

Genesis Notes

Studies completed with Joe Focht, Chuck Smith, Damian Kyle, Jon Courson, Matthew Henry, Henry Morris, Warren Wiersbe, Derek Kidner, and the NIV Study Bible.

Recommended reading... “In the Beginning of the World” by Henry Morris, “The Early Earth” by John Whitcomb and Henry Morris, “Scientific Analysis of Genesis” by Edward F. Blick, “Earth in Upheaval” by Emmanuel Vilikovski and “Cosmological Anthropic Principle” (showing no other universe known apart from ours).

The Bible’s topic on the whole is the creation, fall, and redemption of mankind – and therefore, the Bible’s key figure is Jesus. (John 5:39 – Scriptures testify of Jesus.)

Introduction:

Genesis means “beginnings.”

Approximately 6,000 years ago the earth was created.

There are at least 165 passages in Genesis that are either directly quoted or clearly referred to in the New Testament. Many of those are alluded to more than once, so that there are at least 200 quotations or allusions to Genesis in the NT... There are over 100 quotations or direct references to Genesis chapters 1-11 in the NT... Jesus quoted from Genesis 1:27 and 2:24 in teaching on marriage, as well as referencing His teachings of Scripture as from Moses and the Prophets.

“These are the generations of...” – Gen. 2:4, 5:1, 6:9, 10:1, 11:10, 11:27, 25:12, 36:1, 36:9 & 37:2. The word “generations” is a translation of the Hebrew word “toledoth,” and it means essentially “origins,” or by extension, “records of the origins.”

As they split the atomic structure itself there seems to be a communication between sub-atomic particles. All matter contains more space than actual matter. If we expanded a nucleus to the size of a basketball, the nearest electron would be 3,000 miles away. If all space was taken out of the atoms, all matter could fit into the size of a basketball. There is no good reason why the nucleus of an atom shouldn’t repel the electrons from the atom. There is also no good reason why the negative electrons don’t automatically collapse into the positive nucleus. (The modern explanation of “nuclear glue” seems ridiculous.)

- Quote from a prominent micro-biolecular scientist (who ended up committing suicide), “All matter seems to be a thought in the mind of God... Because it just may be possible for two things to be at the same place at the same time.”
- Many scientists, when faced with the difficulties of evolution (and the convincing evidence for Intelligent Design), tend to believe aliens populated this world before they will believe in God.
- God alone can tell us the things that were former (Isa. 41:22). Science, by definition, deals with that which can be measured and proved by the senses. And yet, only God was there to see this from the beginning.

Verses throughout the Bible speaking of our God as the Creator:

- Rom. 1:20 – “for since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.”
- The creation testifies of God.
- Heb. 11:3 – “By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.”
- There is a God, and He made what is visible from what was invisible.
- Heb. 11:6 – “But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”
- Mark 13:19 – “For in those days there will be tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the creation which God created until this time, nor ever shall be.”
- Jesus said the Father created.
- John 1:1-2 – “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”
- Jesus created.
- Col. 1:16-17 – “For by Him (Jesus) all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.”
- Jesus holds all of creation together.
- Psalms 19:1-4 – “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.”
- The heavens declare the glory of God.
- Eph. 1:3,4 – “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.”
- We were in the mind of God long before any of this was even created.
- 2 Tim. 1:9 – “[God} saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began.”
- Grace was given to us in Christ “before time began.”
- Job 38:4 – “Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding.”
- Where were you when I laid the foundations of the world?
- Isaiah 41:22 – “Let them show the former things, what they were, that we may consider them.”
- It is God’s prerogative to speak of the former things.
- Exod. 20:11 – “For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day.”
- Isa. 45:18 – “for thus says the Lord, Who created the heavens, Who is God, Who formed the earth and made it, Who has established it, Who did not create it in vain, Who formed it to be inhabited.”
- Isa. 40:12 – “Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, measured heaven with a span and calculated the dust of the earth in a measure?”
- God laid out the universe with the span of His hands.

Chapter 1:

1:1 – “beginning” – (Heb. “bereshith”) – The beginning of earth and God’s redemptive plan.

- “God” – (Heb. “elohim”) – God preceded the world. Genesis 1 relates to someone existing before this world.
- God is the main subject of the Bible:
 - The word “God” used 4,447 times in Bible and 32 times in Gen. 1.
 - Elohim used 2,607 times in Bible.
- Genesis does not set out to prove that God exists, only define His heart and His relationship to man.
- “created” – (Heb. “bara”) Lit. “to create out of nothing.” There was nothing before God created; not space, not matter, merely a vacuum.
- “heavens...earth” – Broad Hebrew terms that could properly be called “space” and “matter.”

1:2 – “And the earth was...” – Every verse of Gen. 1 (except 1:1) begins with the conjunction “and” (Hebrew “waw”). This structure clearly means that each statement is sequentially and chronologically connected to the verses before and after.

- “without form, and void” – (Heb. “tohu...bohu”) – Lit. “confusion...emptiness.”
 - The adjectives “formless” and “empty” seem to be the key to the literary structure of the chapter. The record of the first three days refers to the heaven(s) and earth receiving their “form,” and the record of the last three days to the filling up of their “emptiness.”
 - God’s pattern here is to work from the formless to the formed; from disorder to order.
 - The Gap Theory is self-defeating scientifically. It attempts to accommodate the geological ages by postulating a world-wide cataclysm. But a world-wide cataclysm denies the premise on which the geological age system is based, and would indeed obliterate all the so-called evidence of the geological ages and uniformitarianism.
 - Gap Theory tries to change “was” to “became” to indicate the evidence of a prior creation, a catastrophic occurrence, and a recreating of the earth into its present form. But Kidner emphatically demonstrates that the Hebrew structure can not support the translation change from “was” to “become.” (Romans 5:12 – death as a result of sin. Also 1 Cor. 15:21 – death came by man.)
 - Some try to make Isaiah 45:18 refer to a pre-existent world populated by creatures and later destroyed. But the passage is looking at creation on the whole, and does not necessitate that there was living creatures on Day 1 of creation.
 - The world was created in process with an evidence of age already built in. (Adam was a mature adult on day 1; looking 30 (or so) years old while only being 1 day old. The plants had seeds already in them on day 3.)
- “deep” – The mass is endless in its proportion; no idea of a spherical world yet. The earth wasn’t formed until Day 3.
 - Enough mass for the universe to be estimated at 179,000 light years big.
- “Spirit” – (Heb. “ruach”) Also the Hebrew word for “wind” and “breath.”
 - Proverbs 8:22-31 – The Spirit’s activity described in creation.
- “hovering” – Hebrew word also used in Deut. 32:11 and Jer. 23:9 with the idea of an eagle fluttering over her nest. (Modern scientific terminology might use the word “vibrated.”)
 - 2 Peter 1:21 – “as they were moved...” The Septuagint uses the same Greek word (“phero”) for 2 Pet. 1:21 and Gen. 1:2.
- “waters” – The Spirit seems to be imparting energy to move the mass into a sphere.

- 1:3 – “God said” – The Father is the source of all things (1:1), the Spirit is the energizer of all things (1:2), and the Word (Jesus) is the revealer of all things (1:3).
- “Let there be” – (Heb. “hayah”) Lit. “there is.” The word simply speaks of existence.
 - “light” – (Heb. “owr”) There is no sun or electricity yet.
 - Revelation tells us that God Himself is the light of the heavenly city.
- 1:5 – “day” – (Heb. “yom”) The Bible seems to imply that creation happened in 6 24-hour periods. “Yom” is used in the plural form over 700 times in the OT, plus when it is used with a number before it, and every time it refers to 1 24-hour period.
- Exod. 20:9-11 – The creation as the basis as the 7th day Sabbath.
 - There are scientists with considerable evidence to convincingly argue for a young earth.
 - 20 million years ago, the sun (losing 1,200,000 tons of mass/second and, therefore, shrinking at 5 feet/minute) would have been touching the earth.
- 1:6 – “firmament” – (Heb. “rocqeah”) Lit. “beat it out, spread-out-thinness, or expanse.” Seems to be referring to atmosphere(s).
- “waters” – May be referring to a vapor canopy above the seas on the earth, or a layer of water pushed to the end of the universe coupled with the waters of the earth.
 - There is evidence that at one time the entire earth was tropical. (Tropical vegetation found in the stomachs of woolly mammoths and fossilized 50 ft. asparagus ferns.)
 - A vapor canopy would be good reason why humans lived to much older ages – as the cosmic particles (like neutrinos) would be less likely to pass through the earth’s atmosphere.
- 1:8 – “Heaven” – Lit. “heavens” - plural. (Same Hebrew word as is used for “heavens” in 1:9.)
- 1:9 – “place” – Lit. “bed.” God seems to have scooped out a place for the waters.
- The original form of the earth has changed – due to the flood (Gen. 6-9) and separation of land masses (Gen. 10:25).
- 1:10 – “land” – Seems to imply one continent (until Gen. 10:25).
- There is a small break between 1:10 and 1:11.
- 1:11 – “grass” – Lit. “tender grass, new grass.”
- The botanical system created in the 2nd half of day 3.
- 1:12 – “brought forth” – (Heb. “asah”) Lit. “to form or assemble;” forming from what already existed.
- “plants bearing seed” – The seed was already in the plants.
 - One kernel of corn can cover the earth after 6 years.
 - “according to its kind” – The phrase appears 10 times in chapter 1. It means God allows variation within a kind, but something of one kind will never develop into something of another kind.
 - Darwin admitted the state of the fossil evidence was “the most obvious and gravest objection which can be urged against my theory,” and because of the fossil evidence, “all the most eminent paleontologists...and all our greatest geologists...have unanimously, and often vehemently, maintained that the species do not change.”

- “If evolution means the gradual change of one kind of organism into another kind, the outstanding characteristic of the fossil record is the absence of evidence for evolution” – Philip Johnson.

1:14 – “lights” – (Heb. “ma’owr”) Lit. “light bearers.”

- “for signs and seasons” – For mankind’s benefit. God would have no need of these things.
- God thought of Adam all along this process. It was for his benefit.

1:16 – “greater” – The sun.

- “lesser” – The moon.
- “stars also” – Included as an afterthought.
 - There are 100 million stars visible to the human eye and an estimated 1×10^{25} total.
 - With the stars 10 million light years away, the light wave must have been on its way before the lights bearers were actually in place for us to see the light as coming from the stars.
 - Makes astrology and horoscopes seem ridiculous.

1:20 – “creatures” – (Heb. “nephesh”) Lit. “souls.”

- “abundance” – Lit. “swarms.”

1:21 – “created” – (Heb. “bara”) Lit. “created out of nothing.”

- The soul is new, and not formed out of anything the previously existed.
- This must be created in process. The original salmon must have swam upstream to reproduce in its migratory pattern, even though they weren’t born upstream.
- Against the Day-Age Theory, having plants formed on a day separate from animals that would have been necessary for the plants’ pollination, would’ve killed off the plants. There is a necessity to get this system up and running in a short amount of time.
- “great sea creatures” – (Heb. “tannin”) Most frequently translated “dragon.” Possibly looking at dinosaur-like creatures.
- “according to its kind” – There is no transmutation. Genetic changes stay within species.
- “winged bird” – The Hebrew term denotes anything that flies, including insects. (See also Deut. 14:19-20)

1:22 – “blessed” – The first time the word “bless” is used in the Bible. God’s blessing enabled the creatures and the fowl reproduce abundantly and enjoy all that He had made for them.

1:24 – “earth bring forth” – The land animals are formed, and likely paired with a soul created the day before (as with the sea creatures).

1:26 – “man” – We were in the mind of God before the matter was ever first created. (Eph. 1:3,4)

- “let Us” – There seems to be a pause and a council in this process.
- “Us” – Denoting a plurality. (Us – plural, make – singular, Our – plural, image – singular.)
 - The Father, Son, and the Spirit are consulting one another, no doubt, considering the cost in this next step.
- “in Our image” – Possibly referring to the Trinitarian nature of God and trinity of man.
- “image...likeness” – The words “image” and “likeness” reinforce one another; there is no “and” between the phrases, and Scripture does not use them as technically distinct expressions, as some theologians have done.

1:27 – “created” – (Heb. “bara”) Lit. “created out of nothing.”

- There is something new, not formed from earth, plants, or animals; but unique to humans.
- When God created, Adam instantaneously became a “living being” (Gen. 2:7). This is not an evolutionary process over billions of years. (Romans 5:12 – death through sin.)
- We can hardly imagine what Adam and Eve were originally (clothed in light [Rev. 19:8; Ps. 104:2], access to multiple dimensions [John 20:19], created higher than the angels [Heb. 2:7,8], for His good pleasure [Rev. 4:11]...)
- “male and female” – That is the order, but both are created on the same day.
- Jesus made plain when He coupled “male and female” with Gen. 2:24 to make the two sayings the twin pillars of marriage. (Mark 10:6,7)

1:28 – “fill” – Not “replenish” as in the KJV (used by some to support the Gap Theory.)

1:30 – “herb for food” – Adam, as well as the animals, are all vegetarians at this point.

- Meat will be condoned to be eaten in Gen. 9:3.

1:31 – “very good” – Lit. “exceedingly good.” The whole system is functioning according to its design. There is no hint of death yet.

- Possibly makes an implication that Satan has not yet fallen. Ezekiel 28:13 seems to imply that Lucifer was in Eden in his perfected state.
- “sixth day” – God could have made the world in an instant, but He gives us an example (Exod. 20:11) and shows us that he is free to work as He chooses.
- There is something of the heart of God revealed to us in this chapter that goes beyond the fall and redemption of mankind.

Chapter 2:

2:1 – “heavens and earth were finished” – Nothing more needed to be created.

- “host” – Lit. “hosts, armies.” Possibly speaking of celestial bodies (stars, etc.) or angels.
- “Host” speaks of angels in Job 38:4-7, Psalm 104:2-5, Daniel 4:35, and Luke 2:13.

2:2 – “rested” – Lit. “ceased.” God didn’t need to rest due to fatigue. But all was completed.

- Adam’s first day of existence was “resting” in the cool of the day with Almighty God. We were made for His good pleasure (Rev. 4:11) which is to fellowship with Him.
 - God is more concerned with the servant than with the service.
 - In the NT, we are instructed to “be diligent to enter [His] rest.” (Heb. 4:1-11)
- He made us higher than we understand. (Heb. 2:7,8)
- We are not told how many Sabbaths took place before the fall? There is no “and the evening and the morning were the...day” as on the other 6 days of creation, as if to imply the “infinite perspective” (Delitzsh) of God’s Sabbath.
- Creation was perfect. (Rom. 8:20-22)

2:3 – “seventh day” – Sabbath observance is based on a pre-Law event, but itself isn’t pre-Law. The first record of obligatory Sabbath observance is of Israel on its way from Egypt to Sinai (Exod. 16), and according to Nehemiah 9:13-14, the Sabbath rest was not an official covenant obligation until the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai (Exod. 20).

- Col. 2:16 – Let no one judge you in Sabbaths.
- Exod. 31:16,17 – The Sabbath is a sign between Me and the children of Israel.
- “sanctified” – Lit. “set apart.” This day is special to the Lord.
- “rested” – Sabbath means “rest.”

- 2:4 – God goes back to give more detail on the 6th day of creation through chapter 2.
- “history” – (Heb. “toledoth”) Word used 11 times in Genesis.
 - It seems Moses is compiling the Genesis record from other resources. (Still inspired...)
- 2:5 – “plant” – Lit. “cultivated crop.”
- “Lord God” – (Heb. “Yahweh Elohim”) The God of power and perfection. This is the first use of this compound name of God in the Bible.
 - Yahweh is the name God uses to relate to humans, making Himself whatever humans need Him to be.
- 2:6 – “mist” – A sprinkler system of some sort.
- 2:7 – “of the dust” – Human bodies are made of the same 17 elements that make up the dirt outside.
- Ps. 103:14 – God knows our frame; that we are but dust.
 - 2 Cor. 4:7 – We have this treasure in earthen vessels.
 - “ground” – (Heb. “adamah”) The Hebrew root word for the name “Adam.”
 - “Lord...breathed into his nostrils” – Our life is valuable because of what God has placed in us.
 - “breath of life” – Lit. “breath of lives.”
 - Job 27:3 – The powerful breath of God.
 - John 20:22 – Jesus breathes on the disciples for them to receive the Holy Spirit.
 - Animals were brought forth, but God breathed into man. He is intimately involved in this process. Life can only come from life, and the living God is the only self-existent Being, so it must ultimately come from Him.
 - “breath” – (Heb. “neshamah”) Lit. “spirit, breath.”
 - “became” – Lit. “came to be.” It was an instantaneous event, rather than an evolutionary process.
- 2:8 – “garden” – Lit. “a place hedged around.”
- “Eden” – means “delight, pleasure.”
- 2:9 – “every tree grow that is pleasant” – God left nothing good out.
- “tree of life” – Rev. 2:7, 22:2.
- 2:10 – “river went out of Eden” – Not out of the garden, but out of Eden itself.
- Rev. 22, Ezek. 47, Psalm 46:4 – there is a river whose streams make glad the city of God.
- 2:11-14 – The rivers are different after the flood, but the names (at least 2 of them) carry through.
- 2:13 – “Gihon” – may refer to the “Nile.”
- 2:14 – “Hiddekel” – may refer to the “Tigris.”
- Dan. 10:4 – Hebrew “Hiddekel” translated “Tigris.”
 - “Euphrates” – That name will appear throughout the Bible. (see Rev. 16:12)
 - The area of the Babylonian plain between the Tigris and Euphrates is commonly called the “Cradle of Civilization.”

2:15 – “keep it” – Lit. “guard it.” It carries the idea of “treasure it.”

- “tend and keep it” - There is work (“till” – 2:5), but it differs from the labor with “the sweat of your face.” (Gen. 3:19)
- In heaven, “His servants shall serve Him.” (Rev. 22:3)
- More recreation than vocation. More a pleasure than a job.

2:16 – “freely eat” – A gift with no strings attached.

- “any tree” – Including the tree of life. (2:9)

2:17 – “of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil” – We do not know what the fruit was. The evil was not in the fruit, as much as in trespassing the will of God.

- Many ask, “Why the tree?” God created us for fellowship, that we would love Him. But loves means nothing without a free choice and another attractive option.
 - Satan will exploit this option and the woman will find it “good for food...” (3:6)
- God’s greatest command is for us to love Him. (Mark 12:30)
- “you shall surely die” – Lit. “dying, you shall die.” The death process will begin at the moment of the trespass.
- It doesn’t say that God would kill the trespasser. We do not see God out to get Adam on the heels of the trespass. It is sin itself that will kill Adam, not God. (Jesus came to give life – John 10:10.)

2:18-25 – The only full account of the creation of woman in ancient Near Eastern literature.

2:18 – “not good” – The first time something is not good.

- “helper” – Lit. “to complete, surround, succor, comfort.”
- “comparable” – Lit. “suitable, corresponding.” Carries the idea of “opposite.”
 - Man was not made complete on their own, but with the addition of woman.

2:20 – “Adam gave names to all” – The intelligence of Adam to name animals according to their characteristics.

- God likely brought the animals in pairs as a lesson to Adam to show him that he didn’t have his correspondent. (“But for Adam there was not found...”)
- “Adam gave names...for Adam there was not found” – Men are completed in relationship, not in the attainment of power. Adam had power (as ruler over all other creatures to name them all), but was still “not good.” He will not live until he loves, giving himself away (2:24) to another on his own level.

2:21 – “ribs” – (Heb. “tsela”) Lit. “curved side.” More than just the rib bone.

- Matthew Henry wrote: “She was not made out of his head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved.”

- 2:22 – “brought her to the man” – An ordained meeting between man and woman.
- Women are a gift of God to their husbands.
 - Song of Solomon – “do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires.”
 - “made” – Lit. “built.” Not formed from the ground or created out of nothing, but formed from man. Adam was made of dust; Eve was made of Adam.
 - Eph. 5:25-27 – In this Adam is a type of Christ, for out of the side of Christ the spouse was formed. Christ slept the sleep of death on the cross in order for blood and water to be taken from His side. Blood to cleanse. Water to purify. Out of Christ...
 - God must not have taken Adam into a “deep sleep” to necessarily prevent pain, as yet there is no knowledge of pain or suffering in the world. There must have been some profound spiritual picture in the action. Adam “died” when as yet there was not death in the world, in order that he might obtain a bride to share his life.
- 2:23 – “she shall be called Woman” – Adam is still in the naming mode.
- Adam awakens to see Eve. Wow!
- 2:24 – “Therefore” – Because it is not good for man to be alone; because God built a helper; because God brings a partner to man.
- This “therefore” is here for us. Adam didn’t have a mother and father.
 - This verse is quoted by Moses and Jesus (Mark 10:7).
 - “leave...one flesh” – This is God’s design for marriage.
 - “joined” – Lit. “glued to.” But it carries the idea of being “glued by being woven into.”
- 2:25 – “naked...were not ashamed” – Complete openness and intimacy. The fullness of relationship.
- One day we will again be clothed in the righteousness of God. That could take the appearance of light. (Ps. 104:2; Rev. 19:8)
 - 1 Cor. 15:50 – “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.” But the resurrected Jesus had “flesh and bone.” (Luke 24:39) Is there something about the blood that is a result of the fall. (Lev. 17:14 – “for the life is in the blood.”)
 - “not ashamed” – They wouldn’t even know what shame was.

Chapter 3:

- 3:1 – “serpent” – (Heb. “nachash”) Possibly refers to an “upright, shining one.”
- Among the beast of the field that had been examined and named by Adam was the one whose coloration was bright and beautiful and whose movements were smooth and graceful, a most attractive animal.
 - Adam and Eve doubtlessly had contact with the angelic realm.
 - We do not know when Satan fell. (Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28)
 - “So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan.” (Rev. 12:9)
 - “Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.” (2 Cor. 11:14)

- “cunning” – Lit. “very wise.” Can be in a positive or negative sense. Context here dictates the negative sense.
 - Satan knew he could not get at man but by causing him to sin. Balaam could not curse Israel, but he could tempt Israel. The game therefore which Satan had to play was to draw out our first parents to sin, and to separate them from their God.
 - Satan lied by directly contradicting the fall and pain he personally experienced due to his sin.
 - Satan is not an atheist. (James 2:19)
 - Serpent was more cunning. (Rev. 20:2)
 - “Has God indeed said” – Satan’s first step is to question the Word of God.
 - “every tree” – Satan is prodding Eve. Checking for discontent in Eve.
- 3:3 – “nor shall you touch it” – Eve expands on God’s prohibition. (2:17)
- Satan gets Eve focused on the one thing she couldn’t have.
- 3:4-5 – “You...you...your ...you” – The origin of self-exaltation theology and the promise of humans becoming a diety.
- 3:4 – “surely die” – Satan more accurately quotes 2:17 than Eve does.
- Satan’s second step is to directly deny the Word of God.
- 3:5 – “like God, knowing good and evil” – Satan tells a half-truth.
- Satan’s third step is to challenge God Himself. He is implying that God is holding out on Adam and Eve.
 - Satan speaks 3 times in the Bible: Gen. 3 – Slandering God to man. Job 1 – Slandering man to God. Matt. 4 – Slandering God and man to the God-man, Jesus.
 - Satan’s promise of enlightenment will only lead to steal, kill, and destroy. (John 10:10)
 - “knowing good and evil” – This will be a loss of innocence. God, in asking us to obey, wants to save us from the hurt and pain that comes from the knowledge of sin.
- 3:6 – “good...pleasant...desirable” – It seems as if there are a lot of good things about this tree. But it still goes against the Word of God.
- She set her heart on what she was not to have; and the heart makes a convert of the mind.
 - Adam and Eve fell at a tree. So did Jesus. One tree killed, the other tree gives life.
 - “good for food...pleasant to the eyes...make one wise” – The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. (1 John 2:16-17)
 - Satan used these same three tactics on Jesus. Yet, when Jesus answered him, He answered as a man, saying “Man shall not live by bread alone.”
 - “make one wise” – See here how the desire of unnecessary knowledge, under the mistaken notion of wisdom, proves hurtful and destructive to many.
 - “husband with her” – Adam sinned knowingly. Did Eve come to him fallen? (1 Tim. 2:14)
- 3:7 – “fig leaves” – The first religion of the Bible. And fig leaves make you itch like fiberglass, giving us a picture of the restlessness of religion.
- Mark 11:12-14 – Jesus cursed the fig tree that had leaves but no fruit.
 - The fig tree is a symbol of the nation of Israel throughout the Bible.

3:8 – “hid themselves” – You cannot hide from God.

- Sons get disciplined. Enemies get punished.
- “There is no greater pain than shame.” – Mike Snyder

3:9 – “Where are you?” – God is pursuing. His desire is to be with us – Immanuel.

- God does not come as an arresting officer, but as an assisting paramedic.
- God asks for the benefit of Adam. He already knows.

3:12 – “whom You gave” – Adam is passing the buck to Eve, and blaming God in the process.

3:13 – “serpent deceived me” – The old “Devil made me do it” routine.

- Eve passes the buck as well. They do not want to own up to their sin.
- God honors their free choice by holding them accountable for their sinful decision. They had the ability to not sin, despite what anyone else did or didn’t do to them.

3:14-19 – Sin has consequences.

- There are several curses, or phases of the curse, involved: the curse on the animal kingdom, the curse on the serpent, the special curse on the woman, the curse on Adam and his descendants, and the curse on the very elements of the ground itself.

3:15 – The Protevangelium.

- “your seed” – “You do the deeds of your father...You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.” (John 8:41, 44)
- “her Seed” – Masculine singular. Speaking of Jesus!
 - The only place that the seed of a woman is spoken of in the Bible is in regards to the virgin to be with child. (Isa. 7:14) Otherwise, a woman’s seed makes no sense grammatically or biologically.
 - Gal. 3:16 – The OT speaks of Seed, singular, because it is referring to Jesus. (Gal. 4:4)
- “bruise your head...bruise His heel” – Picture given to us in Rev. 12.
- “bruise your head” – For those of us in Christ, the devil has no power or authority over us. He was crushed by Christ on the cross.

3:16 – Eve’s curse is sorrow and subjection in contrast to Satan’s promised pleasure and pride.

- “multiply” – Pain and sorrow is a result of the fall.
 - What would childbirth been like before sin?
- “bring forth children” – As a sign of grace in the midst of judgment, the human race would continue.
- “desire shall be for your husband” – Lit. “desire shall be to rule over your husband.” It is the same phrase as is used in Gen. 4:17.
 - God had to curse the woman to make her stay with the man.
- “rule over you” – Sadly, so often, ‘to love and to cherish’ becomes ‘to desire and to dominate.’

3:17 – “heeded the voice of your wife” – The wife has tremendous influence with her husband.

3:18 – “thorns” – Jesus was crowned with thorns.

- This is a reminder that this earth is not heaven.
- Some say thorns are undeveloped blossoms.

3:19 – “dust you shall return” – So much for human’s attempt at attaining divinity on their own.

3:20 – “Eve...all living” – Adam believes the prophecy given to Eve in 3:15.

3:21 – The first animal sacrifice, and a picture of substitutionary atonement.

- The first death on earth is at the hands of God Himself to clothe His people.
- If the Lord would had been pleased to kill them, He would not have done this for them. For here it is the animal, not Adam and Eve, that gets killed.
- God wouldn’t accept the self-righteous fig leaves, but replaces them with the death of these animals.

3:22 – “live forever” – God is preventing Adam from eating and living forever in the fallen state.

3:23-24 – “God sent...He drove” – Adam must have begged to stay. Eden is all he knew.

- “sent” – It is the same word used of divorced wives being “sent away.”
- “cherubim” – Throughout the OT cherubim point and guard the way to the Presence of God.
 - “he placed” – ‘set as his dwelling place His *Shekinah* glory’ The ancient Hebrew writers understood this place as the original mercy seat. (Ex. 25:18) It was before God’s manifest presence, between the Cherubim, that the first sacrifices were offered.
 - Adam must have returned to this place thousands of times with a lamb looking forward to the sacrifice of “her seed” to restore the relationship he once had with God. (He would pass this practice to Abel, Seth, Enoch, and Noah.)
 - Jesus’ blood was spilt eternally on that mercy seat between the cherubim. It was His sacrifice that tore the veil in the Temple with the cherubim on it giving us free access to the Lord.

Chapter 4:

4:1 – “Cain” – means “gotten.”

- “Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain...” (Jude 1:11)
- “Not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother’s righteous.” (1 John 3:12)
- “from the Lord” – Or “even the Lord or with the Lord.” It seems that Eve thought Cain was going to be the promised child spoken of in Gen. 3:15.
 - There is a sense in which Eve said, “I have gotten the man from the Lord.”
- “the Lord” – Lit. “Yahweh, Jehovah.” The God of salvation.

4:2 – “Abel” – means “breath, vanity, meaningless.”

- The Hebrew word for “meaningless” is used over 38 times in Ecclesiastes.
- “keeper of sheep” – Man was not authorized until after the flood to use animals for food. Cain, therefore, was probably much wealthier as his work fed the bellies of people.

4:3 – “in the process of time” – Lit. “in due time.”

- “offering” – Both brothers understand the concept of offering to God. Possibly picked up from watching Adam (and Adam remembers the other side of Eden.)
- Cain and Abel are more alike than any other brothers ever born. God doesn’t look at their exterior or environment; He sees their hearts.

4:4 – “firstborn of the flock” – Abel has respect for God’s way of working in the world. Abel understood that he didn’t appease God, but acted according to the way that God established.

- Jesus said Abel was a prophet: “That the blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foundation of the world may be required of this generation, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah who perished between the altar and the temple. Yes, I say to you, it shall be required of this generation.” (Luke 11:50, 51;)
 - “That on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, who you murdered between the temple and the altar.” (Matt. 23:35.)
- Hebrews tells us that Abel offering a better sacrifice: “By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks.” (Heb. 11:4)
 - Leviticus does permit the offering of grain, but only for fellowship but not for relationship or covering of sins. (Lev. 9:17)
 - Hebrews 9:22 – “without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.”
- “respected” – Lit. “to look at or to.”
 - Did God send fire onto the sacrifice as a sign of His pleasure? (Judges 6:21; 1 Kings 18:38; 1 Chron. 21:26; 2 Chron. 7:1)
 - The Father could not look at Jesus on the cross, as He became sin who knew no sin.
- “Abel and his offering” – The debate between whether God accepted Abel due to his faith/heart or due to his sacrifice is answered here. God was looking to both.

4:5 – “did not respect Cain” – Cain’s offerings made God a receiver. He thought He could manipulate God.

- Both Cain and Abel were sinners. But the offerings were different. God sees no covering in the offerer, but looks to the offering alone. The only thing standing between a sinful man and a holy God was an accepted sacrifice.
- The natural is more quickly conceived and arrives sooner than does the spiritual.
- “Cain and his offering” – Cain wasn’t an atheist. He knew God was real, but thought he could earn God’s favor on his own terms with the sacrifice of his labor by his own hands.

4:6-7 – The shortest counseling session in the history of man. God confronts sin, tells Cain to do right, and warns of punishment if he does not do so.

4:7 – “If you do well” – God gives Cain a second chance.

- “accepted” – or “lifted up.” Is Cain depressed?
- “sin” – The first mention in the Bible.
 - So near akin are sin and punishment that the same word in Hebrews signifies both.
- “its desire” – There is an internal battle against something.
 - Sin’s only desire is to destroy us. (James 1:15)
 - God never warns without a reason.

- 4:8 – “killed him” – Abel is the first human corpse.
- The problem with man’s relationship with others originates in man falling out of fellowship with God.
- 4:9 – “Where is Abel?” – God is not asking to illicit information. He is giving Cain a chance for repentance.
- “I do not know” – Cain responds by smart-mouthing God.
- 4:10 – “blood” – First mention in the Bible.
- “To Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.” (Heb. 12:24)
- 4:12 – “the ground” – Cain worked the ground, and tried to offer it to the Lord. Now the fields are cursed for him. It won’t come easy anymore.
- “fugitive...vagabond” – Picture of a scavenger; a gatherer.
- 4:13 – “punishment” – (Heb. “avon”) Usually translated “iniquity.”
- “My punishment is greater” – Cain is remorseful due to the punishment. He is not repentant over the action.
- 4:14 – “anyone” – The earth’s population may be quite large already.
- “who finds me will kill me” – Cain understands the eye for eye, life for life, mentality.
 - God protects the murderer.
- 4:15 – “mark” – (Heb. “oth”) Better translated “sign.”
- 4:16 – “Nod” – means “restless, wandering.”
- Cain’s decision it to continue to turn from the presence of the Lord. If he would’ve turned to God, no doubt he would’ve seen forgiveness.
 - Some Bible students believe that Nod refers to the land of China.
- 4:17 – “Cain knew his wife” – Henry Morris says that humans living 800+ years and only averaging 6 children per couple would yield over 120,000 people before Cain died and over 7 billion in the first 1,656 years until the time of the flood.
- Cain would’ve doubtlessly married a sister or niece.
 - Cain is building a city, but wandering in his heart.
- 4:18 – “Enoch” – means “dedicated.”
- “Irad” – means “wild ass.”
 - “Mehujael” – means “blot out the Lord is God.”
 - “Methushael” – means “they are dead who believe in God.”
 - “Lamech” – means “poor, lonely.”
- 4:19 – “two wives” – Going against God’s model of husband and “wife” (singular). (Gen. 2:24)
- “Adah” – means “pleasure, ornament, or beauty.”
 - “Zillah” – means “shade,” possibly referring to a luxurious covering of hair.
 - It seems from these names that Lamech’s culture was committed to physical and outward beauty.

4:20 – “livestock” – If they are eating the animals, it goes against the instruction of the Lord in Gen. 1:29.

4:21 – “harp and flute” – Music. Culture is developing.

4:22 – “bronze and iron” – Metals and alloys are dynamically advanced. Israel didn’t develop metals and alloys until the time of Solomon.

- “Naamah” – means “loveliness.”

4:23-24 – “Lamech” – He is bragging that he has 2 wives, has killed a man, and has weapons to kill more if necessary. He is his own god, even as far as pronouncing his own blessings and all.

- “young man” – (Heb. “yeled”) Lit. “young lad, child.” The savage disproportion of killing a mere lad for a mere wound was the whole point of his boast.
- “seventy-sevenfold” – Lit. “until seventy times seven.”

4:25 – “Seth” – means “appointed.” It seems Adam sees Seth as compensation for the death of Abel.

- We don’t know how many sons and daughters Adam and Eve had by this time, but God is going to follow the line of Seth.
- Noah and the Messiah are of the line of Seth (as well as the rest of us).

4:26 – “call on the name of the Lord” – It seems as if some are turning back to God. But only in Seth’s line.

- “Enosh” – means “weak, frail, mortal.” It speaks of man in a mortal and frail condition.
- “Lord” – Lit. “Yahweh, Jehovah.” (v. 1)

Chapter 5:

There is no reason to think that the men whose names are listed were the firstborn sons of their fathers (ie. Seth). The recorded names are those sons who turned out to be in the line of the Promised Seed.

5:1 – “genealogy” – Similar to Matt. 1:1. (Jesus – the second Adam.)

5:3 – “in his own likeness” – As opposed to the likeness of God, in which Adam was created.

- This is all humans, and the flesh, are capable of.

5:5 – “930 years” – The vapor canopy would allow humans to live longer.

- Adam by this time likely has seen millions of descendants. Adam lived long enough to teach Enoch and Lamech.
- “and he died” – 8 times in Gen. 5.

5:6-20 – Adam – means “man.”
Seth – means “appointed.”
Enosh – means “mortal.”
Kenan – means “sorrow.”
Mahalalel – means “the blessed God.”
Jared – means “to come down.”
Enoch – means “teaching.”
Methuselah – means “his death shall bring.”
Lamech – means “the afflicted.”
Noah – means “comfort.”

5:22 – “Enoch” – Jude tells us that Enoch was a prophet (of the second coming of Christ.) It could be as a part of his prophetic gift that he names Methuselah.
- “Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesies about these men also, saying, ‘behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.’” (Jude 1:14-15)
- “Methuselah” – means “when he dies judgment will come.” Methuselah will die in the year of the flood.

5:22 – “after he begot Methuselah” – We don’t know about Enoch’s walk before Methuselah.
- “walked” – Lit. “to go with.” Speaks of fellowship.
- Hebrews tells us that he walked with God in faith: “By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, ‘and was not found, because God had taken him;’ for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God.” (Heb. 11:5)

5:24 – “took” – Lit. “transfer.”
- “he was not” – The idea is of God snatching him away. He took one step in this world, and the next in eternity.
- Life does not stop at death. It merely changes directions.
- Enoch is a type of the church, snatched away before judgment.

5:27 – “969 years” – Methuselah was the oldest man to ever live, demonstrating God’s mercy and patience in judgment.
- Methuselah will die in the year of the flood. The Jewish writers say he died seven days before the flood referring to Gen. 7:10.

5:28 – “Lamech” – He was 65 years old when Adam died. Giving Adam time to directly pass on the ideas of sin and sacrifice.

5:29 – “Noah” – means “comfort, rest.”
- “comfort us concerning our work” – Possibly referring back to Gen. 3:19.

5:30 – “777 years” – Interesting number. This is 5 years before the flood.

Chapter 6:

Nearly all ancient civilizations have an idea or record of a global deluge. (There are around 270 accounts around the world from ancient cultures that have recorded a global deluge.) A catastrophic flood agrees with the strata layers of the earth – such as a petrified tree protruding through multiple strata.

- Jesus recognized Noah and the flood as an actual event. (Matt. 24:37-39; Luke 17:27-28)

Matt. 24:37-39 – “But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.”

Luke 17:27-28 – “And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: they ate, they drank, they married, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.”

- On the surface, things seemed to be just fine (“eating...drinking...marrying”). But under the surface were strange spiritual activity, heightened sexuality, and extreme violence.
- There seems to be great spiritual activity at this time. The great difference between God’s judgment during the flood and God’s partial punishments of the Israelites seems to be the excessive spiritual activity of the time
- In the end times, before the judgment of fire (2 Peter 3) for the entire world, there will again be an exhibition of “exsousia” power. Great spiritual activity will lead the final judgment as in the days of Noah.

6:1 – “multiply” – Conservative estimates basing growth on lifespans of 400-800 years and couples having an average of 6 children would give us between 5-7 billion people alive in 1656 years, at the time of the flood.

6:2 – “bene Elohim” – The Hebrew phrase is also mentioned in Job 1:6; 2:1; and 38:7.

- A Son of God is a direct creation of God Himself; similar to the “bar Elohim” of Daniel 3.
 - The ancient rabbis, Josephus, and the Septuagint translators understood this phrase to refer to angels.
- The other opinion on this section is that the sons of God are the men of the line of Seth that are taking unbelieving wives of the line of Cain. Derek Kidner says “If the second view (that the sons of God were angels) defies the normalities of experience, the first (that the sons of God are of the line of Seth) defies those of language.”
- “of all whom they chose” – There is a note of violence in this phrase.

6:3 – “120 years” – Either the limit on the life span of humans (gradually come into after the flood) or the time God gives for Noah to build the ark before the flood and for people to repent.

- God is striking at both the depravity and the presumption. In the days of Noah, “they were marrying and giving in marriage.” (Matt. 24:36-39)

6:4 – “giants” – (Heb. “nephilim”) Lit. “fallen ones.” Seen again in the sons of Anak, Goliath, and in Jericho at the time of Joshua and Caleb.

- In the plains of Bashan, before the foundations of Syria and Babylon, excavations uncovered houses with 15 ft. high ceilings and huge doors and hinges. Og’s bed in Deuteronomy 2 is said to be 13 ft. long and 6 ft. wide.
- These “sons of God” produce giant offspring. It seems as if they come to stop the Messianic line predicted to be of “her seed” who would crush the head of the serpent.
- Jude 6,7 – Angels sinned and fell “even as Sodom” (v. 7) when they went after “strange” or “other” flesh.
- “By whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is eight souls, were saved through water.” (1 Pet. 3:19-20)
- “For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly.” (2 Pet. 2:4-5)

6:5 – “thoughts of his heart” – He observed the fountain of sin that was in men’s hearts.

6:6 – “sorry...grieved” – The idea of God being “cut to the heart” and “sighing with a broken heart.”

- KJV translates “sorry” as “repented.” God never changes His mind. He set out that obedience leads to blessing and disobedience leads to suffering/curses. This never changes. But when our disobedience leads to our suffering, it hurts Him (because He doesn’t change His mind concerning our behavior).
- Eph. 4:30 – “do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God.”

6:8 – “But Noah” – “For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him.” (2 Chron. 16:9)

- “grace” – First mention of grace in the Bible.

6:9 – “just” – Also “straight.” Translated “upright” for Job and “righteous” in Gen. 7:1.

- Keil and Delitzsch says “just” relates to “his moral relation to God” and “perfect” relates to “his character and conduct.”
- “perfect” – Lit. “whole or unblemished.” Word used often for the sacrifices brought to the altar in the OT.
- ““Even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would deliver only themselves by their righteousness,’ says the Lord God... ‘even though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, as I live,’ says the Lord God, ‘they would deliver neither son nor daughter; they would deliver only themselves by their righteousness.’” (Ezek. 14:14, 20)
- “in his generations” – Noah was perfect in a most depraved culture and society.
- Noah preached as well. (2 Peter 2:5)

6:11 – “corrupt” – (Heb. “shachath”) More often translated “destroy.”

6:12-13 – This is a very severe judgment if we are talking idolatry. There seems to be more of a supernatural influence happening here.

- 6:15 – “how you shall make it” – This vessel was designed for flotation, not navigation. It is probably simply a huge wooden box.
- Those that work for God must take their measures and instructions from Him and carefully follow them.
 - “length...width...height” – Based on the 18 inch cubit: 450 ft. x 75 ft. x 45 ft. This ark is about the size of the Titanic (about 1,400,000 cu. ft.). It could hold about 522 railway boxcars. All the current pairs of animals could fit into 250 boxcars leaving about 60% unused.
 - “cover” – (Heb. “kaphar”) Translated most often in OT “to make atonement for.”
- 6:16 – “to a cubit from above” – Might be an 18 inch gap at the top of the boat.
- 6:17 – “floodwaters” – Idea of a “catastrophe.”
- 6:18 – “covenant” – First mention in the Bible.
- This covenant is picked up in Gen. 9:9 and carries to our generation.
- 6:20 – “after their kind” – Only the major species would have to be represented. There are genetic mutations within a species so that each variety would not need to be represented on the ark.
- “will come to you” – The animals were just coming to Noah to get on the boat.
- 6:22 – “all that God commanded” – Noah obeyed by faith. And he finished the boat in faith as well.
- Complete obedience in a time of great wickedness is the only way to get through.
 - Noah must have taken great heat for 120 years. They had never seen rain before.
 - “By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.” (Heb. 11:7)
 - God had wonderful fellowship with Noah. There are 7 recorded instances of God speaking with Noah (6:13; 7:1; 8:15; 9:1, 8, 12, 17) and each time it is in fellowship and blessing to Noah and his family. [Psalm 29, referring to Noah and the flood, takes note of 7 times the Lord’s voice thunders forth in judgment.]
 - Noah was undoubtedly a man of great wealth in order to finance the building of that ark. Noah had a life to live in addition to building the boat.

Chapter 7:

- 7:1 – “come” – God is beckoning Noah to Himself, implying that He was in the ark.
- “righteous” – Noah is not sinless, but made righteous by believing.
 - The righteousness as a result of faith was passed down from Adam to Lamech to Noah.
- 7:2 – “seven each” – Extras for sacrifice and eating.
- “two each” – To keep the species of animals alive.
- 7:6 – Noah and his salvation are mentioned 3 times, but the death of the rest isn’t recorded at all. God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked. (Ezek. 18:32)
- 7:9 – “to Noah” – God brings the animals to Noah. Noah doesn’t attempt to bring them in by his own strength.

- 7:11 – “fountains of the great deep” – The water tables were broken up and the underground water gushed through the ground.
- We have little idea how much the mountains and land masses might have changed in the flood.
 - “broken up” – Lit. “cleaved open.”
- 7:16 – “Lord shut him in” – God shut the door to protect Noah and bare exclusively the responsibility for the destruction of the people.
- 7:18-19 – “waters prevailed...increased greatly...prevailed exceedingly” – A progression.
- 7:20 – “15 cubits upward” – Over 20 ft. above the top of the mountains.
- 7:24 – “waters prevailed” – The waters reach their peak and remain there for 150 days, or 5 months.

Chapter 8:

Psalm 104:6-9 – Description of the changes surrounding the flood.

- 8:1 – “God remembered” – To remember in the Bible is not merely to recall to mind. It is to express concern for someone, to act with loving care toward him. When God remembers His people, He does so “with favor.” (Neh. 5:19; 13:31) God didn’t forget, but God again becomes active in Noah’s float.
- The ark drifts like an unmanned barge.
 - “wind” – the same Hebrew word for “spirit” as used in Gen. 1:2.
 - “subsided” – The waters calmed. It seems as if they were turbulent before.
- 8:4 – “seventh month, seventeenth day” – Beginning in Exodus, the Jews had both civil and religious calendars. The civil year began in the 7th month (Tishri), our mid-September to mid-October; but the religious year started with the Passover, the 14th of Nisan (Exod. 12:2), our mid-March to mid-April. However, Nisan would be the 7th month of the civil year, and the 17th day of the 7th month would be 3 days after the Passover, the days of Jesus’ resurrection. This explains why Peter associated the ark with the resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 3:18-22), for the ark rested in Ararat on the date our Lord arose from the dead.
- This is exactly 5 months after the start of the flood, making the months 30 days long. (7:11, 24)
 - “mountains of Ararat” – Not necessarily Mt. Ararat, but in the mountain range of Ararat.
 - The Tigris and Euphrates rivers find their source in the glaciers of the mountains of Ararat. Revelation tells us that the Euphrates will dry up, possibly due to a receding glacier, and at that point reveal the ark that was buried in ice.
 - The elevation of Ararat is 17,000 ft above sea level.
- 8:7 – “raven” – Ravens are scavengers and would be willing to sit on a carcass floating on the water.
- 8:11 – “dove and olive branch” – Worldwide symbols of peace.
- Olive trees have been known to grow and develop leaves underwater.
- 8:14 – “second month, twenty-seventh day” – A total of 370 days (1 year and 10 days) later.
- The start date is given in Genesis 7:11.

8:16 – “Go out” – Noah waits on God’s call. Surely Noah must have been eager to get out after seeing land and the ark resting since the 7th month and 17th day.

8:18 – “Noah went out” – Imagine being 1 of 8 human beings alive in the whole world. It would be the first time they ever saw clouds, wind, and mountains, in addition to all the dead bodies, carcasses, plant matter and debris.

8:20 – “altar” – First mention of an altar in the Bible.

- Noah understood the need for a sacrifice, pointing to Jesus who would eliminate the punishment necessary for a holy God.
- “of every clean animal” – In effect, Noah is sacrificing 1/7th of all his flocks.

8:21 – “soothing aroma” – Lit. “savor of rest.”

8:22 – “cold and heat” – This is the first time the earth will see seasons.

- The mass extinction of animals revealed in the fossil record (such as dinosaurs and other such creatures) possibly took place shortly after the flood, when the earth was changed so dramatically and plunged into an ice age.

Chapter 9:

9:3 – “meat for you” – Up to this point, they were vegetarians. (Gen. 1:29-30)

9:2 – “fear” – Also “terror.” If it were otherwise, the animals, since they would be multiplying much more rapidly than man, might quickly have exterminated mankind.

9:4 – “not eat flesh with its...blood” – This is not a prohibition against blood transfusions (as the Jehovah’s Witnesses teach).

- Lev. 17:14 – “the life of all flesh is its blood.”
- Acts 15:29 – “abstain from things offered to idols, from blood...”

9:5 – “require” – A judicial term. God is here appearing as a judge.

9:6 – “By man his blood shall be shed” – Capital punishment. With capital punishment, human government is initiated.

- “Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.” (Eccl. 8:11)
- Governments “do not bare the sword in vain...execute wrath.” (Rom. 13:1-4; 1 Pet. 2:13-14)
- God knows the flood did not cure the heart of man. The flood cleansed the earth, but cannot cleanse the heart. For the heart is “desperately wicked above all things.” Only Jesus cleanses the heart.
- The flood serves as either a punishment or discipline. Discipline for sons (Noah and his family); punishment for enemies (everyone else).
- “in the image of God He made man” – God is indicating here the value of human life. When God flooded the earth, there were likely around 6 billion people that died – and God valued each one of them as they were created in His image.

9:9 – “covenant” – From v. 9-17, covenant is used 7 times.

- This covenant is not dependant on man. It stands because of who God is. (6:18)
- Our new covenant is even more heavily dependant on God.

9:11 – “waters of the flood” – This doesn’t prohibit localized floods.

- The next universal destruction will be by fire. (2 Peter 3:10 – “breaking up of the atoms.”)

9:12 – “sign of the covenant” – The rainbow is a sign of God’s promise, (as is circumcision and baptism for the NT believer.)

9:18 – “Ham” – means “black or hot.”

- “Japheth” – means “ruler.”
- “Shem” – means “name.” We get our English words Semite and anti-Semitic from this word.

9:21 – “wine” – First mention of wine in the Bible.

- Eph. 5:18 – “do not be drunk with wine, but be filled with the Holy Spirit.”
- “drunk” – Noah’s failure. Even the best of men are men at best.
- God will deal more harshly with Noah’s sons than He will deal with Noah.

9:22 – “saw” – Lit. “gazed intently.”

- “told” – Lit. “to tell with delight.” Mocking.
- This action is in rebellion to his father.
- Ham (and Noah) is a picture of the human heart. Close on the heels of this great destruction, Ham reverts to gawking and mocking his father. The flood didn’t fix the heart.

9:23 – “turned away” – Shem and Japheth respect their father despite Noah’s sin.

9:25 – “cursed be Canaan” – Through Noah’s prophecy, God tells Ham what will happen to his son and their descendents.

- The entire line of Ham is not cursed. Blacks and Africans are not cursed or destined by God to be slaves. Only Canaan is here spoken of, and Canaan will be a perennial enemy of Israel.
- This curse is not universally irrevocable. Rahab will turn from the Canaanites to the God of Israel and be placed in the lineage of Jesus.

9:27 – “enlarge” – Lit. “persuade.” It is largely through Japheth that the gospel has spread.

- “tents of Shem” – Japheth can receive the covering of Shem. The idiom also speaks of having fellowship with and sharing the blessings of Shem.

9:29 – “days of Noah” – Noah will live until Abraham is 58 years old. Shem will outlive Abraham.

- Noah, likely, outlived the dispersion of the peoples of Babylon.
- It is very easy for these accounts to be passed down in an understandable form.

Chapter 10:

Table of Nations – William F. Albright, a renowned ancient Middle-Eastern scholar, also a non-believer, says that “The tenth chapter of Genesis...stands completely alone in ancient literature, without a remote parallel, even among the Greeks, where we find the closest approach to a distribution of peoples in genealogical framework...The Table of Nations remains an astonishing accurate document.” This is an amazing record.

- Ham and Japheth only followed to the fifth generation (assuming genealogies are w/o gaps.) Shem is followed further because he is part of the Messianic line!
- Remember, if no gaps, Abraham was 58 when Noah died and Shem outlived Noah. The stories and hope for the Messiah are easily passed down.
 - This is a genealogy. God knows every one of these individuals, where they are, their lives, their families, even the hairs of their heads are numbered.

10:2-5 –

Japheth (Asian-European):

Gomer – Germanic/Saxon

Magog – Russians/Scythians

Madai – Medes

Javan – Greeks

Tubal – Tubolsk

Meshech – Moscow and Northern Turkey

Tiras – Tira

Gomer:

Askenaz – German Jews (Askenazi Jews)

Riphat and Togarmah – Armenia

Javan:

Elishah and Tarshish – Sth. Spain or Britain? (tin was mixed here)

Kittim and Dodanim – much of the Europeans

10:2 – “Magog” – Russia. The Chinese call the Great Wall of China – “The Great Wall of Magog.” It was erected to protect them from the attacks of the Scythians (Russians).

- “Madai” – The Medes. They end up settling in the area of Iran.
 - Iran and Russia are Japhethites. (Iraq is Arabic – from the line of Shem. That is why there has been such animosity between the 2 countries.)
- “Tubal” – NIV Study Bible note – “Not related to Tolbolsk in modern Russia.” (No reason was given for this statement.) Together with Magog, they are mentioned in the later Assyrian inscriptions.

10:5 – “after his tongue” – Different languages, following 11:9.

- “families” – First mention in the Bible

10:6-20 –

Ham (African):

Cush – Ethiopia

Mizraim – Egypt

Put – Libia, Nth. Africa, (Muslim)

Canaan – Canaanites (only Canaan is cursed)

Cush:

Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, Sabtecha – Ethiopian, Nth. Africa

Raamah

Sheba and Dedan – Arabia

Mizraim:

Sons of Mizraim inhabit Egypt.

Caphtorim – Phoenicians

Canaan:

Sidon – Phoenician (Sidon is still in the news)

Heth – Hittites

Jebusite – inhabited Jerusalem

Sinite – to China (Sino-Oriental)

(No mention of the Rephaim, yet, in Canaan's line. One of the 7 Canaanite tribes mentioned later will be Rephaim. Giants suddenly appear later.)

10:6 – “Canaan” – means “land of purple” (as does Phoenicia, the Greek name for the same general region) – so called because Canaan was a major producer and exporter of purple dye, highly prized by royalty. The territory was much later called Palestine, after the Philistines (v. 14).

10:7 – “Sheba and Dedan” – Saudi Arabia. They are mentioned in Ezekiel 38-39 as opposing Magog in its attempted invasion of Israel.

10:8 – “Nimrod” – means “rebellion” or “to rebel”

- Nimrod hunted defiantly. He hunted the souls of men.
- Linked to the first priesthood on earth. Idolatry finds its origins here.
- Possibly another name for Sargon I, and early ruler of Akkad (see v. 10).

10:9 – “mighty hunter before the Lord” – Carries the idea of “a mighty tyrant (hunter) in the face of the Lord.”

10:10 – Nimrod began Babel, picked up in Ch. 11. (Babalou, Babylon, and Babylonia.)

- Nimrod is the root a worldwide religious system that was a result of the mythological story of Nimrod marrying Semiramus (otherwise known as Ishtar or Ashtart) who supposedly gave birth to Tammuz by means of a virgin conception. Tammuz was said to have been killed by a wild beast and afterward brought back to life. This religious system has extended through each succeeding empire in various forms including: Isis and her son Osiris in Egypt, Aphrodite and Zeus (son Eros) in Greece, Venus and Jupiter (son Cupid) in Rome, Isee and her son Iswara in India, Subelly and her son Deoius in China, and Ashtoreth and Baal in Chaldea.
- The worship of Tammuz led to Saturnalia and the subsequent Christmas and Yule celebrations.
- The worship of Semiramus's miraculous conception led to the fertility cults of Ashtart and the subsequent Easter celebrations with bunnies and Easter eggs.
 - Further reading: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ" by John F. Walvoord (see pg. 246-248), "The Two Babylons" by Alexander Hislop, and "The Woman Who Rides the Beast" by Dave Hunt.
- Jeremiah 7:18; 44:18-19 refers to Semiramus as the Queen of Heaven.
- Ezekiel 8 refers to Israel's worship of Tammuz.
- Revelation 17-18 – Babylon will be punished because through this line Satan perverted the idea of the Messiah coming from God. (Satan knew Genesis 3:15.)

10:11-12 – "same became a great city" – All those cities combine to become one great city in Ninevah.

10:14 – "Philistines" – The Philistines were a vigorous Indo-European maritime people who invaded Egypt in the 12th Century BC. After being driven out, they migrated in large numbers to southwest Canaan, later extending their influence over most of the land. The Philistines of the patriarchal period (see 21:32-34; 26:1,8,14-18) no doubt had earlier settled in Canaan more peacefully and in smaller numbers.

10:21-31 –

Shem (Middle Eastern):

Eber – origin of Hebrew → Habburi – Hebrew, "those who become nomadic"

- There has been and continues to be tremendous hostility within Shem's line.

Elam – Persia

Asshur – Assyrians

Arphaxad – The ancestor of Abram and the Hebrews. (Gen. 11:10-13)

Aram – Syrians

Uz – Job came from the land of Uz. (Job 1:1)

10:21 – "Eber" – means "to cross over." The origin of Hebrew. (Habburi → Hebrew.)

10:25 – "Peleg" – means "division."

- "the earth divided" – Maybe not only people, but geological division as well.
- "earth" – (Heb. "erets") A word speaking of the geological earth itself.

10:29 – "Jobab" – May be the Job of the Bible.

- Job may be the first book ever written.

Chapter 11:

Chapter 11 may have actually occurred before chapter 10, but is included in this order to prepare us for the line of Shem.

- Babylon in the Bible: Jer. 50-51; Rev. 17-19

11:1-9 gives us the line of Ham. 11:10-32 gives us the line of Shem.

11:1 – “one language” – Even one dialect.

- There are over 3,000 languages in the world today, but many more dialects.
- The earliest language may have been Hebrew, as the earliest names of the earliest peoples have Hebrew names from Hebrew roots.

11:2 – “from the east” – Language implies they moved eastward (as in the NIV) from Ararat.

- “Shinar” – Nimrod’s territory, modern-day Iraq.

11:3 – “bricks” – Archeological evidence implies the use of crystals for the purpose of communication at this time.

- “asphalt” – Bitumen, tar for mortar.
 - Rockefeller’s invested in Iraq due to this passage and made money off oil in the region.

11:4 – “top is in the heavens” – A ziggurat for the worship of the heavens/stars.

- Astrology and many occult practices can be traced back to Babylon.
 - God placed the stars in the skies for signs and for seasons, possibly even including the gospel message. But Satan has perverted the study of the stars.
- “a city, and a tower” – The tower serves to guard or watch over the city.
 - They are trying to build a one-world government, for and by themselves. A picture of all humans coming together to protect and make a name for themselves. (Scripture teaches that a one-world government will lead to tyranny.)
 - God builds His kingdom much differently through Abraham. (Ps. 127:1)
 - Instead of destroying the people, as in Noah’s day, God calls a man out from the people to set him apart for His purposes.
- “name” – In the OT, “name” also refers to reputation, fame, or renown. (See 6:4, where “name” is translated “renown.”)
- “lest we be scattered” – But God commanded people to fill the earth. (Gen. 9:1)
 - This unity is based on rebellion with God. Unity and peace are not ultimate goals – better division than collective apostasy. (Luke 12:51)

11:6 – “nothing will be restrained” – They won’t recognize their need for God. If God doesn’t step in, they will attempt to build a world without God and they will succeed.

- Sometimes God’s greatest mercy is in not allowing us to believe we can do it ourselves! His stifling of our selfish efforts is a good gift.

11:7 – “let us” – The trinity.

- Idiomatic language is unique to humankind. Children learn entire languages by age 3, yet they cannot make computers to do the same.

11:8 – “scattered” – Physically, relationally, geographically, etc.

11:9 – “Babel” – The word is of Akkadian origin and means “gate of the gods.”

- “confusion” – (Heb. “balal”) Very similar word to Babel in Hebrew.

11:11-26 – The ages of man are decreasing. (Fulfillment of 6:3?)

11:26 – “Terah” – Father of Abraham. Descendent of Shem.

- It seems Abraham was born when Terah was about 130 years old. (Gen. 11:32; 12:4; Acts 7:4) Evidently, Abraham was not the first-born. That may be why Haran died first.
- “Abram” – The first mention of this very important man in the Bible.
- Abram is mentioned 312 times in 272 verses in the Bible.

11:29 – “Abram” – means “exalted father.”

- “Sarai” – means “princess.”
- Sarai is Abram’s half-sister. (20:12-13)

11:30 – “Sarai was barren” – Abram, unlike Haran and Nahor (22:20-24), had no children in Ur or Mesopotamia. The child of promise must be born in the land of promise.

- This may be why Abram took Lot with him to Canaan.

11:31 – “to Haran” – An 800 mile journey from Ur.

- Haran is located on an important trade route coming up from Canaan and Syria. It became an important city and is still in existence today.
- “go to the land of Canaan” – Acts 7:2 says that God called Abram while he was living in Ur. And it seems as if God spoke the blessing/promise of 12:1-3 to him at that time.
- Abram was to separate from his country, separate from his family, and go to another land. He gets one of three correct the first time.
- Heb. 11:8 – Abraham obeyed the Lord to leave Ur “not knowing where he was going.”
- “Ur” – Sir Leonard Woolley excavated Ur and found evidence of human sacrifice, irrigation, trigonometry, great wealth, medicine, and an intricate law code.

11:32 – “Terah” – means “delay.”

- “Haran” – means “parched, barren.”
- Josh. 24:2 – Abram’s family served other gods in Ur.
- Both Ur and Haran served the sun/moon god “Sin.”

Chapter 12:

12:1-3 – “Great lives are trained by great promises.” – Joseph Parker.

- Notice how often God says “I will” in these verses. Genesis 11 is all about the plans of man. Genesis 12 is all about the plans of God.
- The Hebrew word translated “covenant” has several meanings: 1. to eat with, which suggests fellowship; 2. to bind or fetter, which means commitment; and 3. to allot, which suggests sharing.
- “A faith, which laid hold of the word of promise, and on the strength of that word gave up the visible and present for the invisible and future, was the fundamental characteristic of the patriarchs” – Delitzsch.
- “Abraham was a man of faith that works; Isaac, of faith that endures; Jacob, of faith that wrestles” – Baumgarten.

12:1 – “had said” – Tense Lit. “said and continued to say.”

- God has been speaking to Abram for the past 5+ years. Abraham, known as the father of faith, fell short in his own faith many times, including needing at least 2 chances to obey the first direction he was given by the Lord.
- The call of God is relentless and persistent. He is a faithful God.
- If God loves us, and has mercy in store for us, he will not permit us to take us our rest anywhere short of Canaan.
- “God doesn’t use perfect people, because they don’t exist” – Chuck Smith.
- “Get out” – A mark of Abram’s life is his willingness and ability to separate from things.
 - He searched for a city “whose builder and maker is God.” (Heb. 11:8-10)
 - Our separation at the instruction of God is the place of God’s blessing. “I will bless you...” (12:2-3)
- “father’s house” – Similar instruction to the NT believer – Luke 14:26.
- “I will show you” – Those that deal with God must deal upon trust.

12:3 – “bless those who bless you” – The promise to Abram still stands. This promise has led to our salvation in Jesus.

- “all the families of the earth shall be blessed” – God is not ethnocentric. His heart is for all peoples.
 - “And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, ‘In you all the nations shall be blessed.’ So then those who are of the faith are blessed with believing Abraham.” (Gal. 3:8-9)

12:4 – “75 years old” – God’s callings are not only to the young.

- “from Haran” – Another 400 miles to Canaan.

12:5 – “took Sarai...and Lot” – Abram may have over 1,000 people traveling with him.

- Gen. 14:14 speaks of Abram’s 318 armed servants.

12:6 – “Canaanites were then in the land” – Looking to the later conflicts.

- “Shechem” – means “shoulder or leaned.”
- “Moreh” – means “instruction.”

12:7 – “Lord appeared unto Abram” – First mention in the Bible.

- The Lord appeared to Abram in Ur, but there have been no recorded appearances of God in the time of Haran. Now Abram has obeyed and God appears again.

12:8 – “Bethel” – means “house of God.”

- Bethel is located just north of Jerusalem. It was an important town in the religious history of God’s ancient people (28:10-22; 35:1-8; 1 Kings 12:26-29). Only Jerusalem is mentioned more often in the OT.
- “Ai” – means “heap of ruins.”
 - Ai is located in the plain of Jordon and Sodom. It is beautiful to the natural eye, but a heap of ruins in God’s eyes.
 - It will be at Ai that Achan’s sin of taking of the spoil of Jericho will result in a defeat of the Israelite army.
- “pitched his tent” – Defines Abram’s relationship with the earth. Abram was a pilgrim, choosing to live in tents despite being very wealthy.
 - “By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” (Heb. 11:9-10)
- “built an altar” – Defines Abram’s relationship with the Lord. Abram related to the Lord through the blood of substitutionary atonement.
 - Jesus said Abram looked to His day and saw it. (John 8:56)

12:10 – “famine” – Possibly drought caused. It was common for these local countries to go to Egypt during droughts. Egypt had the Nile and a great irrigation system.

- There was a famine in Sarah’s womb as well.
- What happens when things go dry in the promised-land? (Gen. 26:2)
- When circumstances become difficult and you are in the furnace of testing, remain where God has put you until He tells you to move. (God leads those He calls.)
- Walking in the will of God can be tough; but it is tougher still to walk in disobedience.
- God takes people through the storms and into the wilderness. Just because life is dry, it doesn’t mean that God has left. Deserts are prescribed courses for Christians. Jesus said, “In this world you will have trouble.” (John 16:33) Sometimes God brings famines to teach us something about Himself. At other times, famines are used to reveal our hearts to ourselves. That is why we cannot rely on feelings, emotions, or circumstances.
- “Egypt” – First mention in the Bible.
 - Abraham is moving out of the land of God’s blessing without seeking God first.

12:11 – “beautiful countenance” – Sarai was beautiful at 65 years old.

12:12 – “kill me” – Babylonians, Egyptians, and other ancient cultures severely punished adultery. But murder wasn’t punished as harshly.

12:13 – “well with me” – Abram is looking out for himself, and putting Sarai in a bad place.

- Sarah obeyed Abraham because she feared the Lord. (1 Peter 3:6)
- Sarai is Abram’s half-sister (20:12-13), but this is a full-blown lie.

12:16 – “treated Abram well” – Abram reaps the benefits from this lie, as if he is trading his wife for these animals.

12:17 – “plagued Pharaoh” – This is God’s grace.

- God does to great lengths to protect His plan.

12:19 – “why did you say?” – Egyptian ethics emphasized the importance of absolute truthfulness, and Abram was put in the uncomfortable position of being exposed as a liar.

12:20 – “sent him away” – Pharaoh sends him away with an armed escort.

Chapter 13:

13:2 – “rich” – First mention in the Bible.

- The Targum translates this word “overloaded, or burdened.”

13:3 – “between Bethel and Ai” – The highest point on the Jerusalem mountain range; the range running from Samaria almost to Beersheba.

- “where his tent had been” – Abram goes back to where he started before the slip in Egypt.
 - They will bring back from Egypt some bad stuff; Hagar, Sarai’s Egyptian handmaiden (ch. 16), and Lot with a taste for Egypt (13:10).
 - Abraham made mistakes, but always with respect to God’s promises. He messed up within God’s plan, but he stayed with God.

13:4 – “place of the altar” – After failure, Abram goes back to where he last heard from the Lord.

- Rev. 2:4-5 – “Left your first love...Remember...repent...and do the first works.

13:7 – “strife” – Abram and Lot get divided over stuff. They are both very wealthy.

- “The servant of the Lord must not strive.” (2 Tim. 2:24)

13:9 – “if you take the left” – Abram had the right to choose first. But he had enough perspective to allow Lot to take the choice. He was more concerned with peace than with stuff, so he is willing to sacrifice his own benefit for the sake of the relationship. And he must have trusted God to provide.

- There are times to separate from Lot’s – brethren with a taste for the world.
- The lifelong test of Abram’s obedience to the vision takes a new turn in this chapter in the temptation to self-assertion against Lot. Abram doesn’t succeed because he asserts himself, but because he humbles himself. (1 Pet. 5:6)

13:10 – “Lot lifted up his eyes” – Abram walks by faith; Lot walks by sight.

- Lot lifted up his own eyes. God will ask Abram to lift his eyes to show him a blessing. Compare 13:10 and 13:14.
- “lifted his eyes and saw” – The eyes see what the heart loves.
- “well watered everywhere” – Archeology has confirmed that, prior to this catastrophe, the now dry area east and southeast of the Dead Sea had ample water and was well populated.

13:11 – “Lot chose for himself” – Lot is looking for what he wants. He is choosing based on his own selfish interests.

- Don’t move until God tells you to move.
- Lot is a righteous man. (2 Pet. 2:8) To this point, he has lived in Abram’s wake. Yet his own life is given to carnality. Lot is a saved man with a wasted life.
- Lot will lose every bit of his wealth, in addition to having his sons marry Canaanites and his daughters seducing him to have children by him...a truly sad story.
- “separated” – Lot separated himself from this righteous man.
- “plain of Jordan” – The Jordan Valley is a lush area; like a greenhouse year round.

13:12 – “as far as Sodom” – (KJV “toward Sodom.) Lot’s heart is attracted to the sinful Sodomite area.

- Sin is pleasurable for a season. (Heb. 11:25)
- Lot first “pitched his tent as far as Sodom,” but soon he “dwelt in Sodom” (14:12), and finally “sat in the gate of Sodom” (19:1) as one of its business leaders. Thus begins the tragedy that will ultimately destroy Lot and his whole family.

13:13 – “exceedingly wicked” – This is the area Lot chose. For him, wealth was more important than wickedness.

13:14 – “Lot had separated from him” – Lit. “God separated Lot from him.”

- Here the call of God for Abram to separate from his country, from his family, and go to another land is finally accomplished.
- “lift up now” – Idea of God saying “Please, lift up your eyes...”
 - First of three times that Abram lifts up his eyes. (13:14, 18:2, & 22:13)
- “look from “ – Not where you are, but from where you are.
- “northward” – Where Abram came from – delayed and parched.
- “southward” – Looking to the land of his backsliding – Egypt.
- “eastward” – Speaking of the faithfulness of God – Jordan.
- “westward” – Looking to new horizons and extended promises – Mediterranean.
 - Abram will eventually take, at the promise of God, the land Lot chose for himself.

13:15 – “all the land” – God promises the entire land to Abram and his descendants.

- “I give to you” – The things that are of real benefit to Abram are received from the hand of God.

13:16 – “the dust of the earth” – They are in a desert.

- “descendants” – Abram didn’t have a child yet.
- “also could be numbered” – The idea is innumerable.
 - David was punished for numbering the children of Israel in the census.

13:18 – “Mamre” – means “strength, vigor.”

- “Hebron” – means “fellowship, communion.” Hebron is near the valley of Eshcol, which is known for its grape vineyards.
 - Abram’s strength and vigor come from his own personal relationship and fellowship with God.

Chapter 14:

14:1 – “Amraphel” – No longer believed to be the Hammurabi of history.

- “Chedorlaomer” – The Napoleon of the day kept Sodom under tribute for 13 years.
- “Shinar” – Iraq.
- “Ellasar” – Babylonia.
- “Elam” – Persia.
 - All 4 kings are Shemites.

14:2 – “war” – First mention in the Bible.

- Where there is more than one king there will be war.
- “Bera” – means “son of evil.” He is the king of Sodom.

14:3 – “Siddim” – means “fields.”

- “Salt Sea” – The Dead Sea, whose water contains 25% concentration of bromide and chloride salts, making it the densest body of water on earth.

14:4 – “twelve” – First mention in the Bible.

- Twelve is the number of government. Thirteen is the number of rebellion.

14:5 – “Rephaim...Zuzim...Emim” – Giants are in the land. These are powerful groups.

- God uses Chedorlaomer to rout these groups of giants that will one day be a hassle to Abram and his descendants.
- The 4 kings pummel every group in the Canaan area, but leave Abram alone.

14:6 – “Seir” – Modern Jordan; ancient Moab.

14:10 – “asphalt pits” – Tar pits.

14:11 – “took all the goods of Sodom” – To find fellowship with evildoers is to receive their ends as well.

14:13 – “Hebrew” – The first use of the word “Hebrew” in the Bible. The word comes from a root that means “passed over.” The Septuagint translates it “the passenger.”

- The Habburi were despised people, kind of like the Bedouin are today.
- “allies with Abram” – These are converts from Canaan.

14:14 – “318 trained servants” – These slaves and servants are a real part of Abram’s family. They are joined to God’s servant.

- With 318 men, Abram marches out to fight 4 kings who were conquering the entire area.
- Not only did Abram go to get Lot back, but Chedorlaomer was infringing on Abram’s inheritance promised to him by God. Abraham was willing to fight for his inheritance. There are some things in life worth fighting for.
- “Dan” – About 125 miles north of Mamre; At the base of Mt. Hermon in upper Galilee.

14:15 – “Damascus” – Another 45 miles north of Dan.

14:17 – “king of Sodom went out to meet him” – After Bera ran from the fight which Abram won.

- “Sodom” – means “burning.”

14:18 - “Melchizedek” – means “king of righteousness.” Some believe he is a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus Christ. Others believe Melchizedek is the title for the patriarch, Shem, who would have still been alive in Abram’s day. Others say it is some unknown individual who simply foreshadows Jesus Christ.

- Ps. 110:4; Hebrews 7 – Jesus’ priesthood is “after the order of Melchizedek;” no lineage, but “made like unto the son of God”
- “Salem” – means “peace.”
 - Salem is an ancient name for Jerusalem.
- “king...priest” – These two offices come together in Melchizedek.
- “bread and wine” – Foreshadowing communion.
 - It seems as if he is offering bread and wine to the entire army.

14:19-20 – “blessed him” – The lesser is always blessed by the greater. Abram will recognize Melchizedek as the greater by giving him tithes.

- The king of peace came to give and support, (unlike Bera who will come to take).
- Jesus came to give life. Satan comes only to steal, kill, and destroy.
- “who has delivered” – God is the one to give the victory to Abram – not Abram’s army or plan, or anything else.

14:21 – “give me the persons” – He came to take the people and give Abram the leftovers – the stuff.

- Bera had no right to the people. He bolted in battle.
- Melchizedek steps in, not when Abram was fighting Chedorlaomer, but when Abram was about to be confronted by the king of Sodom. It is not the outright confrontation with evil, but in the subtle perversions of the truth, in which we most need the help of the priest-king. There is no other choice but to rely on God in the outright confrontations. But the subtle perversions seem to give us an excuse to go our own way.

14:23 – “not take anything that is yours” – Abram refused to let himself become obligated to anyone but the Lord. Had he done so, this Canaanite king might later have claimed the right of kingship over Abram.

- Such a climax shows what was truly at stake in this chapter of international events. The struggle of kings, the far-ranging armies, and the spoil of the city are the small-change of the story; the crux is the faith or failure of one man.
- “lest you should say” – Abram, and God, will not allow a man to receive the glory that only rightly belongs to God. They will not allow a man to jumpstart this work of God.
- Chuck Smith turned down a \$1,000,000 donation at the beginning of the construction of their current church building at the instruction of God so that God could provide more miraculously.

14:24 – “portion of the men” – Those who are strict in restraining their own liberty ought not impose those restraints upon the liberties of others, nor judge them for it.

Chapter 15:

15:1 – “After these things” – After Abram wins the battle over Chedorlaomer and was met by Melchizedek and confronted by Bera.

- “the word of the Lord” – First mention in the Bible.
 - Similar to John 1:1. This may have been Jesus speaking with Abram.
 - It is remarkable that God would interject at all with fallen humans.
- “fear not” – Abram may have been wrestling with the fear of the kings he recently defeated coming back to seek revenge.
- “shield...great reward” – First mention in the Bible. God Himself will be Abram’s protection and provision. It is not just that God is giving these things; He is these things for Abram.
 - After Abram rejects the reward from Bera, God promises Abram another, yet greater reward. (We lose nothing when we sacrifice things for the Lord’s sake. Mark 10:29-30)
- “exceedingly great” – Lit. “exceedingly abundant.” (John 10:10; Eph. 3:20)

15:2 – “Lord God” – (Heb. “Adonai Yahweh.”) First mention in the Bible. Adonai indicates the nature of the relationship. Yahweh indicates authority.

- “childless” – Abram thought his “great reward” was going to go to Eliezer.

- 15:5 – “stars of the sky” – God takes Abram’s eyes to the heavens when speaking of the heir to come from his body.
- When God spoke of the earthly descendents, He pointed to the dust.
 - “descendants” – Lit. “seed.” Gal. 3:16 says it speaks of “seed” - singular, not seeds – because it is referring to Jesus.
- 15:6 – Verse quoted in NT in Romans 4:3; Galatians 3:6; and James 2:23.
- “believed” – First mention in the Bible. Lit. “to lean heavily upon.”
 - There is only one belief that God credits to us as righteousness. Jesus!
 - True believers sometimes find it hard to reconcile God’s promises and His providences when they seem to disagree.
 - “accounted” – First mention in the Bible. The NT term, imputed, means “to change from one account to another.”
 - “righteousness” – First mention in the Bible. Lit. “right-ness.” The idea is perfection.
 - This is how God could consider Abraham righteous despite his mistakes.
- 15:8 – “how shall I know?” – The Lord answers this question by making a covenant. Basically God answers by saying, ‘I give you my word.’
- Abram’s question reveals the strain he was under, for his faith was nothing facile: its spirit was that of, ‘Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.’ God’s regular provision for such a need is ‘signs’ and ‘seals’ (see Rom. 4:3 and 11) to confirm the spoken word.
 - One of the basic lessons in the “School of Faith” is: God’s will must be fulfilled in God’s way and in God’s time.
- 15:9-17 – This is the process of making a covenant. They are in effect saying, may it be done to me as was done to these animals if I fail to keep the covenant. (Jer. 34:18)
- Here God passes through the animal parts alone. The covenant will be initiated and sustained by God alone.
- 15:12 – “horror” – Abram is getting a glimpse of the bondage of Israel in Egypt.
- Exod. 12:40-41 – Speaks of the bondage being 430 years to the day. But here it says they will be afflicted for 400 years. No doubt, implying that for the first 30 years or so they saw favor in Egypt as Joseph was a very influential Hebrew.
 - Galatians says it was 430 years from Abraham to the nation of Israel reached Sinai making the nation’s time in Egypt about 215 years.
- 15:16 – “fourth generation” – Here a generation is 100 years.
- “iniquity...not yet complete” – God is patient with the idolatrous and immoral Amorites by extending His grace for 400 years. (2 Peter 3:9)
 - Rahab and Caleb were Canaanites who accepted the Lord. (Rahab was the mother of Boaz, who married Ruth, and became the great-grandfather of David.)
 - It is the same with us today. God is long-suffering, but there is a time when God’s grace will be taken away.
- 15:18 – “have I given” – Present perfect tense. God has already done it according to this promise.
- From the Nile to the Euphrates is 300,000 sq. mi. Israel has never fully occupied this territory. But they will when the kingdom is established.
 - “made a covenant” – Lit. “cut a covenant.” The same Hebrew word is translated “made” and “cut” in Jer. 34:18.

Chapter 16:

16:1 – 10 years pass between Ch. 15 and Ch. 16. (Abram is now 86 years old – 16:16.)

16:2 – “the Lord has restrained me” – Sarai is struggling with the promises of God.

- The people walking with those who have received promises are also affected by those promises.
- “go into my maid” – This was an accepted tradition of the day. (Jacob will have 4 children to handmaids, and they will be counted as legitimate children in the 12 tribes of Israel.)
- Sarai has become God’s little helper. But God didn’t give this instruction and He doesn’t need her help. (The saying that “God helps those that help themselves” is a fallacy.)
- Here is the dichotomy between the natural and the spiritual. It was naturally acceptable to have children by one’s handmaiden. But it wasn’t accepted spiritually. To walk in the spirit, one must do what God wants and do it in the way that He instructs. The natural is willing to try to do what God wants, but do it in its own way, strength, and ingenuity. But God calls NT believers to cast out the bondwoman and her son and walk in the spirit to not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. (Gal. 4:30; 5:16)
 - The three options/forces for an individual to live under:
 1. The flesh – Disregards what God wants, and therefore also disregards how He wants it to be done. (Greek “sarx” – Used 151 times in the NT; see especially Rom. 7-8; Gal. 4-6.)
 2. The natural – Attempts to do what God wants, but does it in its own ability. (Greek “psuchikos” and “phusikos” – Used 10 times in the NT; see especially 1 Cor. 2-3 and 2 Peter 2:12, also translated “sensual” in James 3:15 and Jude 1:19.)
 3. The spiritual – Doing God’s things, God’s ways, and in God’s strength; and thereby bringing glory to God alone.
- God calls us to “wait patiently” (James 5:7) for the promises of God are received “through faith and patience” (Heb. 6:12).
- When God promises, He is also able to perform His promise. (Rom. 4:21)
- “obtain children” - Lit. “be built.” (Prov. 24:3)

16:4 – “she conceived” – By all natural measures, the plan succeeds.

- The flesh is expedient, but never obedient. The promises of God are never earned in our flesh.
- “Those who are truly zealous for God frequently reach for fruit without first dying. Unfortunately, much Christian work is done this way, and while there is conception, the child that is born can never be the heir. Christian work that is done merely through the zeal of human effort with out counting the body as dead, and Sarai as good as dead, may produce great revival campaigns with by a few genuinely saved, large church memberships with many tares among the wheat” – Donald Grey Barnhouse.
- “despised in her eyes” – Here the problem is obviously with Sarai, as Abram was able to conceive by Hagar.
- The natural always mocks the spiritual.

16:5 – “my wrong be upon you” – Sarai throws it back on Abram.

16:6 – “dealt harshly” – Sarai afflicted Hagar.

16:7 – “the Angel of the Lord” – Theophany – a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus.

- The first time we see “the Angel of the Lord” appear to a human is to an oppressed, female slave from Egypt carrying the father of the Arab peoples.
- “Shur” – Hagar is returning to Egypt. No doubt, she would’ve died on the way.
- Shur is mentioned in Gen. 25:18 and 1 Sam. 15:7.

16:9 – “submit...under her hand” – To submit to the Lord is to submit to the authoritative structures He has placed us under.

16:10 – “multiply your descendants exceedingly” – Lit. “multiplying, I will multiply your descendants.”

16:11 – “Ishmael” – He is the first man in the Bible to receive his name before he was born.

16:12 – “wild man” – Idea is “stubborn or rebellious.”

- “against every man” – Much of the problems in the Middle East stem from Abram’s decision here.

16:13 – “the God who sees” – She takes note of the fact that God was actively watching her when she wasn’t even looking to Him.

16:14 – “well” – First mention in the Bible.

- This is the conversion of Hagar.
- This is the well we all must draw from – our own personal encounter with the Lord.

16:15 – “Abram named his son” – Hagar must go back and tell her story to Abram.

- “Ishmael” – means “God hears.”

Chapter 17:

17:1 – “ninety-nine years old” – After spending 24 years in Canaan without receiving the promise. It has been 13 years of dryness since Ishmael was born.

- God is waiting until all the natural resources are dried up...“as good as dead.” (Rom. 4:19; Heb. 11:12)
- “Lord appeared” – Yahweh appears to Abram again. The last recorded appearance of God to Abram was 13+ years ago in Ch. 15.
- “I am Almighty God” – As if to say to Abram, ‘I don’t need your help.’
- “Almighty God” – (Heb. “El Shaddai”) First mention in the Bible.
 - The Hebrew word “shad” either speaks of a mountain (implying strength) or a woman’s breast (implying the nurture and care of a mother).
 - “Shaddai” is used 31 times in the book of Job and 17 times in the rest of the Bible.
- “walk before Me” – In God’s presence and under His scrutiny.
- “blameless” – Lit. “sincere, upright.”
 - Oswald Chambers – “Godly perfection is not a perfection of performance, but a perfection of relationship.”
 - Brennan Manning – “God cannot and will not have a relationship with pretenders in the spirit.”

- 17:2-10 – “My covenant” – 5 times in 9 verses. God initiates (15:18), confirms (17:2), and establishes (17:7) this covenant.
- “I will” – Spoken 7 times. This is God’s promise.
- 17:3 – “Abram fell on his face” – Abram is humbled in the presence of the Lord.
- 17:5 – “Abram” – means “exalted father.” The name given by his idolatrous father.
- “Abraham” – means “father of a multitude.” Pointing to Abraham’s children through Jesus.
- 17:7 – “to be God to you” – The heart of God’s covenant promise, repeated over and over again in the OT. (Ex. Gen. 17:8; Jer. 24:7; 31:33; Ezek. 34:30-31; Hosea 2:23; and Zech. 8:8)
- 17:9 – “as for you” – As opposed to the “as for Me” of v. 4. This is Abraham’s part.
- Circumcision was not uncommon in that part of the world – but it was generally used as a rite of passage into adulthood.
 - Because Ishmael will be circumcised at 13 years old, many Arabs also circumcise at 13.
- 17:11 – “sign” – Romans 4:9-12 – Circumcision didn’t make Abraham righteous. It is only an outward sign of what has already happened in his heart. Paul and the OT prophets speak rather of “the circumcision of the heart.” (See also Deut. 10:16; Jer. 4:4; Rom. 2:28-29)
- We must be careful not to confuse the ritual with the reality.
- 17:12 – “eight days old” – It is on the 8th day that babies make Vitamin K.
- 17:15 – “Sarah” – It appears that Sarah and Sarai are only newer and older forms of the same word meaning “princess.”
- 17:17 – “laughed” – Apparently Abraham’s laughter is different than from Sarah’s later. (18:12)
- 17:18 – “might Ishmael live before You” – Abraham doubts and tries to pass off the promise once again. He is asking God to bless the work of his flesh, as if it was from the Spirit.
- 17:20 – “twelve rulers” – Fulfilled in Gen. 25:16.
- 17:21 – “I have blessed him” – As has already been spoken to Hagar in Gen. 16:10.
- 17:22 – “God went up” – God ascended from Abraham’s presence (like Elijah).
- 17:23-27 – “Abraham took Ishmael” – He took Ishmael; He didn’t tell Ishmael. This covenant was too important to leave to Ishmael. It was important enough to do with his son.
- “all who were born in his house” – Abraham went home and circumcised all from his household that very day. He must have had some interesting arguments with some of the men – even possibly having to threaten to remove them from the group as per the command of 17:14.
 - This is an act of faith. They are living in a foreign land and the circumcision might of have left them completely incapacitated (like Shechem in Gen. 34).

Chapter 18:

18:1 – “then the Lord appeared” – Yahweh appears to Abraham again. (Gen. 12:7; 17:1)

- This is the promised year. Likely about 3 months after God appeared to him in Ch. 17. Abraham is 99 years old.

18:2 – “he ran...and bowed” – He hurried to meet them, despite his age and his serious stature in the family. No doubt, one of these men is the Lord.

- “bowed himself” – (Heb. “shachah”) Usually translated “worshipped.”

18:8 – “butter and milk and the calf” – This meal was not kosher.

- The rule for Kosher of not serving meat and dairy at the same meal is a misinterpretation of the OT guideline to “not boil a calf in its mother’s milk.”
- “they ate” – Two angels and the Lord sit and eat with Abraham.
 - Abraham is entertaining angels. (Heb. 13:2)
 - Jesus, in His resurrected body, sat and ate with the disciples.
 - It is still Bedouin culture to prepare a meal and then stand by and watch.

18:9 – “in the tent” – It is also Bedouin culture for women to stay in a separate part of the tent while the men eat.

18:12 – “Therefore Sarah laughed” – Because Sarah and Abraham are old. Because Sarah is past menopause, and because there is no human way, she laughs.

- “within herself” – The Lord hears through the tent and into the heart of Sarah.
- “shall I have pleasure” – Is she speaking of the sex act itself? This may imply that Sarah and Abraham were far past even being intimate (making even the intimacy itself an act of faith).

18:13 – “Shall I surely bear a child” – The Lord even recounts her thoughts.

18:14 – “too hard” – Lit. “too marvelous, too spectacular.” This word is translated “wonderful” in Isa. 9:6.

- Jer. 32:17, 27; Zech. 8:6
- Sarah was looking at this from the natural, not from the spiritual.
- “appointed time” – God was waiting for a specific time. God was waiting for Abraham and Sarah to be unable to do this in their own strength.

18:15 – “Sarah denied it” – Sarah responds, but God knows her thoughts. It is tough to lie to someone who knows what you are thinking.

18:16 – “Abraham went with them” – According to tradition, Abraham accompanied them some distance on the road and went as far as the site of the later “Caphar barucha,” from which you can see the Dead Sea through a ravine.

18:17 – “Lord” – Yahweh. A theophany.

- “hide from Abraham” – Those who by faith live a life of communion with God cannot but know more of His mind and intents.

- 18:19 – “I have known him” – Lit. “I have made him my friend.” (2 Chron. 20:7; James 2:23)
- John 15:15 – Jesus calls us friends. Through Jesus, we all can have the relationship with God that Abraham had. (We are not to be so familiar with God that we disrespect Him. But He has made us known and called us friends with Him.)
 - The real question is not if we say we know God but if God would say that He knows us. (Matt. 7:21-23 – “I never knew you.”)
 - “command his children” – God is making sure Abraham knows all about his God. He is revealing Himself to him because Abraham is going to the one who will carry the message to his children.
 - God gives Abraham extra revelation, not because of his study, prayer, effort, etc. but because of Abraham’s communication with the generation to come. In a way, to receive from the Lord we must give to others.
- 18:20 – “against Sodom” – Sodom is sinning against light. They saw Abraham defeat the 4-king alliance with 318 men. But they returned to the land to continue living as they were before.
- 18:22 – “the men turned away” – The 2 angels leave to measure out the evil of Sodom.
- 18:23 – “came near” – Lit. “to come to court to argue a case.”
- Abraham is able to draw near to Yahweh God. (James 4:8)
 - “destroy the righteous with the wicked” – Abraham basis this request on God’s justice.
 - Peter tells us that God can separate the righteous to deliverance while the wicked go to destruction. (2 Peter 2:7-9)
 - Abraham seems to be struggling with this question. Abraham is called the friend of God and this destruction doesn’t seem consistent with the nature of God that Abraham knows.
 - No doubt, Abraham’s flesh would love to see Sodom destroyed (as James and John were willing to call down fire on Samaria, not knowing what spirit they were of), but he intercedes for it anyway.
- 18:25 – “the Judge...do right?” – This is the question God wants to bring Abraham to. He will show Abraham that He always does right.
- 18:26 – “spare all the place for their sakes” – We are told that Christians are the salt of the earth. It is the body of Christ that preserves this world, for God will not destroy the righteous with the wicked. (Matt. 5:13; 1 Thess. 2:6-7)
- 18:33 – “as He had finished speaking with Abraham” – God’s perspective of this bargaining session is not Abraham’s whittling down of the number to prevent the destruction. (Abraham only got the number down to 10, but God spared the 4 anyway.) God recognizes the communing with Abraham. God is allowing a human to draw near to Him to fellowship over compassion for the righteous.
- In the Middle East it is normal to bargain for items, as it shows interest in the item you are bargaining over.

Chapter 19:

19:1 – “gate of Sodom” – Where the leaders of the city sat and the leadership decisions of Sodom were made. Lot is sitting in an honored place of Sodom – possibly as a result of Abraham’s victory.

- His public ineffectiveness must be balanced against the influential careers of Joseph, Esther, and Daniel, whose high office was a vocation; the difference lay there.
- “bowed himself” – Lot shows reverence to the angels. The NT says Lot was a “righteous man.” (2 Peter 2:8)

19:2 – “open square” – They are testing Lot, making Lot wrestle with the wickedness of Sodom.

- The squares were large open spaces near the main city gateway where public gatherings were held. (2 Chron. 32:6)

19:3 – “unleavened bread” – A picture throughout the Bible of the consecrated, sinless life. Here Lot participates in the outward show of purity, with no real truth of it in his life.

19:4 – “all” – All the men of this city. Two new men come to town and they all come running.

19:5 – “know them” – Lit. “have relations with them.”

- The Bible clearly considers homosexual sex, sin - like any other sin (“sin of Sodom” - 48x in O.T. 19x in N.T. & Lev. 18, 20, Deut. 23, Rom. 1:26-28, 1 Cor. 6:9, 1 Tim. 1:10; and Jude 7).
 - The Bible condemns homosexuality in the same context as it condemns incest and bestiality (Lev. 18:22; 20:13). If we ignore the word of God at the point of homosexual conduct, then we have no standing to say any of the other two sins are sin either.
 - When sin gets to the place in a society where it is paraded and promoted, presented as normal and made to be accepted, when a nation calls right, wrong and wrong, right, then it is ripe for judgment.
 - Jesus warned that as it was in the days of Lot, so it would be at the time of judgment. (Luke 17:28-30)
- True sin of Sodom – pride, full bellies, free time, and neglect of the poor. (Ezek. 16:49)
 - Their desire is obviously not just for homosexual sex. They had each other and the offer of Lot’s daughters. This, instead, is a full-blown sexual attack on godliness.
- Homosexual men → Average age of death – 41, only 1% reach age 65, 3% reach 55, 3 times more likely to abuse alcohol, 14 times more likely to get syphilis, 23 times more likely to get venereal disease, 1000 times more likely to get AIDS, 50 times more likely to be murdered, 60 times more likely to commit suicide.
 - Homosexuals have an interest in saying that up to 10% of the population is homosexual. But more reliable statistics show that the number is more likely fewer than 2%.

19:7 – “my brethren” – Lot calls these men, brothers. Sad! He has found fellowship in Sodom.

- “wickedly” – Lot calls it as it is.

- 19:8 – “two daughters” – The girls were probably pretty young (12-13 years old) as they have not been given in marriage (to the consummation) yet.
- The very fact that Lot had 2 virgin daughters, in such a place, is itself a testimony that he still had some influence, both over his children and over the men of the city. (He likely betrothed them at a young age. Any who would have had sex with the girls then would likely have suffered execution for adultery.)
- 19:9 – “acting as judge” – Lot has called their actions wicked. (v. 19)
- They respond in anger. This is a picture of militant homosexuality.
- 19:11 – “blindness” – The Hebrew carries the idea of “dazzled state, or confusion.” The word is also used in 2 Kings 6:18.
- “weary trying to find the door” – These guys stay at it, despite this judgment.
- 19:12 – “sons” – Lot’s sons must have perished in Sodom.
- 19:14 – “sons-in-law” – It seems that Lot’s daughters are in the period of espousal. They were still virgins. (v. 8)
- “married his daughters” – The revised version translates this participle, “who were to marry.”
 - “joking” – Lot’s witness is so miserable that he couldn’t even get his sons-in-law to leave.
 - They are “scoffers” from 2 Peter 3:3, saying “where is this coming of the Lord?”
 - Abraham has lived in tents without a real home, yet he hasn’t lost his perspective, his witness, or his standing before the Lord.
- 19:15 – “wife” – This is the first mention of Lot’s wife.
- 19:16 – “lingered” - Amazing. Angels came, blinded men, foretold massive destruction, and they still have to drag Lot out of the city.
- 19:17 – “look behind” – Implies and also can be translated “lag behind.”
- “escape to the mountains” – Jesus said, “pray that you may be found worthy to escape the tribulation to come.” (Luke 21:36)
- 19:18 – “Please, no, my lords” – Lot doesn’t want to leave. He could’ve gone to Abraham, but he wanted to stay in the area.
- 19:19 – “evil overtake me and I die” – God delivers Lot from the destruction of Sodom, but Lot cannot trust God to preserve him in the mountains.
- 19:22 – “I cannot do anything until you arrive” – God is merciful to save Lot’s life.
- 19:24 – “brimstone and fire” – First mention of fire in the Bible.
- The Jordan Valley Rift is a crack 1/5 the circumference of the earth. The oil deposits and asphalt of the area likely ignited. The minerals of that area are minerals left over from a severe fire storm.
 - “Eternal fire” – Jude 7.

- 19:26 – “looked back from behind” – Lit. “continually and longingly looked back while lagging behind Lot.” She was longing for Sodom and fell under its curse.
- Jesus told His disciples to “be constantly remembering Lot’s wife.” (Luke 17:32)
 - In the teaching of the last days, the exhortation to remember Lot’s wife applies more to us than any other group in the history of the church. As we await the judgment to come by fire, may we be busy about the Father’s work. (Matt. 24:44-51)
 - Lot’s wife left Sodom in her body and mind, but her heart longed for Sodom. God looks to the heart and knows that the heart will make a convert of the mind.
 - “pillar of salt” – Seems to simply record a natural calamity that overtook this woman as she very reluctantly followed her husband out of Sodom. (She may have refused to enter Zoar, or entered Zoar and then left – and everything of that region except Zoar was destroyed.)
 - Scientists determine that the only place a person could have been encrusted in salt was by the Dead Sea.
- 19:28 – “he looked” – Abraham, in Hebron, is only about 10-15 miles from Sodom, and at a higher elevation.
- “smoke of the land” – What a view Abraham must have had. The rich, lush area of Sodom (that Lot chose because of his riches and because this “well watered plain” had the ability to support large herds) is now a smoldering ash heap.
- 19:30 – “afraid to dwell in Zoar” – As Lot sees what happens to Sodom and Gomorrah, he fears going to Zoar and goes to the cave in the mountains instead.
- “dwelt in a cave” – He that a while ago could not find room enough for himself and his livestock in the whole land is now confined to a hole in the hill.
- 19:32 – “father drink wine, and we will lie with him” – The daughters of Lot have the moral standards of Sodom.
- Where did Lot get the wine?
 - To Lot’s credit, he wouldn’t have done this sober. “A man may do without reluctance, when he is drunk, which, when he is sober, he could not think of without horror” – Matthew Henry.
- 19:32 – “daughters of Lot were with child by their father” – This is the last we will hear of Lot; a man with such great potential and prosperity, yet ending his life in misery.
- Did Moab and Ben-Ammi call Lot dad or grandpa? How about just Pops?
 - Lot → saved man, wasted life.
- 19:37-38 – “Moab” – means “of my father.”
- “Ben-Ammi” – means “son of my people, or son of my kindred.”
 - Both names make allusion to the children being fathered in incest.

Chapter 20:

20:1 – “journeyed from there to the South” – Abraham goes south again, 25 years after Ch. 15.

- Abraham seems to be journeying into the area of his temptation. Why did he leave Mamre at all?
- “Negev” – Philistine territory. At the lower edge of the boundary of the promised land.

20:2 – “my sister” – Sarah is 90 years old. Her beauty must already be returning as God is restoring her from “as good as dead” to be able to produce children.

- On the brink of Isaac’s birth-story (Ch. 21) here is the very promise put in jeopardy, traded away for personal safety.

20:3 – “Abimelech” – means “the king (God) is my father.” Probably not his name, but a title (like the Pharaoh in Egypt.) The title is used in Genesis 26 and in the heading of Psalm 34.

- “dead man” – Adultery is seen and judged by God.
- Does this refer to sexual impotence? (vv. 17-18)

20:5 – “integrity of my heart” – Abimelech is claiming himself to be a righteous man, saying that he has done nothing wrong to Sarah. But God is telling him that it was God Himself who withheld Abimelech from Sarah.

- “integrity” – Or is it ignorance?
- God seems to reward a man who lives in integrity (who responds when a sin of ignorance is revealed) by keeping him from further sin and the destruction of his household/country.

20:7 – “prophet” – First mention in the Bible. The first usage shows the prophecy is not primarily prediction, but rather speaking the words of God as inspired by Him.

20:9 – “Abimelech called Abraham” – Abraham is being rebuked by a pagan king.

- “God does not allow His children to sin successfully” - Charles Spurgeon.

20:11 – “fear of God” – A conventional phrase equivalent to “true religion.” Fear in this phrase has the sense of reverential trust in God that includes commitment to His revealed will (word).

- It was the fear of God that preserved Sarah.
- God has His ways of protecting His work.

20:12 – “daughter of my father” – Abraham is trying to sneak out of this situation by claiming that he was telling a half-truth (which is a full-blown lie). His intent was to deceive.

- Abraham was motivated by fear.
- If the city was that bad, what was he doing there?

20:13 – “God caused me” – Another part of Abraham’s half-truth. Here he is blaming God.

- In the NT, none of these wrong decisions are recorded. Abraham was human and made mistakes, but God (through Jesus) has chosen not to remember those things.
- “wander” – The Hebrew word occurs 50 times in Scripture and never in a good sense. It is used of animals going astray, of a drunken man reeling or staggering, of sinful seduction, of a prophet’s lies causing the people to err, and of the path of a lying heart.

- 20:16 – “she was rebuked” – Sarah is being rebuked as well. She should have been wearing the veil of a married woman, but instead she participated in Abraham’s lie.
- “rebuked” – Possibly better translated “reproved.” The Hebrew is translated “proved” in Job 13:15 and “approved” in Genesis 24:14. Hence the RSV translation “righted” and the NIV translation “vindicated.”

Chapter 21:

- 21:1 – “as He said” – God does what He says, not one of His promises will fall to the ground. But He does it in His time.
- Heb. 6:12; 10:36 – “...it is through faith and patience that we inherit the promises.”
 - “did for Sarah” - True believers, by virtue of God’s promises, are enabled to do that which is above the power of human nature, for “by them they partake of a divine nature.” (2 Pet. 1:4)
- 21:3 – “Isaac” – means “laughter.” He is a reminder of Abraham and Sarah’s laughter and unbelief.
- God is making a point about His divine promise. It is God’s covenant. God does it, and then only God gets the glory.
- 21:7 – “Sarah would nurse” – Even her milk has come in.
- 21:8 – “weaned” – Children were generally weaned at about 3 years old.
- 21:9 – “son of Hagar...scoffing” – The natural always mocks the spiritual. (Acts 2:13)
- 21:10 – “cast out this bondwoman” – Sarah seems harsh, but it is a picture of how we are to handle the Law and the flesh. (Galatians 4:30)
- 21:11 – “displeasing” – Lit. “to shake violently.” Abraham loved Ishmael. Ishmael was his son too.
- 21:12 – “listen to her” – The first time Abraham hearkened to Sarah, he shouldn’t have. But this time, when Sarah’s advice goes against the custom of the day, God tells Abraham to listen to Sarah.
- “the lad” – Ishmael is about 15 years old at this time.
 - “in Isaac your seed shall be called” – Quoted in Romans 9:7-9.
- 21:14 – “bread and a skin of water” – It is likely that God gave Abraham instructions about how to send Ishmael and Hagar away. He could have sent her away with a huge amount of resources.
- God seems to ordain this desert experience for Hagar and Ishmael.
 - “Beersheba” – Hagar seems to get lost on the way to Egypt.
- 21:16 – “death of the boy” – She despairs of relief...though God had told her, before he was born (16:10-16), that he should live to be a man, a great man. We are apt to forget former promises, when present providences seem to contradict them.

21:17 – “God heard the voice” – God hears this boy and answers.

21:18 – “great nation” – Ishmael is the father of the Arab people. (Arabs and Jews are connected in Abraham.)

21:19 – “God opened her eyes” – The well was always there, but in her desert experience she couldn’t see it.

- God leads us into desert experiences to teach us something about Himself. The desert has its own beauty.
- Jesus, in the desert, answered Satan that “Man does not live by the will of God, but by every word that proceeds out the mouth of God.”

21:20 – “God was with the lad” – God loved and will bless Ishmael. It is just that he is not of the line of the Messiah (as neither is my lineage). This doesn’t make him lesser than any other peoples, and shouldn’t produce hostility then either.

21:21 – “Paran” – The Sinai region.

- “Egypt” – Hagar’s homeland.

21:22 – “God is with you” – Also noticed of Isaac (26:28), Jacob (30:27), and Joseph (39:3).

21:23 – “swear to me” – Abimelech and Phichol are greater in power than Abraham, but here they are begging Abraham to make a covenant with them

21:25 – “Abraham rebuked Abimelech” – Abraham uses this opportunity to get back at Abimelech.

21:30 – “they may be my witness” – The ewe lambs were a guarantee of the covenant.

21:33 – “the Everlasting God” – Heb. “El Olam.”

- “tamarisk tree” – There are 12 types of tamarisk trees growing in that region.

Chapter 22:

This chapter has the first mention of “love,” “worship,” “lamb,” and “obey” in it.

22:1 – “after these things” – Abraham raised Isaac 30 (or so) years. For this time, no doubt, Isaac was his central focus. Isaac is the source of Abraham’s affection and hope. This is the child of promise.

- “tested” – (KJV “tempt”) Or “proved.” God doesn’t tempt with evil (James 1:13-14). But God will put us in circumstances with an unclear future to reveal our faith/trust in Him.
 - This was not so much a test to produce faith, as it was a test to reveal faith.

- 22:2 – “your only son” – God doesn’t recognize Ishmael here. Ishmael is the work of the flesh.
- Isaac and Abraham were well aware of human sacrifices. The heathen in the vicinity of Abraham also sacrificed their children to their gods.
 - God is the only one with the right to offer His Son as a sacrifice. Abraham and Isaac are a living parable of what Christ will do later.
 - This is the 7th time God appeared to Abraham. This will be Abraham’s watershed experience. (Galatians 3:16; Hebrews 11:17-19)
 - “whom you love” – This is the first mention of love in the Bible.
 - In Isaac were contained all the promises of God. Abraham had to learn the difference between trusting the promise and trusting the Promiser.
 - “Moriah” – means “foreseen of Jehovah.”
 - The author of Chronicles identifies the area as the Temple Mount in Jerusalem (2 Chron. 3:1). Today, Mount Moriah is occupied by the Dome of the Rock, an impressive Muslim mosque erected in AD 691. A large outcropping of rock inside the building is still pointed to as the traditional site of the intended sacrifice of Isaac. (Although, Golgotha is at a higher elevation in the same mountain range.)
 - “offer” – (Hebrew “alaw”) Lit. “to lift him up.”
 - Jesus said if He be lifted up, speaking of His crucifixion, He would draw all men to Himself. (John 12:32-33)
 - “of which I shall tell you” – God is going to reveal something about the mountain Abraham is to sacrifice Isaac on.
 - Jesus said, Abraham looked to see my day and he saw it. (John 8:56)
- 22:3 – “of which God had told him” – There was an experience of God through the night.
- “and...and...” – This is a continual thought. Abraham is not stalling at any point here.
- 22:4 – “third day” – Isaac will be dead in the mind of his father for three days.
- A type/picture of Jesus’ death and resurrection.
 - “saw the place” – He recognized the mountain from what God had spoken to him. (Did the mountain look like a skull?)
- 22:5 – “worship” – Isaac understands that there is no worship without the shedding of blood. (v. 7)
- “we will come back” – Abraham fully expects he and Isaac to return together.
 - “lad” – Lit. “young man.” The same Hebrew word is given for the servants in vv. 3 & 5. Isaac might very well be near 30 years old. (see Exod. 2:6 and 1 Chron. 12:28)
 - “to his young men, Stay here” – This was an incident reserved only for the father and the son.
- 22:6 – “the wood...on Isaac” – God must be seeing the cross being laid upon His Son.
- “fire in his hand” – The Father put the wood on His Son, but He personally takes the fire in his own hand (which speaks of the wrath of indignation that would be poured out on Jesus on the cross.)
- 22:7 – “lamb” – First mention of the word lamb.
- 22:8 – “God will provide for Himself the lamb” – God will provide Himself as the Lamb.
- John the Baptist will declare: “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29)
 - “the two of them went together” – Lit. “they went in agreement.”

- 22:9 – “Abraham built an altar” – Seems that Abraham builds the altar alone.
- “he bound Isaac” – Isaac, at 30 years old, could have easily overpowered his 130 year old father.
- 22:10 – “took the knife” – Abraham must have the knife in the air.
- 22:11 – “the Angel of the Lord” – A theophany. Jesus Himself.
- 22:12 – “I know” – Abraham reveals his heart to the Father; but truly revealing his heart to himself.
- There is an added blessing that comes on the heels of this act of obedience. (12:18)
 - “that you fear God” – God gave Isaac to Abraham, and Abraham gave him back. We must be careful that God’s gifts do not take the place of the Giver.
- 22:13 – “ram” – This is not the “lamb” mentioned in vv. 7-8. This ram will be the first of thousands to be sacrificed on this mountain.
- “instead of” – The substitutionary sacrifice of one life for another is here mentioned for the first time. As the ram died in Isaac’s place, so also Jesus gave His life as a ransom “for” (lit. “instead of”) many. (Mark 10:45)
- 22:14 – “The-Lord-Will-Provide” – (Heb. “Jehovah Jireh”) Carries the idea of “the Lord who sees to it.”
- “as it is said to this day” – Evidently it was in this scene that Abraham saw the sacrifice of Jesus, God’s Son. And he passed it down to his descendants as Moses writes this note.
 - “shall be provided” – God provides the sacrifice to die on our behalf. The sacrifice is God’s, not ours.
- 22:15 – “a second time” – The Angel appears to Abraham again. (Or was the Angel, Jesus, there watching Abraham sacrifice that ram before the Father?)
- To obey is to find new assurance, as Abraham had discovered in 13:14ff. Note too the new promise in v. 17. (The best comment on God’s oath is in Hebrews 6:16-18.)
- 22:17 – “bless you” – This is always the end of these types of trials.
- 22:18 – “Rebekah” – This account is given at this time to introduce us to the bride of the promised son after his “resurrection.”
- 22:19 – “Abraham returned” – Isaac is not mentioned again until Eliezer returns from Paddan-Aram with his bride. (Serving as a type of Jesus not being seen again until he returns for His bride.)

Chapter 23:

23:1 – “Sarah” – She is mentioned in 1 Peter 3:5-6 as a holy woman and the mother of the wives who do good. She is also mentioned in the Hebrews 11 account of those who lived by faith.

23:2 – “Hebron” – means “fellowship.”

- “Abraham came” – It seems that Abraham was away (possibly in Beersheba – v. 19) when Sarah died.
 - They very well could have been married nearly 100 years.
- “mourn” – Abraham, a great man of spiritual faith, weeps at the passing of his wife. (1 Thess. 4:13)
 - Jesus wept (John 11:35) and God collects our tears in a bottle (Psalm 56:8).
- “weep” – The first mention. Lit. “physical, external sobbing.”

23:4-15 – “bury my (the, your) dead” – The key phrase of this chapter, used 7 times.

23:4 – “foreigner” – (Hebrew “ger”) A stranger/foreigner was a resident alien with some footing in the community but restricted rights. In Israel, for example, the “ger” would be granted no land on his own.

23:6 – “mighty prince” – Lit. “a prince of God.” They recognize Abraham and his God.

23:6-9 – “none of us will withhold...give it to me at the full price” – There is a bit of the bargaining cultural tradition going on here.

- This is the only place we know for sure that Abraham owned. (In Acts 7:16, Stephen said Abraham owned a piece of property at Shechem. So there may be 2 properties in total.)
- Abraham is putting Sarah to rest in a foreign land, a land they have been promised but have never possessed. He is truly a stranger and alien in this land.
- “Machpelah” – means “double doors.” (Speaking of death as a means of passing through?)
 - Though inaccessible today, the tombs of several patriarchs and their wives – Abraham & Sarah, Isaac & Rebekah, and Jacob & Leah (see v. 19; 25:8-10; 49:30-31; 50:12-13) – are, according to tradition, located in a large cave deep beneath the Mosque of Abraham, a Muslim shrine in Hebron.

23:15 – “four hundred shekels of silver” – Ephron starts ridiculously high, expecting Abraham to barter with him. (See the price in Jeremiah 32:9.)

23:16 – “Abraham listened” – Abraham simply would not barter with Ephron over his wife’s grave price. He shows no concern for the land itself, only to care for his wife.

- Sarah’s tomb is a legitimate site. The city of Hebron is build around it.

Chapter 24:

“At this distance from the event, we can see how decisively the courageous obedience of a few individuals over a family matter was to shape the course of history” – Derek Kidner. (p. 146)

- The pictures of Ch. 24 are of God arranging the marriage of a man and woman, a faithful servant working diligently for the master’s concerns, and the Spirit taking a bride for the Son at the command of the Father.

24:1 – “well advanced in age” – Abraham is 137 years old, but he is still quite active.

- Isaac is 40 years old at this time. (25:20)

24:2 – “oldest servant” – Possibly Eliezer of Gen. 15:2.

- Eliezer means “God my help” and is an interesting type of the Spirit as paracletos (“one who comes alongside to help”) sent by the Father to take a bride for the Son.
- “hand under my thigh” – A process of making an oath; pointing to the reproductive organs.

24:4 – “to my country” – The servant will travel about 700 miles to find a wife for the son.

24:5 – “not be willing to follow” – The woman will have to take a huge venture of faith to go back with the servant to marry a man she has never seen.

24:8 – “do not take my son back there” – Abraham is making sure Isaac doesn’t leave the promised land.

- Isaac, the son of promise, never once left the promised land.

24:10 – “Mesopotamia” – means “between the rivers.”

24:11 – “at evening time” – The coolest part of the day.

24:12 – “Lord God” – The servant is a believer. He calls on Abraham’s God.

- He is praying silently, “speaking in my heart.” (24:45)

24:13 – “daughters of the men” – Finding the wife is like finding a needle in a haystack.

24:14 – “drink...your camels also” – This is an amazing request. Camels drink 20-50 gallons of water each. This woman will draw 200-700 gallons of water.

24:15 – “before he had finished speaking” – God answers the prayer before he is finished praying it.

- “Milcah” – The sister of Lot.
- “Bethuel” – The brother of Abraham.

24:18 – “Drink, my lord” – Little did Rebekah know that doing a humble task for a stranger would make her the bride of a wealthy man who is in a covenant relationship with God.

24:20 – “ran back to the well” – She is not only watering his animals, but running back and forth to do so.

24:21 – “wondering at her” – Is there any question whether or not this journey has been a success?

- 24:24 – “daughter of Bethuel” – This is Abraham’s brother’s granddaughter.
- 24:26 – “Then the man bowed” – He doesn’t even move. He just stopped and prayed out loud.
- He thanks God – not the woman – for the success of this venture. “Success, which inflates the natural man, humbles the man of God. The servant’s first thought is for the Lord, his second for his employer (27b), and his final one, with unaffected delight, for himself” – Derek Kidner. (p. 147)
 - “being on the way” – As Eliezer is obeying, God reveals His plans. Step by step.
- 24:30 – “when he saw the nose ring” – Laban is looking for more gold.
- 24:33 – “I will not eat until” – The servant is focused and desires to complete the task.
- 24:36 – “a son” – The servant testifies of the promised son.
- “to him he has given all” – Jesus said the Father had given Him all things. (John 16:5)
- 24:40 – “a wife for my son” – It is the story of the Bible that the servant (Holy Spirit) works to take out a bride (the Church) from the native land (the Jews) and bring the bride to the Son (Jesus).
- 24:45 – “speaking in my heart” – We do not need to pray out loud to be heard by God.
- 24:53 – “servant brought out jewelry” – The servant breaks out the gifts only after the woman has agreed to marry the son.
- As the Spirit brings the gifts of the Spirit upon an individual after salvation.
- 24:54 – “ate and drank” – The servant only eats after the bride is bought.
- This is a picture of the marriage supper of the Lamb.
- 24:58 – “I will go” – Rebekah voluntarily chooses to go to Isaac, the son, merely on the prompting and sharing of the servant.
- 24:62 – “Now Isaac” – We haven’t seen Isaac anywhere in the story since Abraham’s test in Gen. 22. Now he appears at the coming of the bride.
- “Lahai Roi” – means “the Lord gives and sees.” The well Hagar and Ishmael drank from after leaving Abraham.
- 24:64 – “dismounted from” – (Heb. “nephel”) Lit. “fell off.” She is reaching for her veil. She must have been anticipating this moment for all the 700-800 miles.
- The bride meeting the son – like the Church meeting Jesus. (2 Cor. 11; Rev. 19; Song of Songs)
 - The bride is accepted of the Son as imperfect. It is nearly blasphemous for us to think that we can improve on the work of Jesus in the life of His bride.
- 24:65 – “covered herself” – Her modesty did not negatively impact their marriage relationship.

Chapter 25:

25:1 – “Keturah” – means “mother of us all, or incense.”

- Said to be Abraham’s concubine in 1 Chron. 1:32.

25:2 – “she bore him” – Abraham is completely restored and has 6 children at 130+ years old.

- Abraham was an ancient father and grand-father of the faith, even in his own time.
- It is good to pass down the faith in our old age.
- “Midian” – Moses’ father-in-law, Jethro, will be a Midianite, which explains his knowledge of the true and living God and practice of sacrifice.

25:3 – “Sheba and Dedan” – Saudi Arabia.

25:7 – “175 years” – Jacob and Esau were 15 years old when Abraham died.

25:8 – “full of years” – One translator has this “satisfied with life.” The Hebrew speaks more of the quality of life than with the quantity of days.

- Abraham is a great picture of a man wealthy beyond physical resources.
- “gathered to his people” – Gathered to those who died in faith before him, to the saints of old.
- The alien goes home...to the city whose builder and maker is God.

25:12 – “Ishmael” – Allah is the moon god in a pantheon of gods linked to the fallen rock/plate found in Mecca.

25:16 – “12 tribal rulers” – As predicted in Gen. 17:20.

25:17 – “gathered to his people” – Ishmael was gathered to his people as well. (Were they the same people as Abraham?)

25:18 – “died” – Lit. “fell.”

25:21 – “she was barren” – They have been married 20 years at this point. (25:26)

- “Isaac pleaded with the Lord” – Even the son of promise does not come into the promise easily.

25:22 – “struggled” – Lit. “to crush or oppress.”

25:23 – “older shall serve the younger” – God makes this prediction, even before their births.

- Part of this verse quoted in Rom. 9:10-12 (as well as Malachi 1:1-3) as an example of God’s sovereign right to do “whatever pleases Him” (Ps. 115:3).
- God’s predestination is in accordance with His foreknowledge (Rom. 8:29). And His choices accord with the decisions the individuals will make later in life.

25:25 – “red” – Lit. “ruddy.” Speaking of being masculine.

- “Esau” – means “hairy.”

25:26 – “Jacob” – means “heel-catcher, or supplanter.”

25:27 – “skillful hunter” – Esau is the natural man. The only other skillful hunter referred to in Genesis is Nimrod.

- Heb. 12:16-17 says that Esau was “profane” and “a fornicator.”
- “man of the field” – Jesus, in the parables, always used the field to refer to the world.
- “mild” – (Heb. “tam”) Lit. “complete.” Also translated “perfect, undefiled, and upright.” (KJV “plain”) This word is translated “blameless” in Job 1:8.
 - Jacob immediately goes after the birthright, which contains the promise of the coming Messiah.
- “dwelling in tents” – Evidently occupying most of his time caring for the flocks and herds of his father.
 - For some reason, most people think the attributes of Esau commendable and those of Jacob distasteful. Yet, exactly the opposite is the truth of the matter.

25:28 – “because he ate of his game” – Isaac plays favorites because of what Esau gives to him.

- This is a picture of a divided family.

25:29 – “weary” – There seems to have been a famine in the land for some time now. Esau was probably out for days looking for food, coming in “at the point of death.”

25:31 – “birthright” – (Heb. “bekorah”) The spiritual aspect associated with the blessing (Heb. “berakah”). The two were not meant to be separated.

- Jacob need not buy the birthright; it was already ordained to go to him by God.

25:34 – “despised” – Lit. “to hold in contempt, or to consider a little thing.”

- “despised his birthright” – Esau is more than willing to satisfy the hunger of his nature, the needs of the flesh. Esau sacrifices the future blessing for the temporal satisfaction.
- Esau represents the natural man of the flesh entrenched against the spiritual man of promise. (Gal. 5:17)
- Esau displays the tendency in all of us to seek the blessing (physical promises) while forsaking the birthright (the spiritual responsibilities). But they are in fact intrinsically linked together.
- “History shows that men prefer illusions to realities, choose time rather than eternity, and the pleasures of sin for a season rather than the joys of God forever...Men still sell their birthright for a mess of pottage” – Donald Grey Barnhouse.

Chapter 26:

Abraham is mentioned 8 times in this chapter, and you find the word “father” 6 times. Isaac is very much his father’s son. But, Isaac has to grow in and develop his own relationship with God. He cannot live off Abraham’s faith.

26:1 – “Abimelech” – The title of the king of the Philistines (like Pharaoh in Egypt).

26:2-4 – “seed” – Singular, pointing to Jesus. This is the promise of the birthright, which Esau despised.

26:3 – “Dwell in this land...bless you” – The promise was searching: to refuse the immediate plenty of Egypt for mostly unseen (26:3a) and distant (26:3b-4) blessings demanded the kind of faith praised in Hebrews 11:9-10.

- 26:7 – “he was afraid” – God had appeared to Isaac and promised to keep him safe. Yet, right away Isaac lies to protect himself.
- Exod. 20:5 – God visits the “iniquity of the fathers to the third and fourth generations.”
- 26:9 – “Lest I die on account of her” – But husbands are to love their wives the way Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for her. (Eph. 5:25)
- 26:10 – “what is this?” – Isaac is reprimanded by a pagan king (as was Abraham years earlier – 20:9,10).
- 26:12 – “hundredfold” – This seems to be the year of the famine. God has His ways of blessing His people, even at a time of famine, as they walk in obedience.
- 26:16 – “much mightier” – Isaac departs from Abimelech, because Abimelech and his people are scared of Isaac.
- 26:19 – “running water” – Lit. “springing water.” The water that bubbles at the bottom of the well.
- 26:20-21 – “quarreled” – Isaac and his servants are doing the work, yet the Philistines are taking the wells.
- 26:22 – “Rehoboth” – means “room.” No more contention.
- 26:24 – “do not fear, for I am with you” – The presence of God will dispel all fears.
- 26:29 – “blessed of the Lord” – The Philistines recognize that God is blessing Isaac.
- 26:32 – “we found water” – God is confirming His promises to Isaac.
- 26:35 – “grief of mind to Isaac” – Esau is taking wives who are problems for Isaac and Rebekah.
- Hittite wives worshipped foreign gods. Esau continues to show no regard for the things of God.
 - Despite Esau’s actions and God’s promises, Isaac will choose to bless Esau over Jacob.

Chapter 27:

There is never a single instance in the Bible of criticism of Jacob.

- 27:1 – “Isaac was old” – Isaac is 130-140 years old. Ishmael died at 137 years. Isaac thinks he is getting close to dying, but will in fact live another 40+ years.
- It was likely 100 or so years since Isaac carried the wood of his own sacrifice to Mount Moriah.
- 27:4 – “bless you” – The final blessing of a patriarch at this time was considered legally binding.

27:5-6 – “Esau his son” – Pointing to the favoritism of the family.

– “Jacob her son” – Again, the favoritism.

- The bent to favor one son over another is passed from Abraham to Isaac to Jacob. The bent to lie is passed from Abraham to Isaac to Jacob as well.
- As parents, we will never know more about our children than God. The last thing Esau needed was to be reinforced in his fleshly nature, as Isaac did. And the last thing Jacob needed was to be taught how to lie and manipulate, as Rebekah did.

27:9 – “savory food” – Goat seasoned to taste like venison.

27:12 – “deceiver” – Lit. “mocker.” (2 Chron. 36:16)

- “seem to be” – Jacob is more concerned about his reputation than his is his character. (He is a deceiver despite what he seems to be.)

27:16 – “hands” – Lit. “up to the elbows.”

- “skins of the kids of the goats” – Esau is as hairy as a goat.

27:20 – “so quickly” – Isaac is a little suspicious.

- “the Lord your God brought it” – Jacob is dragging God into this; taking the Lord’s name in vain.
- “Lord your God” – Jacob seems to have not accepted Isaac’s God as his own yet.

27:22 – “he felt him” – It is amazing Isaac couldn’t feel Jacob trembling.

27:24 – “Are you really my son Esau?” – God will ask Jacob many years later, What is your name? (Gen. 32:27)

27:27 – “blessed him” – God had already chosen Jacob for this blessing. Jacob and Rebekah know God has chosen Jacob, but they take it upon themselves to bring God’s calling into reality. They are living with the assumption that God needs them to make this happen. And in turn, they make God depend on them, rather than they depend on God. (Jacob and Rebekah are setting out to follow God’s word and do His will in their own way.)

- Jacob is “the picture of the NT believer indwelt by the Spirit yet living under the control of the flesh.” Alan Redpath

27:28-29 – “may God give you...” – This is the blessing Jacob steals from Esau.

- Jacob is here blessed with: 1. plenty (v. 28), 2. power (v. 29), and 3. prevalence with God (v. 29).
- Isaac must have known all along that Jacob was to get the blessing. No doubt, if Jacob didn’t deceive, somehow God would have blessed Jacob anyhow.

27:33 – “trembled exceedingly” – Lit. “trembled most excessively with a great trembling.” Is Isaac under conviction here, knowing Jacob was to get the blessing in the first place?

- Years later, Jacob will talk about “the God of Abraham and the fear of Isaac.” Possibly, Isaac wasn’t walking with his God well to this point.

27:35 – “your blessing” – Isaac is wrong. The blessing was not Esau’s.

27:36 – “took away my birthright” – Not true either. It wasn’t his birthright in the first place and yet he sold it Jacob for a pot of stew.

- “taken away my blessing” – This wasn’t his either.
 - Esau sold, or traded away, the birthright (which was the spiritual part of the blessing). But now he seeks after the material part of the blessing with tears. (Heb. 12:17)

27:39-40 – “said to him” - Esau gets some blessing.

- “his yoke from your neck” – Either speaking of the burden and bitterness of Jacob’s deception which Esau will shed through forgiveness 20 years later, speaking prophetically of the Edomites coming out from under the domination of the Israelites (2 Kings 8:20-22), or speaking of a still future event involving the anti-Christ (Jon Courson’s opinion).
- “become restless” – (KJV “have dominion”) Lit. “shake yourself.”

27:41 – “kill my brother” – Esau is carrying heavy bitterness – Heb. 12:15-16.

27:44 – “few days” – This will turn into over 20 years and Rebekah will never see her favorite son again.

- Jacob and Esau are between 70-77 years old at this point.

Chapter 28:

28:1 – “Isaac called Jacob and blessed him” – Isaac seems to have realized that God intervened, so he decides to send Jacob away with his blessing.

- “wife from the daughters of Canaan” – Jacob is to marry a believer, as Abraham had commanded for Isaac years earlier. (Gen. 24:3)

28:3 – “God Almighty” – Heb. “El Shaddai.” (Gen. 17:1)

- “assembly” – The OT term for the church or congregation makes its first appearance, bringing with it the idea of coherence as well as multiplicity. It is associated with Jacob again in Gen. 35:11 & 48:4.

28:3-4 – Isaac blesses according to the promise of God that spoke of the “lamb” and the “seed” that was to come from his line.

28:9 – “Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael” – Esau seems to be trying to appease his family by taking a wife from Isaac’s half-brother’s line.

28:10 – “Jacob went out from Beersheba and went toward Haran” – Here the “home body” begins a 500 mile journey.

- It is between 35 and 70 miles from Beersheba to Bethel.

28:11 – “to a certain place” – Jacob is shepherded to this place as God gets him alone. God is setting Jacob apart so he can deal with him personally.

- Jacob has known about the God of Isaac and Abraham. But he has yet to encounter Him personally.
- Jacob has to quit deceiving first; hypocrites keep themselves from God. “God cannot and will not have a relationship with pretenders in the spirit.” – Brennan Manning

- 28:12-15 – There is not one word of rebuke or reproof in this encounter with God. It is the pure love of God that pours over Jacob here and, in that, God ruins Jacob for this world.
- This is Jacob's first encounter with the God of his fathers. He must have heard about this God many times, and possibly really longed for this personal touch for some time.
 - Jacob didn't do anything to earn God's favor yet.
- 28:12 – “ladder” – Lit. “stairway.” Probably a broad passageway.
- A ladder is merely a link from one location to an elevated location. Jacob sees the interconnectedness of heaven and earth.
 - In John 1:51, Jesus said He was the ladder upon which the angels ascended and descended, speaking of his bridging the gap between earth and heaven.
- 28:13 – “the Lord stood above it and said” – God grants Jacob His presence, protection, preservation, and promise.
- 28:14 – “seed” – The promise of Jesus continues. (Gal. 3:16)
- 28:15 – “I am with you” – Similar to the blessing Jesus spoke to his disciples in Matt. 28:20.
- “keep you wherever you go” – Just as Jesus keeps the believer. (Jude 24)
 - God promises to be with Jacob wherever he goes.
- 28:16 – “in this place, and I did not know it” – Jacob thinks he happened by chance onto this portal to heaven. (But God is not localized. His presence is the same everywhere.)
- 28:17 – “afraid” – Lit. “terrified.” Because he knew it not...
- God has been working in all our lives long before we ever realize it.
- 28:18 – “pillar” – A memorial. The place of an oath.
- Jacob is making promises and commitments to God. Not the best response...
 - The only pillar we see before Jacob's pillar is Lot's wife.
- 28:19 – “Bethel” – means “house of God.”
- It was near Bethel that Abraham had built an altar. (Gen. 12:8; 13:3-4)
- 28:20 – “If” – May possibly be better translated “since.”
- “Jacob made a vow” – Jacob seems to be cutting God a deal, by trying to set the rules.
 - Warren Wiersbe and other Bible teachers believe that Jacob wasn't making a bargain with God as much as he was affirming his faith in God.
- 28:22 – “I will surely give a tenth” – Jacob is giving God an incentive...like God needs the money.
- Like we do when we set out to something asking God to bless it while promising that if He does, we will use it in the end for His glory. But He may not have even called us to that something in the first place, and therefore cannot condone any of it.

Chapter 29:

The affairs of princes and mighty nations of that time are not recorded in the book of God, but are left to be buried in oblivion; while these small domestic matters of holy Jacob are recorded with their minute circumstances, that they may be an everlasting remembrance for “the memory of the just is blessed.”

29:1 – “went on his journey” – Lit. “lifted up his feet.”

- Jon Courson has this idea as “he had happy feet;” referring to his “conversion experience” at Bethel.

29:5 – “Laban the son of Nahor” – Actually the grandson of Nahor. (The Hebrew for “son” can refer to any male descendant.)

29:6 – “Rachel is coming” – This is no coincidence.

- God is guiding Jacob and Rachel to get them both there at the same time.

29:10 – “rolled the stone away” – A feat of unusual strength for one man, because the stone was large. (v. 2)

- Rachel is of the right family and she is beautiful. It is likely that Jacob is making a play for Rachel’s attention and favor.

29:11 – “Jacob kissed Rachel” – It seems to imply that Jacob bows and kisses her hand.

29:12 – “Rebekah’s son” – No doubt, Rebekah was a famous story in this area.

- Rebekah had left her brother almost 100 years ago, on almost an moment’s notice; and so far as the record goes, he had not seen her since.”
- “ran and told her father” – Because this is such a big story, Rachel leaves immediately for her family.

29:14 – “my bone and my flesh” – Laban is Jacob’s family.

- These men have a lot more in common than fathers and grandfathers.

29:16 – “Leah” – means “cow.”

- “Rachel” – means “ewe sheep.”

29:17 – “eyes were delicate” – Lit. “light or weak eyes.” Either light colored or poor eyesight.

- Jacob is walking into a lesson from God. He will reap what he has sown. (Gal. 6:7)
- “beautiful of form and appearance” – Everything they would esteem in that culture.

29:18 – “seven years for Rachel” – Jacob is paying the bride-price/dowry from 7 years of wages.

- The dowry was actually alimony in advance, in case of divorce. It was the responsibility of the father to keep the money aside for the woman in case of divorce.
- “seven years” – Time is a huge asset in a relationship, for “Love is patient...”
- Ladies: Give your heart to no man quickly.
- It is important to marry a man who can work hard.

29:22 – “feast” – Lit. “drinking feast.” No doubt Laban got Jacob drunk at this party.

29:25 – “deceived me” – As Jacob had done to Isaac. (Gen. 27:35)

- Disobedience may not derail God’s plan for our lives, but it will greatly affect how we end up experiencing it.

29:26 – “younger before the firstborn” – Jacob had deceived Isaac to skirt the custom of the firstborn. Now it comes back on him. (Lev. 18:18)

- “not be done so in our country” – Laban gives the lame excuse of the customs of the country.

29:31 – “unloved” – The idea is that Leah is unloved in comparison to Rachel. (v. 30)

- This dysfunctional family and the manipulations of two wives will bring about the 12 tribes of the nation of Israel.
- The tribe names may give a “coded” description of the life of the believer.

29:34-35 – “Levi...Judah” – Leah, although she is not loved by Jacob, gives birth to Levi and Judah, the priestly and messianic lines through Israel.

29:35 – “Judah” – means “praise.” The 4th of Leah’s sons was the only one whose name did not reflect her own personal situation, his name being a simple expression of praise to God. It is perhaps significant that this is the one through whom God intended one day to bring the Messiah into the world.

Chapter 30:

30:1 – “children, or else I die” – Tragically prophetic words. (Gen. 35:16-19)

30:2 – “Jacob’s anger was aroused” – Obviously, Jacob wasn’t the problem as he and Leah have had four sons by this time.

30:8 – “great wrestlings” – Lit. “wrestlings with God.”

30:14 – “Reuben” – Reuben is likely only about 7 years old at this time.

30:15 – “mandrakes” – Nicknamed “love apples.” The mandrakes had small orange-colored berry-like fruit, much esteemed in ancient times as an aphrodisiac and inducer of fertility. It also had fleshy, forked roots resembling the lower part of a human body, which have been used as a narcotic and emetic.

30:23 – “reproach” – Barrenness was considered to be shameful, a mark of divine disfavor. (Gen. 16:2; 30:2)

30:24 – “Joseph” – The name in Hebrew is akin to two words: “asaph” meaning “he has taken away my reproach,” and “joseph” meaning “the Lord shall add to me another.”

- “another son” – The fulfillment of Rachel’s wish would bring about her death. (Gen. 35:16-19)

30:25 – “my own place” – Jacob has about 12 or so children under 10 years old.

30:27 – “by experience” – (Heb. “nachash.”) Lit. “by enchantments.” Possibly by means of the little household idols that Laban worshipped. (Gen. 31:29)

- “Lord has blessed me for your sake” – Laban has gained from God’s blessing on Jacob.
 - This is an amazing observation of God’s work in another by a deceitful and idolatrous person.
- “the Lord” – Yahweh.

30:32 – “spotted and speckled” – Usually the animals were born solid colored. These would have been in a minority.

- Some think he chose this color because in Canaan it was generally most desired and delighted in. Shepherds in Canaan are called “nekoim” (Amos 1:1), the word here used for “speckled.”
- The spotted and speckled are recessive traits, meaning the genes contributed by the parents would both have to be spotted and speckled genes. Otherwise, the animals would be solid colored. Laban stacks the odds in his favor by removing all the spotted and speckled, leaving only animals with at least one dominant gene, and therefore giving him a much greater chance of seeing solid colored animals born from this flock.

30:35 – “removed...speckled and spotted” – Laban is separating out and sending away the ones that were to be Jacob’s (or would have helped to produce the ones that would have been Jacob’s).

- Laban continually manipulates this agreement changing Jacob’s “wages ten times.” (Gen. 31:7)

30:39 – “conceived” – (Heb. “yacham”) Lit. “to be made hot.” The idea is “come to be in heat.”

- It doesn’t seem that these rods peeled white would naturally influence conception at all.
- “brought forth streaked” – The scheme worked – but only because of God’s intervention (as Jacob himself admits in Gen. 31:9).

30:42 – “feeblers were Laban’s and the stronger Jacob’s” – Jacob is still conniving and deceiving for his own benefit. And Jacob is coming out on top.

Chapter 31:

31:2 – “countenance of Laban” – Jacob could see it in Laban’s face that Laban was upset with him.

31:2-3 – not favorable...Return to your land” – Jacob is called as well as driven.

31:3 – “Return to the land” – It has been 20 years. Jacob is around 90 years old. During the time he was in Haran, we have no record of an encounter with God.

31:4 – “to the field” – For privacy.

31:7 – “God did not allow him to hurt me” – God was protecting Jacob.

31:9 – “God has...given them to me” – Jacob is giving God the credit now for the growth of his flocks. (Is Jacob being honest?)

- 31:13 – “God of Bethel” – God is calling Jacob back to Bethel. Jacob doesn’t fully obey to his dismay. (Gen. 33:18; ch. 34)
- 31:14 – “any portion or inheritance” – Rather than treating this payment like a dowry, to provide a financial base for his daughters future well-being and security, as should have been done, he had “consumed” it all on himself.
- 31:19 – “Rachel had stolen the household idols” – It was a capital offense to steal another’s gods.
- “the household idols” – It is possible, as implied in some of the Nuzi tablets excavated around 1039, that the teraphim were associated with the inheritance and property rights of their owner.
 - If someone can steal your gods, you have the wrong gods.
- 31:21 – “he fled” – Running away, as he did from Esau.
- The running will end for Jacob in Ch. 32.
- 31:24 – “God had come to Laban” – God goes ahead to protect Jacob again, this time by telling Laban to not harm Jacob in a dream.
- “The safety of good men is very much owing to the hold God has of the consciences of bad men and the access He has to them.” - Matthew Henry
- 31:25 – “mountains of Gilead” – About 300 miles from Padan Aram.
- 31:27 – “secretly” – Laban gets a taste of his own medicine.
- Jacob is practicing deception.
- 31:29 – “my power to do you harm” – Laban threatens Jacob, but keeps his hands off.
- 31:33 – “Jacob’s tent” – Laban checks Jacob’s tent first. There is an obvious lack of trust here.
- 31:35 – “cannot rise before you” – Rachel lies and claims to have her period so she doesn’t have to stand up and reveal the gods.
- Rachel is learning deception as well; learning from the best - Laban and Jacob.
- 31:36 – “Jacob was angry” – Jacob turns on Laban now.
- 31:42 – “Fear of Isaac” – It seems that Jacob doesn’t think too highly of his father’s relationship with his God.
- 31:44 – “a covenant” – Who could trust a promise between these two guys?
- 31:49 – “Mizpah” – They do not trust each other. Mizpah is to serve as a look-out for both sides.
- 31:52 – “for harm” – This doesn’t restrict each from passing over to the other side, but declaring that they cannot pass over to the other side with bad intentions.

Chapter 32:

32:2 – “God’s camp” – Jacob recognizes them as God’s angels.

- “Mahanaim” – Lit. “two camps.” This is either 1) his camp and the angel’s camp, or 2) two camps of angels, one before and the other behind.

32:3 – “Esau” – Jacob’s mother had told him that she would send for him as soon as the wrath of Esau had cooled (Gen. 27:45). But, so far as the record goes, he hadn’t heard from her during his 20 years in Haran and she has died in the meantime.

32:4 – “my lord Esau” – Jacob is scared.

- Jacob is trying to appease Esau to win Esau’s favor. He thinks he must show Esau that he is not coming back to take over.

32:7 – “greatly afraid” – Jacob has seen the angels of God and is still afraid.

- “divided the people” – Jacob splits his camp into two parts to try to get one to escape, and likely to protect himself primarily.

32:9 – “Then Jacob said” – His first recorded prayer since leaving Bethel.

- “the Lord who said to me” – Jacob is going to Canaan in obedience to the Lord. And his obedience is going to put him between Laban and Esau.

32:9-12 – “I fear him...For you said, ‘I will surely treat you well...’” – Jacob is both sincere and manipulative.

- Jacob has a plan and then asks God to bless him.
- “deliver me” – This is the true request of Jacob.

32:13 – “a present for Esau” – Jacob sends ahead 580 animals.

- After Jacob prays, he proceeds with his own plan, again trying to manipulate Esau.

32:20 – “perhaps” – All of this effort and money for a “perhaps.” It is far better to trust God.

32:22 – “Jabbok” – means “emptying.” (Henry Morris has this word meaning “wrestler.”)

- Today, the Jabbok is called the Wadi Zerqa, flowing westward into the Jordan about 20 miles north of the Dead Sea. The Jabbok formed a deep rocky valley that served as the boundary between the kingdoms of Sihon at Heshbon and Og of Bashan.

32:24 – “Jacob was left alone” – Jacob is about 90 years old. He is alone in the dark, as he wouldn’t have had a fire that would’ve disclosed his position.

- He is alone again, as he was 20 years earlier at Bethel. (Gen. 28:11)
- “wrestled” – The Hebrew word implies a physical wrestling.
 - We do not struggle against God to win some prize from God. God condescends to wrestle with Jacob, rather than just crushing him.
 - Jacob is trying his best to avoid any conflict. He wasn’t looking to beat God. God searched him out.
 - We still wrestle with our own willingness to surrender and submit. We don’t wrestle to beat God, we wrestle to surrender ourselves.
- “wrestled...until the breaking of the day” – Jacob’s strong will was also his greatest weakness. Jacob was to surrender, through a crippling, to serve the Lord.

32:25 - “not prevail” – We do not beat God. He is gracious to continue with us.

- “hip was out of joint” – No more running from Esau.
- “out of joint as he wrestled” – Jacob is clinging now, not wrestling against God anymore, but clinging to God.
- God permits Jacob to wrestle with Him to get Jacob to a place where God can bless him.

32:26 – “I will not let you go” – Jacob is blessed by God because he stays with God, even while being disciplined by God.

- We won’t experience blessings from God by running to other things when we are hurting.
- This is an invaluable place for everyone to come to: where God conquers us. We must know we serve a God who is greater than us, and we cannot conquer much of anything until he conquers us.
- “unless you bless me” – Hosea 12:3-4 tell us he begs this request with weeping and tears. At this point, Jacob finally surrenders. He is now grasping the correct heel.
- For 20+ years, Jacob has connived and manipulated to get what he wants. Even though Jacob interacted with God, he still sought to please himself on his own strength. But here, Jacob cannot connive anymore.
- Our surrender always results in our blessing.

32:27 – “What is your name?” – Jacob must remember Isaac as him that same question 20+ years ago. (Gen. 27:24)

32:28 – “Israel” – Lit. “prince of God, or governed by God.” He is no longer Jacob – “heel catcher.”

- Jacob’s blessing is to be governed by God.

32:30 – “God face to face” – This is who Jacob was wrestling with.

32:32 – “the muscle” – Probably the sciatic muscle. Mentioned nowhere else in the Bible, this dietary prohibition is found in the later writings of Judaism.

- “shrank” – The flesh wasn’t removed. It was only rendered inoperative.

Chapter 33:

33:2 – “the maidservants and their children in front” – Even after his wrestling with and blessing from God, Jacob’s nature shows through in the ordering and sending ahead of his family.

33:3 – “bowed...seven times” – As was custom when approaching a king (according to the Tell el Armana tablets).

33:8 – “favor” – Jacob is trying to appease, and therefore manipulate, Esau.

- Jacob was worried about nothing. “Who can by worrying add one cubit to his height?” (Matt. 6:27; Luke 12:25)

33:9 – “enough” – (Heb. “rab”) Lit. “much.” (Compare with “enough” of v. 11.)

33:10 – “as though I had seen the face of God” – Jacob is humbled before Esau as God fulfills His word to Jacob.

- 33:11 – “blessing” – The Hebrew word for “blessing” is also used in Gen. 27:35. Jacob now acknowledged that the blessing he had struggled for was from God. In his last attempt to express reconciliation with Esau, Jacob in a sense gives back the “blessing” he had stolen from his brother, doing so from the blessings the Lord had given him.
- “enough” – (Heb. “kol”) Lit. “all things.”
- 33:14 – “until I come unto my lord in Seir” – Jewish teachers believe this will still happen in the kingdom age, where the Jews and the Edomites will come together. (“Sela” in Isaiah 16:1 and alluded to in Rev. 12.)
- 33:17 – “Succoth” – Only about a day’s journey from Bethel.
- Rather than going south to Seir, Jacob turns north to Succoth. And Succoth was a backward step, spiritually as well as geographically. It is difficult to reconcile the call to Bethel with the prolonged stay involved in building cattle sheds and a home, east of the Jordan.
- 33:18 – “Shechem” – Jacob is supposed to be at Bethel (Gen. 31:3), but he stops at Shechem.
- Jacob’s well still stands here to the day. It is at Shechem that Jesus met the Samaritan woman. (John 4:6)
 - Shechem is the place where God first appeared to Abram as he entered the land. (Gen. 12:6-7)
 - Jacob wanders between Succoth and Shechem for 8-10 years.
- 33:19 – “bought the parcel” – Jacob evaluates this move based on whether or not he can buy a home there, or get a job there, rather than on how it would affect his family.
- 33:20 – “altar” – This is Jacob’s first altar. Up to this point, Jacob has just been building pillars, which are places of oaths. (See also Jacob’s sacrifice in Gen. 31:54.)
- Jacob calls the altar by the right name, but puts it in the wrong place. He is building an altar while in disobedience.
 - “Israel” – Jacob accepts his new, God-given name.

Chapter 34:

The name of God ends Ch. 33 and begins Ch. 35, but it is completely absent from this sordid chapter.

- 34:1 – “Dinah” – She was likely between 13 and 15 years of age at this time.
- 34:2 – “violated her” – Lit. “afflicted or opposed.” The word speaks of going against her will. Shechem raped Dinah.
- Unattached young women were considered fair game in the cities of that time. There were no rights for women in this culture. If a man forced himself upon a woman, he was responsible to marry her.
- 34:3 – “he loved the young woman” – Shechem didn’t just abuse her and leave. He wanted to marry her.
- 34:5 – “defiled her” – Lit. “to make unclean, or to spoil for marriage.”
- “Jacob held his peace” – Jacob is waiting for the boys to come home.

- 34:7 – “very angry” – Jacob’s sons were immediately filled with wrath.
- This is a travesty in many ways. They were neighbors and friends. They had settled there amicably.
 - Vengeance is the Lord’s. (Rom. 12:19) We are to be slow to get angry. (James 1:19)
- 34:9 – “marriages with us” – Deceitful, and possibly Satanic, attack on the promised nation and Seed through the threat of intermingling.
- The Canaanites wanted to absorb Israel (v. 16) in order to benefit from the blessings Jacob had received from the Lord (both his offspring and his possessions – vv. 21-23).
- 34:13 – “deceitfully” – The boys have learned something from their father.
- 34:15 – “circumcised” – Jacob’s sons are using the sign of their covenant with God in a blasphemous and deceitful way.
- 34:22 – “circumcised” – This stipulation is all the more plausible because the rite, outside Israel, was sometimes an initiation into adulthood and marriageable status.
- 34:24 – “all...heeded Hamor and Shechem” – They convince all the men of the city to be circumcised.
- Circumcision in this culture was generally done with a stone and without antibiotics,
- 34:25 – “killed all the males” – They unjustly kill all the men of the sin of one man. It is a tendency of the flesh to punish a whole family or country for the sin of one man or one leader.
- 34:30 – “Simeon and Levi” – They will be punished for this action much later in Gen. 49.
- “I shall be destroyed” - Jacob’s sons have done this awful thing, yet Jacob is still concerned mainly about his own well-being. He is worried about himself.
 - Jacob fails to assume his own responsibility in this. It was his partial obedience that put them in this position in the first place.
 - It is this horrible event that finally gets Jacob back to Bethel.
- 34:31 – “like a harlot” – Jacob’s sons fire back at their father.
- Judah will have no problem treating his daughter-in-law like a harlot in Ch. 38.

Chapter 35:

- 35:1 – “God said to Jacob” – God initiates. This is God’s grace in the life of a stubbornly disobedient man.
- The grammar appears to be from Jacob’s perspective. God plants it in the heart of Jacob.
 - God is calling Jacob back to his “first love.” (Rev. 2:4)
- 35:2 – “Put away the foreign gods” – Rachel brought gods into the family.
- A god is anything that prevents us from obeying the Lord and His word. Sometimes, those things are as simple as daily circumstances, which we allow to dictate the course of our life.
 - The Law says we are to “have no other gods before Me.” (Exod. 20:3) Yet, “before Me” literally means “in My presence.”

- 35:3 – “go up to Bethel” – Jacob is trying to find his way back to the Lord. God is not located in a certain place. But the thing in Jacob’s heart that kept him from Bethel was also the same thing that kept him from God and obedience.
- “make an altar there” – Rather than the one built at Shechem.
- 35:4 – “earrings” – Amulets used in idol worship.
- “under the terebinth tree...by Shechem” – At the same spot, possibly prompted by Jacob’s example, Joshua would one day issue a similar call to Israel. (Josh. 24:23)
- 35:5 – “terror of God was upon the cities” – As soon as Jacob gets back in line with the Lord, God protected Jacob from those around him (despite Jacob’s fear mentioned in Gen. 34:30-31).
- When God’s people are doing God’s will in God’s way, they can depend on God’s provision and protection. When we fear God, we need fear no one else.
- 35:6 – “Luz” – means “departed.” The original name of Bethel.
- 35:7 – “El Bethel” – means “the God of the house of God.” Jacob realized something important about the Lord Himself between visits at Bethel.
- It has been a 30-year lesson!
- 35:8 – “Deborah, Rebekah’s nurse” – Rebekah died while Jacob was in Padan Aram. Somehow, Rebekah’s nurse ends up dwelling with Jacob’s family.
- Jacob is parting with the past.
- 35:9 – “when he came from Padan Aram” – It is when Jacob gets to Bethel that God considers him out of Padan Aram.
- 35:10 – “Israel shall be your name” – God reiterates the name change of Jacob. Jacob is coming into the promises of God.
- “blessed him” – There is no word of rebuke here, and no hint of Jacob getting second best.
 - This is an unequivocal promise with no hint of Jacob needing to do anything to receive this gift.
- 35:11 – “God Almighty” – (Heb. “El Shaddai”)
- 35:12 – “descendants” – KJV “seed.” This seems to be the culmination of the promises of God, the fullness of which pointed to the Messiah intimated in the word “seed,” singular. (Gal. 3:16)
- 35:14 – “drink offering” – This is a consecration offering; in addition to the sacrifice on the altar.
- 35:16 – “they journeyed from Bethel” – After God had told them to “go up to Bethel and dwell there.” (v. 1)
- “Ephrath” – means “fruitful.”
- 35:17 – “you will have this son also” – Jacob is 105 years old at this point.
- 35:18 – “Benjamin” – This final son of the 12 tribes of Israel.

35:19 – “Bethlehem” – means “house of bread.”

- This looks prophetically to Jesus and the slaughter of the innocents – Jer. 31:15 and Matt. 2:18.

35:21 – “Migdol Eder” – means “house of the flock.”

35:22 – “Reuben” – He is forfeiting the birthright and blessing of the firstborn. (Gen. 49:3-4; 1 Chron. 5:1) This act was an arrogant and premature claim to the rights of the firstborn – the right to inherit his father’s concubine.

- “Bilhah” – She was Rachel’s maid. And this is on the heels of Rachel’s death.

35:27 – “Jacob came to his father Isaac” – It has been 30 years. And the last time Jacob saw Isaac, Jacob was dressed in goat’s hair and calling himself Esau.

35:28 – “days of Isaac were one hundred and eighty years” – This must actually have been about 25 years after Jacob came back from Padan Aram, since Isaac had probably been about 135 years old when Jacob left home. Actually, Isaac must have still been living at the time Joseph was sold into Egypt, but the writer found it appropriate to mention his death at this point.

Chapter 36:

Ch. 36 shows the fulfillment of the prophecy to Rebekah; “two nations are in your womb.” (Gen. 25:23)

36:8 – “Esau dwelt in Mount Seir” – Esau moved east of the Jordan River, outside of the promised-land, to an area near Petra/Bozra in Edom. He is leaving Canaan because he and Jacob have too much stuff to mutually exist in Canaan.

- Esau never got to afflict Jacob. But the Edomites would afflict the Israelites for years to follow.
- There is no mention of God moving or blessing through this line. Esau’s sons make themselves at home, making themselves dukes, outside the promised-land.
- “Seir” – Another name for Edom. The word itself is related to the Hebrew word meaning “hair.”

36:11, 33 – “Eliphaz...Jobab” – Possibly the characters from the book of Job.

36:15 – “Teman” – Job’s counselor, Eliphaz, was from Teman.

36:20 – “the Horite” – This section of “the generations of Esau” lists the prominent descendants of Seir, and is included no doubt because of the fact that these people became so closely associated with the descendants of Esau by intermarriage that the two groups finally were one people, the Edomites.

36:28 – “Uz” – Job was from the land of Uz. (Job 1:1) Thus, Job probably lived in Edom.

Chapter 37:

- 37:1 – “a stranger, in the land of Canaan” – As opposed to Esau and his family, Jacob remains a stranger in this land. He was looking for “the city which has foundations whose builder and maker is God.” (Heb. 11:10)
- 37:2 – “Joseph...was feeding the flock” – It seems as if Joseph was shepherding, or in charge of, the flock and the brothers.
- Joseph never really gets a glimpse of God. The revelations of God seem to stop with Jacob and pick up again at the burning bush.
 - “Joseph brought a bad report of them” – It could be Joseph is being a bit of a tattletale, taking the favorite status of his dad. Or he is acting honorably toward his employer, his father.
- 37:3 – “Israel loved Joseph more” – Joseph gets the pre-eminent place. Levi and Simeon murdered Shechem. Reuben slept with Jacob’s concubine. Judah will sleep with his daughter-in-law. Joseph already seems to be set apart to receive the blessing.
- We have no reason to believe that Jacob’s favor toward Joseph was motivated by God in any way.
 - “son of his old age” – The rest of the brothers are raised under Jacob. Joseph is raised under Israel. They pick up on Jacob’s traits of deceitfulness. Joseph receives the blessing of God.
 - “tunic of many colors” – May also be translated “tunic with sleeves.” The laborers wore coats without sleeves; the aristocracy wore coats with sleeves.
 - Apart from v. 23 and 32 of this chapter, the only other place the Hebrew word is found in the OT is in 2 Sam. 13:18 describing the garment of a king’s daughter.
- 37:4 – “they hated him” – Acts 7:9 says they hated Joseph because they “envied” him.
- 37:7 – “sheaves” – This dream refers to Joseph’s earthly work in preserving the entire known world.
- 37:9 – “the sun, the moon...stars” – This dream refers to God’s heavenly work through Joseph and demonstrates God’s divine sovereignty over all these proceedings. (Rev. 12:1)
- The dream is repeated to declare that it was firmly decided by God. (Gen. 41:32)
 - Joseph had the heavenly pressure of a vision of the Lord. These dreams led (in one way) to Joseph being sent to Egypt. But those dreams also helped to sustain Joseph for 20 years as a slave or prisoner in a foreign country. These dreams afflicted Joseph, as well as gave him hope. (Ps. 105:17-19)
 - Joseph will need all of these dreams. The reality will happen whether or not Joseph received or understood these dreams at all. But the dreams are for Joseph. He didn’t ask for them. He won’t make them come to pass on his own. But there is a fellowship in seeing these dreams come to pass, as Joseph knows beforehand what the Lord intends to do. And all along God will develop faith in Joseph as he carries these dreams for 20 years.
 - Between the dreams and the reality of those dreams is a period of preparation/waiting while God develops character in us. (Rom. 5) What God put Joseph through, He put him through to conform him to the image of Jesus. (Rom. 8:28-29)
- 37:11 – “father kept the matter in mind” – Jacob pondered the dreams. After all, Jacob had received messages from God in dreams. (Gen. 28:12; 31:1-13)

- 37:12 – “Shechem” – About 50 miles from Hebron.
- The site of Levi and Simeon’s mass murder of the city of Shechem.
- 37:13 – “Here I am” – Joseph seems ready to yield/ surrender to the will of his father.
- 37:14 – “if it is well with your brothers” – Jacob may be worried that his sons might be hurt, possibly from those who had heard of what happened at Shechem.
- The sons seem to like to get away.
 - “Hebron” – means “fellowship.”
- 37:17 – “Let us go up to Dothan” – The people around Shechem know where the sons of Jacob are.
- “Dothan” – means “two cisterns.” About 20 miles north of Shechem.
 - It would turn out that God had been as watchful in His hidden-ness as in any miracle. The two extremes of His methods meet in fact at Dothan, for it was here, where Joseph cried in vain (42:21) that Elisha would find himself visibly encircled by God’s chariots (2 Kings 6:13-17).
- 37:18 – “slay him” – Levi and Simeon may be leading the way to murder again.
- 37:19 – “dreamer” – The Hebrew for this word means “master of dreams” or “dream expert” and is used here with obvious sarcasm.
- “the dreamer is coming...become of his dreams” – This shows what it was that fretted and enraged them.
- 37:20 – “We shall see what will become of his dreams” – They are putting Joseph’s dreams to the ultimate test; if the dreams really were from God, they cannot be defeated by the hatred of the brothers.
- 37:21 – “Reuben...delivered him” – Being the oldest son, he is responsible. But he may also feel guilty for sleeping with Bilhah, his father’s concubine, and may be trying to make that up to Jacob.
- 37:23 – “Joseph” – He is pleading with crying as they do this to him. (Gen. 42:21)
- The deliverer and favorite son will die in the eyes of the father today. Was this (from Exod. 12:41) the very same day as the first Passover 430 years earlier?
- 37:28 – “20 shekels of silver” – In later times, this amount was the value of a male of Joseph’s age who had been dedicated to the Lord. (Lev. 27:5)
- The price of a mature slave was later set at 30 pieces of silver. (Exod. 21:32)
 - “Joseph to Egypt” – This is the hand of the Lord sending Joseph to Egypt. (Ps. 105:17)
 - The matter has been firmly decided by God. (Gen. 41:32) The brothers “meant evil against me; but God meant it for good.” (Gen. 50:20)
- 37:29 – “Reuben...tore his clothes” – He thinks the blame will be on him.
- 37:31 – “goats” – Much like Jacob deceived Isaac years earlier with goat stew and skins. (Gen. 27:5-13)

37:33 – “wild beast” – The evil beast was the envy of the brothers.

37:36 – “officer” – (Heb. “saris”) Lit. “eunuch.”

- “guard” – means “slaughterers;” he is either the chief executioner or the head butcher.

Chapter 38:

The Bible flashes back to Canaan to give us the development of the Messianic line.

38:1 – “Judah departed” – Judah was the one to tell his brothers to sell Joseph, and now he leaves the brothers. It seems as if he is carrying some guilt for what was done.

38:2 – “daughter of a certain Canaanite” – Judah is taking a Canaanite wife and may be taking her wives as well.

- Judah goes against the custom of the day that would have the father of the bridegroom arrange the marriage and pay the dowry.

38:3-4 – “Er” - means “watchman.”

- The names Er and Onan also appear as designations of tribes in Mesopotamian documents of this time.

38:7 – “the Lord killed him” – The Hebrew tense seem to make God a passive participant in Er’s death, as if Er ceased to be sustained by God.

- There is good reason to believe that Er was involved in idolatrous practices.

38:8 – “raise up an heir to your brother” – A pre-law appearance of the Leverite marriage (“lever” is the Latin for brother-in-law), where a brother raised up children for the dead brother’s family. (Deut. 25:5-10)

38:9 – “when he went into his brother’s wife” – Lit. “whenever he went into his brother’s wife.” He enjoys sexual pleasure with her, but refuses to allow her to conceive children by him. This is a means of birth control sometimes called “onanism.”

- The blessing and birthright of the firstborn would go to Tamar’s child. Onan seems to want those things selfishly.
- This is not speaking of masturbation or coitus interruptus. It is also not speaking against the use of birth control.

38:11 – “lest he also die like his brothers” – Judah is suspicious that Tamar is having something to do with the death of his boys.

- The line of Judah, and therefore the line of the Messiah, is in jeopardy.

38:12 – “sheepshearers” – Usually accompanied by a big party.

- “Timnah” – Where Samson had also visited. (Judges 14)

38:14 – “covered herself with a veil” – Tamar dresses as a Canaanite temple prostitute.

38:15 – “he thought she was a harlot” – She had to disguise herself because Judah (to his credit) would not have done this knowingly.

38:16 – “what will you give me?” – They barter over the payment. This act is calculated.

38:18 – “signet” – The family seal. That is his name.

- Some say the tradition of exchanging rings at a wedding come back to the pledge talked of here.
- “your staff” – That which he leans upon. His trust.

38:21 – “harlot” – (Heb. “cedesha”) Lit. “one set apart.” That is, a temple prostitute.

- “no harlot in this place” – They are familiar with the harlots and this area didn’t have any in.

38:23 – “lest we be shamed” – Judah wants to push this under the carpet.

- God’s kids never get away with these kinds of things.

38:24 – “let her be burned” – Typical male chauvinism. It is okay for him to have sex with a prostitute, but she should be killed for doing the same.

- It seems like Judah is eager to get rid of Tamar.
- It is amazing how bad our sins look on everyone else.

38:29 – “Perez” – means “breach.”

- This is the Messianic line (Matt. 1:3; Luke 3:33). Jesus came to be among sinners.
- The very thing Judah was trying to avoid by selling Joseph and not wanting to serve the younger happens here in Judah’s own family. The older will serve the younger.

Chapter 39:

39:1 – “Potiphar...bought him” – Joseph seems to be auctioned off and sold as a slave.

- “Potiphar” – means “devoted to the sun.”

39:2 – “Lord was with Joseph” – This is the key characteristic of Joseph’s life.

- This is the first time this is said to be true of Joseph. It is better to be a slave with the Lord, than a free man without.
- Joseph was 17 years old, in a foreign country, away from his family, and serving as a slave.
- Nowhere in the Genesis account do we see God appear to Joseph, but God was with him anyway. Joseph was committed to the Lord despite his circumstances.
- “he was a successful man” – Possibly better translated, “he became a successful man.” The key word recurs in v. 3, which could be rendered “...made...successful.” The slightly complacent ring of the expression in English is no part of it. This speaks of achievement rather than status.

39:3 – “master saw that the Lord was with him” – Potiphar recognized the presence of God in Joseph’s life.

39:5 – “overseer” – Joseph, as a young man, was given responsibility over his master’s house.

- Joseph will be in Potiphar’s house for 11 years.

- 39:6 – “all that he had in Joseph’s hand” – Always this Israelite came to hold the welfare of his “world” in his hands – but always by the blessing and overruling of God, never by his own wits, as his father Jacob had so long attempted.
- “handsome in form and appearance” – Joseph is handsome and well built.
 - We can be very susceptible to temptation when things are going well – “let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor. 10:12). Proverbs 4:23 tells us to guard our hearts, for out of them flow the issues of life. The mind may know right from wrong, but the heart is deceitful above all things. Therefore, it is the heart that we are to guard.
- 39:7 – “cast longing eyes” – Her sin began in the eye.
- Job. 31:1 – “I have made a covenant with my eyes; Why then should I look upon a young woman?”
 - “Lie with me” – She wants to have sex with him.
- 39:9 – “you are his wife” – Joseph sees the consequences of this action before getting doing it.
- “great wickedness” – It is no longer considered a great wickedness in our culture. But Joseph has the true perspective on the matter.
 - “sin against God” – Joseph is basing this decision off of what God wants. Even if no one else would know, God would know. (Gal. 6:7 and 1 Cor. 15:33)
 - Ps. 51:4 – “against you and you only have I sinned.”
 - God’s Presence is everywhere. He sees everything. (Prov. 15:3)
 - Judah didn’t have any problems sinning in this manner in the previous chapter.
- 39:10 – “day by day” – This is a long-term trial.
- No doubt, Potiphar’s wife was beautiful. Powerful men don’t generally marry ugly women. In addition, Egyptian women were known for their liberality.
 - This trial is compounded by circumstances...Joseph is a 17 year old hormonally challenged boy alone in the house with an older woman who wants to have sex with him, she holds more power than he in the house and perhaps may be making promises to Joseph based on his compliance, and Joseph’s family has set a horrible example of abuse and dysfunctional relationship.
 - “or be with her” – If you have a problem, wisdom is to stay out of that environment.
 - Mike McIntosh is known for having the TV’s removed from his hotel rooms before entering the room. Alcoholics should stay out of the bars. Those struggling with pornography should stay off the internet.
- 39:11 – “none of the men of the house was inside” – It seems Potiphar’s wife is arranging this.
- They are far enough away to give privacy, but close enough for her to run to when she wants to accuse Joseph.
- 39:12 – “fled and ran outside” – Joseph fled youthful lusts. (2 Tim. 2:22)
- At times, it takes more courage to run than to stay.
 - 1 Cor. 10:13 – God provides a way of escape when temptation is too great.
 - If Joseph falls to Potiphar’s wife, Israel loses its deliverer. How many callings of God have been compromised by moral failure? How many dreams of God have been sacrificed for a moment’s pleasure?
- 39:13 – “his garment” – Likely the little Egyptian loincloth.

39:14 – “Hebrew” – From the ancient word “Habburi” meaning “shepherd.” This seems like a term of derision, playing off the racial prejudice of the Egyptians.

- “he has brought in” – She is blaming Potiphar for bringing in Joseph.

39:19 – “his anger was aroused” – It seems his wrath was against his wife as much as with Joseph. He is going to lose his best slave over this accusation.

- Generally, if you try to rape the executioner’s wife, you lose your head. But Potiphar places Joseph in his prison, and allows him some freedom there. (40:3)

39:21 – “the Lord was with Joseph” – Joseph can no longer blame his situation on his brothers. Here Joseph is put into prison for doing what is right. (Matt. 5:11-12) It would be normal for Joseph to begin accusing God and challenging His fairness.

39:22 – “committed to Joseph’s hand” – Joseph’s outstanding abilities and integrity are constant at every level: as prisoner and as governor he was simply the same man.

Chapter 40:

40:1 – “the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt offended their lord” – There may have been a plot against Pharaoh, and they put both guys in prison until they could figure out who did it.

40:2 – “chief butler” – The cupbearer. He would have been close to Pharaoh. Being the guy to taste the king’s wine before serving the king, he would be laying his life down for his boss on a regular basis.

40:3 – “house of the captain of the guard” – This is Potiphar’s prison; he must be regaining some favor in Joseph.

40:4 – “charged Joseph with them” – Joseph is placed over these two very important men.

40:7 – “Why do you look so sad today?” – A strange question to be asking in jail.

40:8 – “interpretations belong to God” – Joseph is not outwardly angry at God or at his dreams. The last time Joseph dealt with dreams, he was sent to Egypt.

- Joseph clearly knew that dreams came from God.

40:12 – “This is the interpretation” – God gives Joseph the interpretation.

40:14 – “house” – Lit. “hole.”

- Joseph is hurting and wants out. Yet, he doesn’t bad-mouth his brothers or Potiphar’s wife.

40:15 – “I was stolen away from the land of the Hebrews; and also I have done nothing here that they should put me into the dungeon” – Joseph’s words and actions give no indication of the pain that he is carrying on a daily basis, but this expression reveals some of what he bears.

40:16 – “the interpretation was good” – It was believed that interpreted dreams have some influence on what came to be.

40:19 – “Pharaoh will lift off your head” – Joseph tells the hard truth.

40:20 – “a feast for all his servants” – Pharaoh brings the butler and the baker out of jail. They eat with Pharaoh, then the butler is reinstated and the baker is executed.

40:22 – “hanged” – This is likely impaled after beheading. (40:19)

40:23 – “butler...forgot him” – This is God-given amnesia. God was the one to send Joseph to Egypt and to keep him in prison (Ps. 105:17-19). If Joseph is released at this time, he will head back to Canaan without interpreting the dreams of Pharaoh. Joseph wasn’t an Egyptian prisoner; he was God’s prisoner.

- God is building a man of iron out of Joseph. It takes a lot of time for God’s vision for Joseph to come true. The very dream Joseph was waiting for is the dream that tried him along the way.
- God is building the character into Joseph to be able to handle what He has called him to. Dr. D Martyn Lloyd-Jones used to say, “It’s tragic when a person succeeds before he is ready for it.”
- Joseph must be getting a little depressed. But God must be reminding him that if the butler’s and baker’s dreams came true, then his dreams will come true too.

Chapter 41:

41:1 – “two full years” – These must have been the toughest years of Joseph’s life. Each time the prison door opened, his heart must have skipped a beat in anticipation.

- God didn’t forget Joseph, despite the butler forgetting Joseph (40:23). God was with Joseph then too (as in 39:2,21) even though it probably didn’t feel like God was too close.
- This is an historical record. Grant Jefferies in “The Signature of God” quotes a reference to Joseph from a Yemenite tomb engraving.
- We don’t even know Pharaoh’s name; but we have 13 chapters on Joseph. God is more concerned with the line of the Messiah than with the passing powers of the world.
- Joseph has been in Egypt 13 years at this point. He is now 30 years old. (37:2; 41:46)
- When we are waiting, God is working. (Isa. 64:4)
- It is “through faith and patience that we inherit the promises” (Heb. 6:12; 10:36). And the best way to learn patience is through tribulation. (Rom. 5:3-4; James 1:2-4)

41:2 – “out of the river seven cows” – Because the Egyptians worshipped the Nile and Osirus (who was pictured with seven fattened cows), this dream would have great significance.

- Also Isis, the Egyptian goddess of fertility was the figure of a cow.
- “out of the river” – Cattle often submerged themselves up to their necks in the Nile to escape the sun and insects.

41:4 – “eat up” – (Heb. “akal”) Lit. “chewed up.”

41:5 – “grain” – Egypt was known as the granary of the ancient world.

41:6 – “the east wind” – The Palestinian sirocco (in Egypt called the khamsin), which blows in from the desert in late spring and early fall, often withers vegetation.

41:7 – “devoured” – (Heb. “bala”) Lit. “swallowed or engulfed.”

41:8 – “spirit was troubled” – God will change the course of history through this man’s dreams.

- “no one who could interpret” – These magicians were awesome, powerful men. They would later turn staffs into snakes, call up frogs, and other miracles. But their power couldn’t touch Pharaoh’s dreams, because the dreams came from God.

41:13 – “He restored me to my office” – The Egyptians believed the one who interpreted the dream actually had power to make the interpretations come true.

- The cup-bearer isn’t calling to Joseph because Joseph helped him, but because they have a need again.

41:14 – “shaved” – This was probably the first time Joseph, a Hebrew, was ever shaved. And they shaved everything; hair, eyebrows, beard, etc.

41:16 – “peace” – (Heb. “shalom”)

- “It is not in me” – Joseph takes no credit to himself. The prison has taught him well.
- The impossibility of the prison has humbled Joseph to the point where he can serve and give God the glory.

41:25 – “The dreams...are one” – Both dreams are speaking of the same thing.

- The repetition of the dreams implied the assurance that the dreams would take place – as with Joseph’s two dreams. (v. 32).

41:28 – “God has shown Pharaoh” – God seems to have a habit of speaking to pagan kings through dreams.

41:30 – “the plenty will be forgotten” – The famine would surpass the years of plenty.

- It always seems to be the case that the years of famine supersede and consume the years of plenty.

41:31 – “very severe” – Lit. “heavy.”

41:32 – “repeated” – The repetition of the dream signifies God’s confirmation and the establishment of this happening.

- God does the same thing with us, telling us two or three times to get us to believe in something.

41:33 – “Now therefore” – Joseph continues to give Pharaoh advice that Pharaoh didn’t ask for.

- God is leading Joseph here.

41:34 – “one-fifth” – It was common for nations to take a tenth across the board. But here they will take twice as much (and the people won’t even mind).

41:38 – “in whom is the Spirit of God” – This is the first mention in the Bible of the Holy Spirit coming upon a man.

41:39 – “discerning and wise” – Joseph was trained by the Holy Spirit in the plenty of Potiphar’s house and in the poverty of the jail. God has been training Joseph long before he reaches this point.

41:40 – “my people shall be ruled according to your word” – Lit. “at your command all my people are to kiss (you)” – i.e. kiss your hands or feet in an act of homage or submission.

41:41 – “set you over all the land of Egypt” – This is an amazing step in one day; from jail in the morning to second in the kingdom in the evening.

- This seems similar to the way God has worked in my life; wait, wait, wait...and then run like crazy.
- Hindsight is 20/20 when we look back on the hardships of our lives and see how God used them for redemption and our personal benefit.
- When God is working character in us, He sees beyond us to the multitudes of people who will be effected by us in time.

41:42 – “signet ring” – The sign of the authority of Egypt.

41:45 – “Zathnath-Paaneah” – We are unsure of the meaning, but seems to speak of something like “preserving life” or “discerning dreams.”

- Joseph will rule Egypt as an Egyptian.
- “priests of On” – These priests were nearly equal to Pharaoh in power.
 - Plato and Strabo traveled to On to learn. It was a great place of learning devoted to the sun-god, Ra.
- “Asenath” – Probably means “she belongs to (the goddess) Neith.”
 - It seems likely that she became a believer, as is true of her children later in life.

41:49 – “immeasurable” – They were harvesting so fast that they couldn’t keep up the numbering.

41:51 – “Manassah” – means “forgetful” and speaks of God removing the bitterness from Joseph’s heart and life.

41:52 – “fruitful in the land of my affliction” – What other land has ever been more fruitful?

- God will never greatly use a man He has not first greatly hurt” – Chuck Swindoll.

41:56 – “over all the face of the earth” – This seems to be a world-wide famine, at least covering the entire Mediterranean world.

- This is now 20 years since Joseph came from Canaan. He is 37 at this time.

Chapter 42:

42:1 – “in Egypt” – The trip to Egypt was long (250-300 miles) and dangerous, and a round trip could consume 6 weeks’ time.

- “Why do you look at one another?” – Jacob noticed a strange expression among the brothers when Egypt was mentioned, because the brothers knew Joseph was sold as a slave there.

42:3 – “brothers went down to buy grain in Egypt” – It was considered a dishonor to send your servants in your place, so Jacob sent his sons.

- 42:6 – “he who sold to all the people” – All food went out through Joseph.
- “Joseph’s brothers came and bowed down” – His brothers come to him to buy grain.
 - This is, in some measure, the fulfillment of Joseph’s dreams from 37:7,9.
 - When Joseph’s brothers plotted murder against him and sold him into slavery, they did it with the specific intention of defeating his dreams (Gen. 37:19-20). Instead, by sending Joseph to Egypt, they provided the way for the dreams to be fulfilled.
- 42:7 – “spoke roughly” – Joseph spoke through an interpreter to his brothers.
- 42:9 – “you are spies” – Joseph’s brothers may have called him a spy 20 years ago.
- 42:11 – “one man’s sons” – They are all 40-60 years old.
- “honest men” – Joseph knows better than that. He knew their hearts.
- 42:15 – “you shall be tested” – Joseph is delaying.
- “Jesus doesn’t test us to see us fail; He tests us to see us fixed” – Jon Courson.
- 42:17 – “in prison” – Joseph places them in the prison three days, where he had been sitting for 2+ years.
- 42:18 – “for I fear God” – What would it be like for an Egyptian to tell the Hebrews that?
- 42:21 – “guilty concerning our brother” – Joseph’s brothers still struggle with a guilty conscience 20 years later.
- “Suspicion haunts the guilty mind” – Shakespeare.
- 42:22 – “Did I not speak to you” – Reuben says “I told you so!”
- “blood is required of us” – He knows they are all responsible for Joseph’s blood.
 - Joseph was wronged and yet has been able to relinquish the anger and revenge of 20 years of separation. On the other hand, Joseph’s brothers wronged and treated him poorly and still, 20 years later, they were dealing with their actions. One day Joseph will tell them that oversaw the whole process, and they would be free of their guilt.
- 42:23 – “understood” – He overheard and understood their language. But more than that, Joseph could glimpse into their heart and see their guilt and really understand where they are coming from.
- 42:24 – “wept” – Joseph wept for them. He was doing alright now. He didn’t weep for his situation. He knew that God had taken him there to save his brothers. His dreams were fulfilled. But they were still struggling with their guilt. And their struggle hurt Joseph empathically.
- No doubt, Joseph had some concept of the importance of the sons of Israel in the over-arching plan of God.
 - “bound him” – Joseph has Simeon bound in front of their eyes, as he had been bound years earlier.
- 42:25 – “restore every man’s money” – Joseph knows there will be five more years of famine.

42:28 – “they were afraid” – How guilty they must have been to have received a sack of money back and believe that God is getting them because of it.

- “money” – Could each sack have 20 pieces of silver in it?

42:30 – “the man” – Joseph.

42:34 – “trade” – This means “to do business.”

42:35 – “afraid” – Fear is associated with a sense of loss. They hadn’t lost any money, so they must feel like they are losing something else.

42:36 – “All these things are against me” – Jacob, the spiritual giant, continues to doubt. He keeps the brothers at home, rather than sending them back to Egypt for food and Simeon.

42:37 – “Kill my two sons” – What grandfather would want to kill his two grandsons to recompense the loss of a son? This is a thoughtless offer.

42:38 – “My son” – Jacob only recognizes Benjamin as his son.

Chapter 43:

43:2 – “buy us a little food” – Jacob wants food, making no mention of Simeon.

- Necessity drove Jacob to do something he would never normally do.

43:6,8,11 – “Israel” – Jacob is not called by his original name in this scene.

43:6 – “still another brother” – Jacob wants to know why they disclosed so much information.

43:8 – “the lad” – Benjamin is more than 20 years old at this time.

- “live and not die” – Judah states that if Jacob doesn’t send Benjamin with them, they and Benjamin will all die anyway as a result of the famine. Jacob might as well take the chance to send Benjamin.
- “The Judah said” – From here on, Judah assumes the leadership of the remaining 11 brothers.

43:9 – “I myself will be surety” – Judah guarantees Benjamin’s safety with his own life.

43:11 – “Take some of the best fruits” – It seems that Jacob is trying to appease the Egyptian ruler, as he had done with Esau in Ch. 32.

- “present” – (Heb. “minha”) This is an almost indispensable/mandatory courtesy in approaching a person of rank. (1 Sam. 16:20; 17:18)

43:14 – “God Almighty” – (Heb. “El Shaddai”) As seen in Gen. 17:1.

- “If I am bereaved, then I am bereaved” – This doesn’t seem like a strong declaration of faith.
 - Jacob is called to surrender again. (At this point, he is called Israel again. 43:11)
 - Sometimes, the greatest act of surrender is simply to place it in the hand of God without any idea of how it will turn out in the end. (Esther 4:16)

43:18 – “afraid” – They are going to the ruler’s home, not to the prison, and they are still scared. No doubt, it is a mark of their on-going guilt.

- 43:19 – “drew near to the steward” – Joseph’s brothers are pleading their case to Joseph’s servant.
- 43:23 – “peace” – (Heb. “shalom”) Here, the Egyptian is witnessing to the Hebrews.
 - “Your God and the God of your fathers” – The Egyptian is giving credit to the Lord.
- 43:26 – “bowed down before him” – They bow to Joseph again. He is getting closer to the fulfillment of his dreams. (Gen. 37:7,9)
- 43:27 – “your father” – This is Joseph’s father too.
- 43:29 – “his brother Benjamin” – Benjamin was about 16 years younger than Joseph. Therefore, he would’ve been about 1 year old when Joseph was sold into slavery.
- 43:30 – “his heart yearned for his brother” – God take note of Joseph’s broken heart. He keeps record of our tears. (Ps. 56)
 - Joseph cared greatly for these brothers who had hurt him.
 - Joseph, like Jesus, wants to come to his brothers, but can only do so after a demonstration of repentance.
 - “weep” – The Hebrew word carries the idea of “to flow with tears.”
- 43:32 – “Hebrews” – The Egyptian word “habburi” and the word “Hebrew” have the same root meaning “nomads, or shepherds.”
 - The Egyptians were intelligent and advanced, and therefore looked down on nomads and shepherds.
 - Egypt was one of the most racist societies on earth. They believed that Egyptians came from the gods, and all other peoples came from lesser origins. There was absolutely no social mixing with foreigners in the Egypt of Joseph’s day.
- 43:33 – “looked in astonishment” – The brothers recognize the impossibility of this happening by chance. These are 40 million to 1 odds.
- 43:34 – “Benjamin’s serving was five times as much” – Joseph is treating Benjamin as a noble, possibly to see if the brothers would react to this with jealousy.

Chapter 44:

- 44:5 – “practices divination” – Joseph, no doubt, did not need to and would not practice divination as the Egyptians. But he wants his brothers to think he is truly Egyptian.
- 44:9 – “let him die” – The brothers, sure of their innocence, set the terms for the offender.
- 44:10 – “be my slave” – The servant softens the terms of the offender.
- 44:14 – “Judah and his brothers came to Joseph’s house” – The brothers could have split. We are beginning to see evidence of a true character change within them.

- 44:16 – “God has found out the iniquity” – They are very aware of their guilt, even though they didn’t actually steal Joseph’s cup.
- In Judah’s mind, it seems, the brothers are now destined to live the rest of their lives as slaves in Egypt because they sold Joseph as a slave some 20 years before.
 - “iniquity” – Lit. “bent, or twisted.” The natural inclination of the human heart away from the things of God.
- 44:17 – “be my slave” – Joseph decides to keep Benjamin as a slave (as he was sent to Egypt by these brothers about 20 years earlier).
- 44:18 – “The Judah came near and said” – Donald Grey Barnhouse called this speech by Judah “the most moving address in all the Word of God.”
- 44:28 – “torn to pieces” – This is the first time Joseph has heard the alibi used by the brothers to cover their selling of Joseph to Egypt as a slave.
- Jacob and (likely) Reuben and Benjamin still believe that Joseph is dead.
- 44:30 – “his life is bound with the lad’s” – The Hebrew underlying this clause is later used of Jonathan’s becoming “one in spirit with David.” (1 Sam. 18:1)
- 44:33 – “please let your servant remain instead of the lad” – This is self-sacrifice coming from the tribe of Judah. (A picture of Jesus.)
- Judah is the one who came up with the plan to sell Joseph in Gen. 37:26-27.

Chapter 45:

- 45:1 – “Then Joseph could not restrain himself” – This is what Joseph has been longing to hear.
- “cried out” – Joseph must yell in Egyptian, and the Egyptians leave.
 - It is good to remember in any family, even in the Church, that people can change.
- 45:2 – “the house of Pharaoh heard it” – It seems to imply that they were crying loud enough to be heard in Pharaoh’s house.
- 45:3 – “dismayed” – Lit. “terrified, awestruck, or speechless.”
- “I am Joseph” – This is the first time Benjamin and Reuben will hear the truth.
- 45:4 – “whom you sold into Egypt” – Joseph’s forgiveness doesn’t gloss over the truth of the matter. (Gen. 50:20 – “you meant it for evil...”)

- 45:5 – “you sold me here; for God sent me” – One of the classic Biblical statements of providential control. This Biblical realism, to see clearly the two aspects of every event – on the one hand human mishandling (and the blind working of nature), on the other the perfect will of God – and to fix attention on the latter as alone being of any consequence.
- “for God sent me before you to preserve life” – Joseph is not bitter, but is consoling his brothers. Remarkable!
 - It is Joseph’s ability to see God’s hand in this that keeps him from bitterness.
 - “to preserve life” – Joseph is going to preserve the life of those who betrayed him.
 - “do not therefore be grieved” – Joseph is trying to alleviate their guilt. He has truly set in his heart that God was in this. God used their evil for good (Gen. 50:20), and Joseph truly forgives them for their part in this story.
 - More of Genesis is devoted to Joseph than to any other character. Joseph truly parallels and most accurately portrays God’s own Son, Jesus.
- 45:7 – “to preserve a posterity for you” – God’s Israel (His people) are the particular care of God’s providence. (“The Lord’s portion is His people...” - Deut. 32:9.)
- 45:9 – “your son Joseph” – They have been calling him “the man” all this time.
- 45:10 – “be near to me” – Joseph wants those who mistreated him to live near him so he could nourish them.
- 45:11 – “I will provide for you” – Keep in mind that this reconciliation was possible only because Joseph had suffered and triumphed; and it is a beautiful picture of what the Lord Jesus Christ did for sinners in His death on the cross and His resurrection.
- 45:12 – “my mouth that speaks to you” – No longer through an interpreter. (Gen. 42:23)
- 45:14 – “wept” – How long must have they cried?
- 45:15 – “talked with him” – This may be the first time Joseph and his brothers have really talked. They despised him earlier. (Gen. 37:4)
- 45:20 – “do not be concerned about your goods” – This is not easy. But Egypt would offer all they would need and replace all that was lost.
- 45:21 – “gave them carts...and he gave them provisions” – They come out of Egypt with riches; and they walk through famine lands with stuff. God has his way of providing for His people.
- 45:26 – “Jacob’s heart stood still” – Jacob is hearing the truth for the first time.
 - Jacob is 130 years old.
- 45:28 – “Israel” – The author switches to Jacob’s spiritual name at the end of this account.

Chapter 46:

46:1 – “Beersheba” – At the southern border of Canaan. (Josh. 15:21)

- Jacob is seeking the Lord before leaving Canaan. Isaac was told to no longer leave the land. And even though this decision may seem obvious, Jacob is waiting on God's voice rather than just walking through the open door.

46:3 – “do not fear” – Evidently, Jacob has some fear.

- “I will make of you a great nation there” – As Israel and his family were about to leave Canaan, God reaffirmed his covenant promises.

46:4 – “his hand on your eyes” – Speaking of Joseph closing Jacob's eyes upon his death.

46:8 – “children of Israel” – Jacob's children. Israel becomes the name of the nation.

46:15 – “Leah” – She had 6 sons and totaled 33 sons and grandsons.

46:18 – “Zilpah” – Leah's handmaid had 2 sons and totaled 16 sons and grandsons.

46:20 – “Asenath” – Joseph, picturing Jesus, took a Gentile bride while in a foreign land.

46:21 – “Benjamin” – The chronologies place Benjamin around 22 years old at this time, yet with 10 children. Could this be a set or two of twins or triplets?

46:22 – “Rachel” – She had 2 sons and totaled 14 sons and grandsons.

46:25 – “Bilhah” – Rachel's handmaid had 2 sons and totaled 7 sons and grandsons.

46:27 – “seventy” – Stephen states the number to be 75 (in Acts 7:14) which is the number given by the Septuagint which includes the three sons of Ephraim and the two sons of Manasseh (Exod. 1:5; Num. 26:28-37; 1 Chron. 7:14-15, 20-25).

- It was now 215 years since God had promised Abraham to make of him a great nation (Gen. 12:2) and that branch of his seed on which the promise was entailed had increased to only 70. But over the next 400 years, while in Egypt, it will reach to 2-3 million.

46:28 – “Goshen” – means “to draw near.”

46:29 – “Joseph made ready his chariot” – Joseph has waited 22 years for this day.

- The picture of Joseph, the prime minister of Egypt, approaching this old man, who cannot see well, as 70 people stand around watching; the Egyptian officers and chariots on one side and the Hebrew shepherds and their stuff on the other side. It is the re-uniting of a father and a son.
- God must be looking to the day when He would be re-united with His Son.

- 46:34 – “shepherd is an abomination” – The Egyptians detested the uneducated, nomadic shepherds who ruined their fields and stole their things. They abhorred the Habburi.
- It was God’s grace to have Egypt hate shepherds and, therefore, keep Israel separate.
 - This is a picture of sanctification. God knows how to keep His people from the influence of the world.
 - During this era, the Hixos dynasty has taken over the area. “Hixos” means “shepherd-kings.” During this time, the Habburi will be treated fairly. But this gives rise to the ultra-harsh treatment the Egyptians will place on Israel when a king comes to power “who did not know Joseph.” (Exod. 1:8)

Chapter 47:

47:3 – “What is your occupation?” – Joseph knew Pharaoh well. He predicted this question in Gen. 46:33.

47:4 – “dwell in the land” – This is only a temporary (400 years – Gen. 15:13) stay in Egypt.

47:6 – “Goshen” – In north-east Egypt, the Nile-delta area at Goshen was rich and fertile.

- “any competent men” – Any men with ability comparable to Joseph’s. Pharaoh is so pleased with Joseph that he wants to hire Joseph’s brothers for government work simply at Joseph’s word.

47:7 – “Jacob blessed Pharaoh” – The lesser is always blessed by the greater. (Heb. 7:7)

- Here we have an old man who doesn’t see well standing in front of one of the most powerful men in the world at that time un-intimidated and looking to bless.

47:8 – “How old are you?” – This is the first thing Pharaoh says to Jacob.

47:9 – “few” – Life is like a vapor.

- “evil” – Lit. “hard, difficult.”
- “130 years” – Jacob will leave to be 147 years old.
- “pilgrimage” – Jacob was looking to a city with foundations whose builder and maker was God. (Heb. 11:10)

47:11 – “Rameses” – The Rameses kings had not been on the scene by the time of Joseph. This is either a district with a name unassociated from the kings or it is an addition by Moses at the time of writing.

47:14 – “all the money” – Joseph takes all the gold and/or silver of the entire regions of Egypt and Canaan to Pharaoh.

- Joseph is not being harsh, but is in fact a good steward of the resources of Egypt. Asking the people to pay like this for food will make the people use the food as needed and not be wasteful. Joseph will not promote the waste that comes from being given food without working.

47:15 – “money failed” – There was no more money left and the money depreciated in value compared to the food.

- There comes a time when the money of every great civilization fails.
- Revelation speaks of a time when the people will be trading a wheelbarrow of gold for a wheelbarrow of wheat.

47:17 – “livestock to Joseph” – They exchange all their possessions for food.

47:18 – “nothing left” – We would like to think that with our technology and resources that we would escape these natural disasters.

- The first 6 seal judgments of Revelation are natural disasters.

→ The common refrain on the heels of Hurricane Katrina in 2005 was “this ought not to have happened in the United States.”

47:20 – “Joseph bought all the land of Egypt” – Now the people are giving their property for food.

- Archeologists agree that there is a point in the history of Egypt when the land goes from private ownership to property of the king.

47:22 – “priests” – These are the priests of On at Hieropolis. They were very powerful and Pharaoh curries their favor.

47:23 – “seed for you...sow the land” – Joseph knows that this is the final year of the famine. They plant to harvest the following season.

47:24 – “one-fifth to Pharaoh” – The people are working the land that belongs to Pharaoh and giving him 20% of the revenue off the top.

- Pharaoh must have been fairly pleased with Joseph and these arrangements.

47:27 – “multiplied exceedingly” – About a 6% increase over the 430 years in Egypt, growing from 70 to 2-3 million people.

47:28 – There is a 17-year gap between v. 26 and v. 27.

- It has been 39 years since Joseph first went down to Egypt. Jacob is now 147 years old and Joseph is now 56 years old.

47:29 – “hand under my thigh” – The process of making an oath, pointing to the reproductive organ and the descendants that are involved in the keeping of this oath, as well as the punishment that will come on the one failing to keep the oath.

- Jacob knew God’s promise that Joseph will close his eyes at his death and the Jacob will remain in Egypt. (Gen. 46:4)

47:30 – “carry me out of Egypt” – Jacob was a pilgrim and he trusted by faith that God would take him back to the promised-land (to Abraham’s cave at Machpelah).

47:31 – “bowed himself on the head of the bed” – Could also be translated “...on his staff.” Heb. 11:21 points to this (and the blessing of Joseph’s sons) as the great act of faith in Jacob’s life.

Chapter 48:

48:1 – “Manasseh and Ephraim” – They are likely about 20 years old at this time. (Joseph has been married to Asenath approximately 26 years at this time.)

48:2 – “strengthened himself” – This is often the impact of a visit to the ailing.

48:3 – “Luz” – The previous name of Bethel.

- God is going to be passing the blessing given to Jacob at Bethel to his sons.

48:5 – “as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine” – Jacob is making Joseph the firstborn due to the forfeiture of that place by Reuben as a result of his adultery with Bilhah and the forfeiture of that place by Simeon and Levi as a result of attacking the city of Shechem.

48:7 – “Rachel died beside me” – Jacob will soon see Rachel again.

48:8 – “Who are these?” – Jacob’s eyesight is poor, and he cannot see them.

48:13 – “Ephraim with his right hand toward Israel’s left hand” – Joseph put Manasseh at Jacob’s right hand to get the blessing of the firstborn. But Jacob crossed his arms and passed the first blessing to Ephraim instead. This is a deliberate and knowing act of Jacob.

- Years earlier, Jacob had to trick his father for the blessing so that the younger would be blessed above the older. Here he does this wittingly.

48:14 – “knowingly” – Despite not being able to see physically, his spiritual sight and knowledge lead him to this blessing.

48:15 – “the God who has fed” – (Heb. “Jehovah-Ra”) Lit. “the Lord is my shepherd.”

- This is the first mention in the Bible as God as a shepherd.

48:16 – “redeemed” – (Heb. “goel”) Also “kinsman-redeemer.”

- This is the first mention in the Bible and associates “goel” with the Angel.

48:15-16 – Some see the trinity in these verses with the “God before whom my fathers” being God the Father, “the God who has fed me” being God the Holy Spirit, and “the Angel who has redeemed me” being Jesus Christ.

48:19 – “his younger brother shall be greater” – Ephraim becomes the main part of the northern tribes of the nation of Israel. (Judah will become the leader of the southern tribes taking the name Judah.)

48:20 – “God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh” – In the future, it will be good to be blessed like Ephraim and Manasseh. But for now, Ephraim takes the predominant blessing.

48:22 – “portion” – (Heb. “Shechem”) Lit. “ridge.” We are not sure if Jacob took possession of that area after Simeon and Levi sacked the city (Gen. 34), if this is referring to another unrecorded event of Jacob’s lifetime, or if this is referring to a future prophetic event.

- Joseph will have his bones buried at Shechem when the Israelites leave Egypt. (Josh. 24:32)
- Shechem is also the place where Jesus met the woman at the well. (Sychar of John 4.)

Chapter 49:

- 49:1 – “that I may tell you what shall befall you” – There is a prophetic element to these blessings.
- Jacob will take the appropriate character trait of each son and prophetically project it into the future and onto the descendants of that son.
 - The prophecies will line up with the blessings of Moses in Deut. 33 and the drawing of the lots by Joshua in Josh. 13-21.
 - “in the last days” – A Hebrew phrase used 14 times in the OT.
 - “Every superior and significant life becomes prophetic at its close” – Ziegler.
- 49:2 – “Israel” – This is the high point, spiritually, in the life of Jacob. The sons of Jacob, the deceiver, are in fact blessed by Israel, the spiritual son of God.
- Here, Jacob devoid of any strength of his own is able to declare the faith of a son of God.
 - It is at our death where we often most clearly reveal our faith. It is often at that point where we most clearly show our heart.
- 49:3-4 – Reuben: Although firstborn by birth, he forfeited the rights of the firstborn because of his adultery.
- “unstable as water” – Speaking against lust and adultery.
 - Reuben’s descendants were characterized by indecision. (Judges 5:15-16)
 - As much as anything, God looks for stable character in those who will lead His people.
 - “excel” – Lit. “have anything special to contribute, to leave to the benefit of posterity.” (Num. 32; Josh. 22; Judges 5)
 - “you went up to your father’s bed” – He slept with Bilhah in Gen. 35:22.
 - That act occurred nearly 40 years earlier.
 - Reuben stayed east of the Jordan when Israel inherited the promised-land. (Judges 5:15-16)
- 49:5-6 – Simeon and Levi: The second and third-born sons of Jacob forfeit their position to Joseph because of their act of cruelty to Shechem. (Gen. 34)
- “in their anger” – Speaking against anger and the lack of control.
 - Levi is left without an inheritance, only having 48 cities scattered throughout Israel. (Exod. 32:26-38; Num. 35:2,7; Josh. 14:4; 21:1-3,41)
 - Simeon will be absorbed into Judah in the southern kingdom. (Josh. 19:1,9; 1 Chron. 4:39-43)

49:8-12 – Judah: This will be the second longest blessing (next to Joseph’s) and will make no mention of the selling of Joseph or the sexual relationship with Dinah.

- “praise” – Judah means “praise.”
- “lion’s whelp” – Judah’s greatest descendant, Jesus Christ, is Himself called “The Lion of the Tribe of Judah” (Rev. 5:5).
- “Shiloh” – The word comes from the root word for “peace.”
- “Shiloh...Him” – Speaking of a specific person. Seems to be speaking of the Messiah. (Num. 24:9,17; Micah 5:2-5)
- “until Shiloh comes” – The Hebrew is nearly identical to Ezek. 21:27, where Zedekiah, the last king of Judah, is told to remove his crown (Ezek. 21:26) from his head because dominion over Jerusalem will ultimately be given to the one “to whom is rightfully belongs.”
- “scepter shall not depart from Judah” – The ancient rabbis taught that the Messiah would come before the right to govern their own people was taken away from the Jews. So when the Roman empire took away the right of capital punishment from Israel in 6 AD, rabbis passed through the city wailing and tearing their clothes believing the word of God to have been broken, when in fact the Messiah was in a carpenter’s shop in Galilee at that time.
- “donkey” – Zech. 9:9 predicted the Messiah to ride into Jerusalem on a donkey.

49:13 – Zebulun: Although not directly touching the sea or Sidon, they were placed close enough to be able to work with and benefit from both.

- Zebulun was noted for its faithfulness to David. (1 Chron. 12:33)
- Lebanon currently holds the ancient area of Zebulun.

49:15-16 – Issachar: The tribe would be located along the “Via Mare” trade route making the region important and wealthy. But apparently, they never capitalized on it as they could have.

- “strong donkey, lying down” – They were a strong, yet lazy, group of people.
 - Issachar was a large tribe; third in size according to the Numbers 26 census. But because of their size and abundance, they were often targets of oppressive foreign armies who put them into servitude. Thus they became “a band of slaves.”
 - “Ease at the cost of liberty will be the characteristic of the tribe of Issachar” – Delitzsch.

49:16-17 – Dan: The tribe is omitted from the listing of tribes in Rev. 7, but is included in the listing in Ezek. 48.

- “judge his people” – Dan produced some strong leaders including Samson. (Judges 14-16) And despite being small and unimpressive, Dan was nevertheless a dangerous adversary to those attacking Israel from the north.
- “serpent by the way” – Dan is a perpetual troubler of Israel. Unsatisfied with their inheritance in the south, they relocated to the north at took the peaceful city of Laish. (Judges 18) And the northern region of Dan (near Mt. Herman) will become a center of idolatry for the nation of Israel.

49:18 – “salvation” – (Heb. “yeshua”) First mention in the Bible.

- This is an unrelated outburst not related to the blessings directly.
- The Greek for “Jehovah is salvation” is Jesus.

49:19 – Gad: They were constantly vulnerable to attack because of its location east of the Jordan River. (Josh. 13:24-27)

- The tribe of Gad supplied many fine troops for David. (1 Chron. 12:14)

49:20 – Asher: This is still a very productive area. With fertile plain and trade routes to the sea, Asher would “dip his foot in oil” (Deut. 33:24) and produce a notable annual quota for the palace (1 Kings 4:7).

49:21 – Naphtali: This is another productive area. (Judges 4:6,10,15; 5:18)

- Jesus did much of His teaching and ministry in the areas of Zebulun and Naphtali. (Matt. 4:12-16)

49:22-26 – Joseph: This is the longest of all the blessings. Ephraim will be the son to carry this blessing, as it will lead the northern tribes of Israel.

- The imagery of this blessing is similar to Psalm 1.
- Jacob used the word “bless” 6 times in his speech to and about Joseph.
- “fruitful” – A pun on the name of Ephraim. (Gen. 41:52)
- “made strong” – Lit. “subtle.” This is a picture of God Himself reaching around Joseph and grabbing the bow with Joseph to shoot the arrows.
- Joseph’s blessings are greater than the blessings Jacob received from his father.

49:27 – Benjamin: This tribe will eventually be subsumed into the tribe and nation of Judah.

- Benjamin is known for its warriors including the judge Ehud (Judges 3:15-20) and the king Saul (1 Sam. 11-15). See also the warriors of Judges 19-21. The Apostle Paul is also of the tribe of Benjamin.

49:28 – “twelve tribes of Israel” – First mention in the Bible.

49:33 – “drew his feet up” – His hip must still be sore (Gen. 32:25). To lift those legs off the ground one more time is the final struggle with the flesh and the world.

- Jacob must lay that staff down before lifting his feet. He has carried that staff all his life (Gen. 32:10), and now he lays it aside. He won’t need the staff where he is going.

Chapter 50:

50:2 – “embalmed Israel” – It may be that Jacob is mummified.

50:3 – “seventy days” – The Egyptians would mourn for a Pharaoh for 72 days. The length of mourning they give to Jacob shows the respect they had for him and his family.

- 1 Thess. 4:13 – “lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.”

50:5 – “please let me go up” – Joseph wants to fulfill his vow immediately. Pharaoh will grant Joseph’s request.

- Joseph is 56 years old at this time.

50:7 – “and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh” – Egyptian ministers, elders, and Hebrews are traveling together to bury Jacob. It must have been quite a sight to the Canaanites.

50:10 – “beyond the Jordan” – On the eastern side of the Jordan.

50:11 – “the Canaanites saw the mourning” – They are observing this strange traveling party and their grieving.

- “Abel Mizraim” – There is actually some evidence that Egypt controlled this region in those days.

- 50:15 – “Perhaps Joseph will hate us” – Joseph’s brothers are still guilty. They are worried that Joseph will get back at them now that Jacob is dead.
- They are treating Joseph like he is Esau, who threatened to destroy his brother upon the death of their father.
 - We are like Joseph’s brothers too. We doubt our father’s son’s forgiveness as well. But His love is unconditional.
- 50:17 – “Joseph wept” – It breaks his heart that they doubt his love.
- Joseph is here demonstrating unconditional love.
- 50:19-21 – “Joseph said to them” – Each sentence of his three-fold reply is a pinnacle of Old Testament (and New Testament) faith. To leave all the righting of one’s wrongs to God, to see His providence in man’s malice, and to repay evil not only with forgiveness but also with practical affection.
- 50:19 – “Do not be afraid” – Joseph doesn’t take advantage of his brothers’ fear. Instead, he leaves it to God.
- 50:20 – “you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good” – Joseph doesn’t explain away their actions, trying to make them right. They weren’t right, but God used it anyway.
- “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.” (Rom. 8:28)
 - “to save many people alive” – This was the immediate good in the situation. If this large family did not come to Egypt, it would have perished in the famine.
 - With the comfort we have received in trials, we can comfort others. (2 Cor. 1:4)
- 50:21 – “I will provide” – The “I” is emphatic – promising something more personal than mere philanthropy.
- “he comforted and spoke kindly to them” – Often, the problem we have in loving others and in freeing ourselves from bitterness we may have towards them, is really a problem of not knowing who God is and trusting His to be who He says He is.
- 50:22 – “110 years” – This was considered the ideal lifespan by the Egyptians, giving them further testimony to the God of Israel and the blessing He had on Joseph.
- Joseph died 54 years after Jacob died.
- 50:23 – “to the third generation” – Joseph takes care of his grandchildren and great-grandchildren.
- “Machir” – Manasseh’s firstborn son and the ancestor of the powerful Gileadites. (Josh. 17:1)
 - Joseph spent the majority of his working life as an administrator, not a missionary or pastor. And yet, he had a huge impact on the world toward the salvation of many.
- 50:25 – “carry up my bones from here” – Joseph hasn’t been in Canaan for over 50 years, but he is still looking forward to the promised-land. His hope would come true (Exod. 13:19; Josh. 24:32).
- Heb. 11:22 – “by faith Joseph...gave instructions concerning his bones.”

- 50:26 – “being one hundred and ten years old” – So after 13 years of affliction, Joseph enjoyed about 80 years of honor and as much happiness as earth could afford him.
- “a coffin in Egypt” – Joseph’s coffin sat in Egypt for nearly 400 years. It would be a testimony to the children of Israel to look to the promises of God as they would begin to be oppressed in a foreign land.

Concluding thoughts:

Genesis begins with God creating the heavens and earth. It ends about 2000 years later with Joseph in a coffin. But it stands looking forward to the promised-land and 2000 years later when the Messiah will come to restore what we lost in the first handful of human days.

Genesis means “beginnings.” In the book of Genesis we see the beginning of creation (Gen. 1-2; Heb. 11:3), sin (Gen.3; Rom. 3:10,23), hope through “her seed” who is Jesus (Gen. 3:15; Col. 1:27), justification by faith (Gen. 15:6; Habakkuk 2:4; Rom. 1:17), historical nation of Israel (Gen. 49:28), and God’s work through history to call out a people for Himself.