the power of the grave?
- b. Eccles.3:19 - Man's fate is like that of the animals; the same fate awaits them both: As one dies, so dies the other. All have the same breath; man has no advantage over the animal. Everything is meaningless.
- c. Eccles.8:8 - No man has power over the wind to contain it; so no one has power over the day of his death.
- d. Rom.5:12 - Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned
- e. Heb.9:27,28 - Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

2. Jacob prepares for his death

- a. He believed God's promises about the future – Promised Land
 - 1) Lived in Egypt 17 years (famine is long gone)
 - 2) Wants to be buried in the Promised Land
 - 3) Burial a testimony to that belief
- b. Believed in life after death – “rest with my fathers”
 - 1) Not idea of burial – tells him to bury body in Canaan
 - 2) He will go be with his fathers & wants body buried in Promised Land
 - 3) Ex.3 – “I am” - the name of the God of your fathers
(Jesus refers to this as proof of life after death)

3. Jacob blesses Joseph's sons

- a. Add their names to the list of his sons
 - 1) Concerns his belief in the Land promises
 - 2) Made them equal to his first 2 sons (Reuben & Simeon)
 - 3) Were to be the heads of two of the tribes of Israel
(Joseph not to be a head, but his 2 sons were)
 - 4) Joseph being given a double portion – 1st born inheritance

- b. Primary blessing to be given to Ephraim (Joseph's second born)
 - 1) Jacob intentionally gave it to Ephraim
 - 2) In God's sovereignty the younger was often the chosen
 - Seth chosen over Cain
 - Shem chosen over Japheth
 - Abraham chosen over Haran
 - Isaac chosen over Ishmael
 - Jacob chosen over Esau
 - Ephraim chosen over Manasseh
 - Moses chosen over his brother
 - Gideon chosen over his brothers
 - David chosen over his brothers
 - 3) Man chooses the oldest to take on the responsibility, but God looks at the heart. He chooses who He wants regardless of man's traditions
- c. Jacob calls upon God & His angel to bless them
 - 1) Shepherd them – look after & take care of them
 - 2) Angel – one wrestled with = Jesus

4. **Jacob's death** – Gen.49:29-33

- a. Gathered to my people = eternal life
 - 1) Gen.25:8 – Abraham not buried with his family at Machpelah (Sarah)
 - 2) Refers to going to be with his people in eternity
 - 3) Gen.25:17 – Ishmael not buried with his father at Machpelah
 - 4) See also
 - 2 Sam.12:22,23 – David's faith
 - Job 19:25-27 – Job's faith
 - Dan.12:2 – Daniel's prophecy
- b. Joseph's reaction
 - 1) Wept over his father
 - 2) Fulfilled all Jacob's wishes – petitions Pharaoh
 - a) Famine over – what to hold him?
 - b) Knows Israel is valuable to Pharaoh so will return
 - c) Organizes a large funeral procession
 - Pharaoh's officials
 - Jacob's household except children & workers
 - Chariots & horsemen – military escort

5. **Preparing for & facing death**

- a. **Develop a biblical view of death**
 - 1) Death is an unnatural intrusion – not intended to die at first
 - 2) Death is a consequence of sin entering the world - Rom.5:12; 6:23
(We die because we are sinners)
 - 3) Death is a process – moment we begin to lives we slowly die
 - 1 Pet.1:24 – like grass & flowers = wither & fall
 - Ps.144:4 – like a breath or a fleeting shadow

b. Death is not the last word

- 1) Lk.23:43 – today be with me in paradise
- 2) Jn.11:25,26 – believe in me never die
- 3) Jn.6:47 – believe in me has everlasting life
- 4) Believers will be with Jesus when die
 - Acts 7:59 – Lord receive my spirit
 - 1 Cor.5:8 – prefer be away from body & at home with the Lord

c. Dealing with the emotions at death

- 1) Emotions we face
 - Denial or unbelief
 - Fear of pain, leaving family or being unprepared
 - Anger – at doctor, selves, healthy loved ones, God
(I don't deserve this)
 - Helplessness & vulnerability – depression
 - Worry at what will happen to family, their work or themselves
 - Regret because of lost opportunities or wasted life
- 2) Dealing with these emotions
 - a) Talk about what is happening - feelings
 - b) Give them assurances – love help, compassion
 - c) Not allow them be absorbed in self pity
 - d) OK to shed tears & cry with them

d. Paul's view of death – 2 Tim.4:6-8

- 1) Life being offered & sacrificed to God
 - a) The Greek word for offering or sacrifice (spendomai) refers to the drink offering that was presented to God.
 - b) When a person wanted to make a sacrifice to God, he often took a cup of wine or oil and poured it out as an offering and sacrifice to God. The drink offering symbolized the Lord Jesus pouring out His soul—dying—for us.
 - c) Paul is saying, “I am pouring out my soul through death for the Lord Jesus Christ. The life and blood of my body is being sacrificed for the preaching of God's Word. I am laying down my life as an offering to Christ Jesus my Lord.

“Paul did not think of himself as going to be executed; he thought of himself as going to offer his life to God. His life was not being taken from him; he was laying it down. Ever since his conversion Paul had offered to God—his money, his scholarship, his strength, his time, the vigour of his body, the acuteness of his mind, the devotion of his passionate heart. Only life itself was left to offer, and gladly Paul was going to lay life down” (The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon, p.240).

- 2) Paul saw his death as a departure
 - a) Departure - “Vine” To depart is the picture of a ship hoisting the anchor and loosening the mooring ropes and departing one country for another country.

b) *“Observe...with what pleasure he [Paul] speaks of dying. He calls it his departure: though it is probable that he foresaw he must die a violent bloody death, yet he calls it his departure, or his release. Death to a good man is his release from the imprisonment of this world and his departure to the enjoyments of another world; he does not cease to be, but is only removed from one world to another” (Matthew Henry’s Commentary, Vol.5, p.849).*

3) A crown of life now awaited him

- a) A crown that will make him acceptable to God.
- b) No person can ever be accepted by God unless he is crowned with righteousness—completely covered with righteousness and made perfect.
- c) Why? Because God is perfect and only perfection can live in the presence of God.
- d) The crown of righteousness will be given to all who love and look for the Lord’s appearing.

“No man knows the day or the hour when Jesus will come; we do not know the day or the hour when we will be called to meet the Lord in death. If this should be the day of the Lord’s return, or if this should be the day death comes for me, could I testify as Paul did in the face of death? Have I really fought a good fight? Have I kept the faith? Have I been a good minister, true to the Word and to those to whom I preached? Will I have a crown to cast at the feet of Jesus when we crown Him Lord of all?” (The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to Timothy and Titus, p.371f).

Reaping What We Sow

Introduction

This is the last lesson in our study of Genesis. We will focus on the remarks of Jacob to his sons while on his deathbed. Jacob blessed each of them & his remarks are prophetic. God's Spirit was enabling Jacob to predict the future of the nation of Israel. As we read these predictions one lesson vividly comes to the forefront – we reap what we sow.

Genesis 49:1-28

1. Reuben the first-born – vs.3,4

- a. In Jacob's day, tradition said that the first-born was to receive the birthright & be recognized as the head of the family. He was also to receive a double portion of the family inheritance. By all rights he was to excel in honor & authority over the family.
- b. **Notice the prophecy** – Reuben had proven himself weak & unstable, therefore he would not excel, neither he nor his tribe.
- c. Reuben had sinned with Bilhah, his mothers' maidservant. Gen.35:22
 - 1) He did not have the discipline to control himself & gave in to his lust
 - 2) He did not have the restraint needed for leadership
- d. Reuben never exhibited the strength needed to lead
 - 1) He was not decisive in leading his younger brothers to live godly
 - 2) He seemed to fear antagonizing them
 - 3) He also feared standing up for what was right – when Joseph was sold
 - 4) He did not take charge of the situation & demand his release which proved that he was weak & unstable in leadership.
- e. Apparently this weakness in character seemed to carry over into the next generations. They needed to always be on their guard.
 - 1) Some of his tribe joined in with the rebellion of Korah against Moses Num.16
 - 2) The tribe refused to fight when they were called for battle Judges 5:15,16
 - 3) Were 1st to request to settle on the east side of the river before they entered the Promised Land – Num.32
 - 4) Lacked discipline & erected a false place of worship – Joshua 22:10-34
 - 5) Tribe was never important in the history of the nation – never produced a leader with any stature.

2. Comments about Simeon & Levi - vs.5-7

- a. Their sins – anger, cruelty & vengeance
 - 1) Killed all the males in Shechem & plundered the city
 - 2) Enslaved all the women & children
 - 3) All because their sister had been raped

- b. Jacob disapproved of their behavior – was inexcusable; cursed their anger as being cruel & fierce.
 - 1) They were to be divided & scattered, never again to band together in such an evil plot
 - 2) Simeon never given a separate region – was within the midst of Judah’s territory – not allowed to stand alone, always ruled by Judah Joshua 19:1; Judges 1:3
 - 3) At the end of his life when Moses was blessing the tribes, Simeon is passed over & never mentioned – Deut. 33
- c. Levi was also scattered throughout the land
 - 1) Given homes in 48 cities
 - 2) Levi shows how God can take a repentant people & use them mightily
 - 3) Tribe of Levi produced more leaders than any of the other tribes
Moses; Aaron; Phinehas; Eli; Ezra; John the Baptist

3. **Judah is given part of Jacob’s birthright – vs.8-12**

- a. He & Joseph will share the birthright
- b. Judah’s tribe is praised for their military leadership – hand would be on the neck of his enemies & other tribes would follow them into battle
- c. Great kings of the tribe of Judah - Saul; David; Solomon; Asa; Jehosaphat; Uzziah; Jotham; Hezekiah; Josiah
- d. Greatest blessing was that the Messiah was to come through his seed
- e. From the time of the captivity on, Judah was the dominant tribe. Those who returned were of Judah, Benjamin & the Levites. The other 10 tribes were scattered by the Assyrians.

4. **Prophecy concerning Zebulun – vs.13**

- a. Prepositions should be translated “toward”. Tribe of Asher was actually between Zebulun & the sea. Border of Zebulun was only about 10 miles from the sea.
- b. They were to feast on the abundance & treasure of the sea
- c. Only tribe that had its’ territory spelled out by Jacob

5. **Issachar – vs.14,15**

- a. Be like a donkey – animal of great strength & valued in ancient societies
- b. Fought courageously for Deborah & Barak when the other tribes refused to help – Judges 5:15-18
- c. Provided 87,0000 men for the military – 1 Chron.7:5
- d. Issachar had a weakness for lethargy & complacency. There was a danger that they would focus upon comfort, ease, prosperity & rest. Become so comfortable & satisfied they would accept enslavement rather than risk the comforts of life.
- e. These character flaws are the enemies of drive, ambition, initiative, production & work.

6. Dan – vs.16,17

- a. Name means to judge or to administer justice - Most well known judge of Dan was Samson
- b. Second thought was the tribe would be like a snake – deadly opponent for its enemies.
 - 1) Samson single handedly defeated the enemies of Israel
 - 2) A snake is also known for treachery, double-dealing & dishonesty
 - 3) Tribe of Dan was the 1st to take up idol worship – double minded toward God
 - 4) Some commentators suggest this is the reason the tribe of Dan is omitted in the list of the 144,000 in Revelation

7. Gad – vs.19

- a. Surrounded by nomadic tribes, but would be successful & never give in to enemies – would fight until they overcame.
- b. They requested the land east of the river Jordan because it appeared to be good & fruitful. Their territory was called Gilead
- c. Their land appeared good, but was lurking with enemies & they had to be constantly on alert

8. Asher – vs.20

- a. Tribe located along the seacoast north of Carmel all the way to Tyre & Sidon
- b. Some of the most fertile land anywhere – this along with trade from the sea made them among the wealthiest. Called upon to make a yearly quota for the palace – 1 Kings 4:7
- c. During the period of the judges they were swallowed up in luxury & refused to help their brothers fight their enemies.

9. Naphtali – vs.21

- a. Like a deer or a doe let loose – known for its swiftness
- b. Enslaved by the Canaanites, Barak quickly defeated them

10. Joseph – vs.22-26

- a. Joseph was given a double portion of Jacob's inheritance. Two of his sons would inherit the land along with Joseph's brothers.
- b. Be like a fruitful vine near a spring
- c. Be harassed by their enemies but would remain strong & steady. Ephraim & Manasseh bore the brunt of oppression in Israel
- d. They would be strong because of God's strength – 5 names of God mentioned
 - 1) The mighty one of Jacob
 - 2) The shepherd – guide, provider & protector
 - 3) Rock of Israel – foundation or support of Israel
 - 4) The God of Jacob who helps you
 - 5) The almighty – El Shaddai

11. Benjamin – vs.27

- a. Tribe be like a ravenous wolf – strong, crafty & ferocious
 - 1) Always alert & ready to fight
 - 2) Smallest, yet most courageous of the tribes
- c. Wolf has both good & bad features
 - 1) Produced great leaders – Ehud; Saul; Abner; Jonathan
 - 2) Became cruel & ferocious – Judges 20,21

12. God had Jacob predict their future for several reasons

- a. To encourage Jacob – assurance his faith was not in vain; his sons would grow into a mighty nation of people.
- b. To warn the sons & their heritage of their weaknesses
- c. To encourage Israel during the time of Egyptian bondage
- d. To show all generations that we will reap what we sow – blessings based upon their actions in life – Gal.6:7,8

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