

Sunday School Member Quarterly

Winter 2020 – 2021

Genesis 25 – 50

God Changes Lives

Sunday School Lessons for Adults and Youth
Written by John O. Yates



Morningside

B A P T I S T C H U R C H

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Sunday School – 8:45 each Sunday Morning

Sunday School Lessons

December 2020 through February 2021

Genesis 25 – 50

God Changes Lives

JACOB: SELFISH DECEIVER TO HUMBLE WORSHIPER

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Revised and updated 2020 for the Winter 2020 – 2021 quarter.

Daily Bible Reading Guide

Read the following scripture passages each day and complete the learning activities in this book each week. This will prepare you for Sunday School class, and God will bless you as you read, study, and memorize His Word.

Week of November 30 – December 5

Mon: Genesis 25; **Tues:** Genesis 26; **Wed:** Matthew 16;
Thurs: Memorize 1 John 3:1; **Fri:** Genesis 25;
Sat: Genesis 26

Week of December 7 – 12

Mon: Genesis 27; **Tues:** Genesis 28; **Wed:** Hebrews 12;
Thurs: Memorize Genesis 28:15; **Fri:** Genesis 27;
Sat: Genesis 28

Week of December 14 – 19

Mon: Luke 1:1-38; **Tues:** Luke 1:39-80; **Wed:** Isaiah 7;
Thurs: Isaiah 9; **Fri:** Luke 2:1-20; **Sat:** Luke 2:21-52

Week of December 21 – 26

Mon: Genesis 29; **Tues:** Psalm 127; **Wed:** Proverbs 31;
Thurs: Memorize Genesis 29:20; **Fri:** Hebrews 11;
Sat: Genesis 29

Week of December 28 – January 2

Mon: Genesis 29:31 – 30:13; **Tues:** Genesis 30:14-43;
Wed: Ephesians 5; **Thurs:** Ephesians 6;
Fri: Genesis 29:31 – 30:13; **Sat:** Genesis 30:14-43

Week of January 4 – 9

Mon: Genesis 31; **Tues:** Genesis 32; **Wed:** Genesis 33;
Thurs: Memorize Genesis 32:28; **Fri:** Genesis 31;
Sat: Genesis 32 – 33

Week of January 11 – 16

Mon: Genesis 34; **Tues:** Genesis 35; **Wed:** Joshua 1;
Thurs: Memorize Genesis 35:2-3; **Fri:** Psalm 86;
Sat: Genesis 35

Week of January 18 – 23

Mon: Genesis 36; **Tues:** Genesis 37; **Wed:** Proverbs 1;
Thurs: Matthew 6:19-34; **Fri:** Acts 7:1-9; **Sat:** Genesis 37

Week of January 25 – 30

Mon: Genesis 38; **Tues:** Genesis 39; **Wed:** Proverbs 6;
Thurs: Memorize Genesis 39:9; **Fri:** Proverbs 7;
Sat: Genesis 39

Week of February 1 – 6

Mon: Genesis 40; **Tues:** Genesis 41; **Wed:** Daniel 2;
Thurs: Memorize Colossians 3:23; **Fri:** Genesis 40;
Sat: Genesis 41

Week of February 8 – 13

Mon: Genesis 42; **Tues:** Genesis 43; **Wed:** Genesis 44;
Thurs: Genesis 42; **Fri:** Genesis 43; **Sat:** Genesis 44

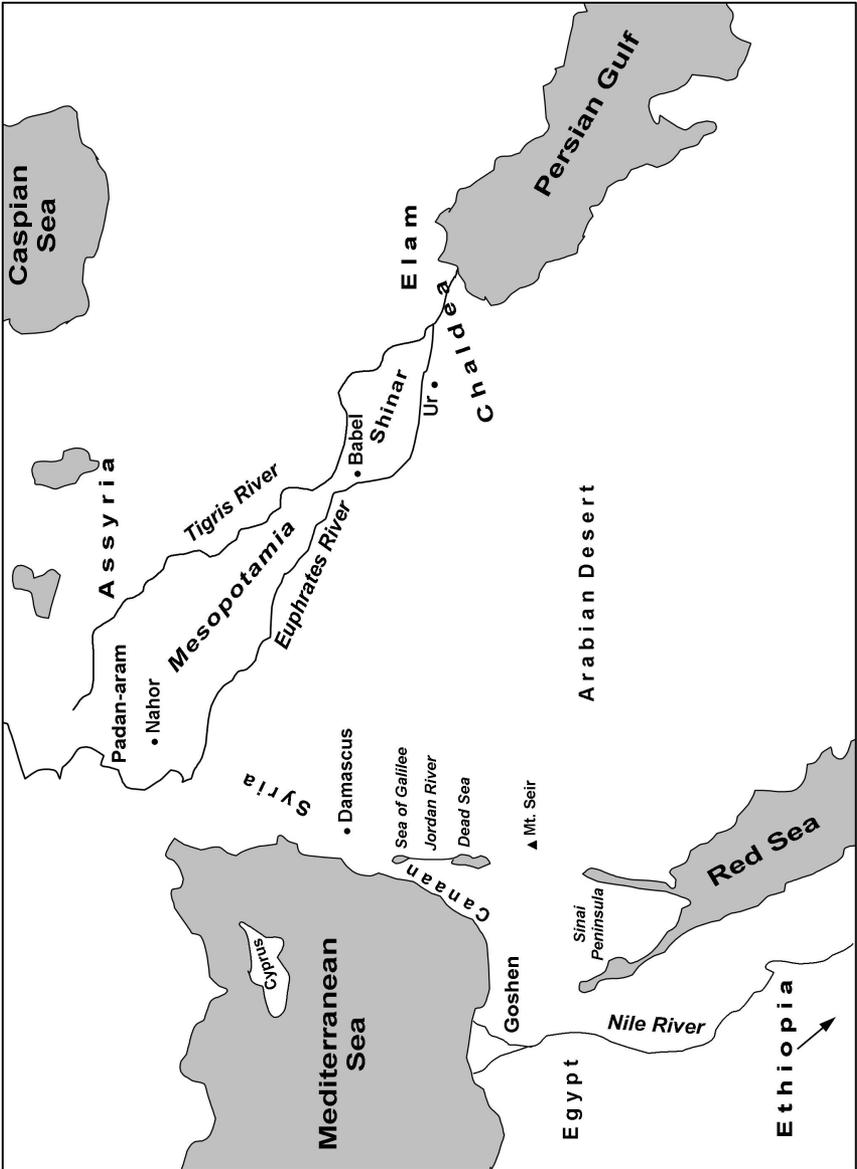
Week of February 15 – 20

Mon: Genesis 45; **Tues:** Genesis 46; **Wed:** Genesis 47;
Thurs: Memorize Genesis 45:8; **Fri:** Genesis 45;
Sat: Genesis 46 – 47

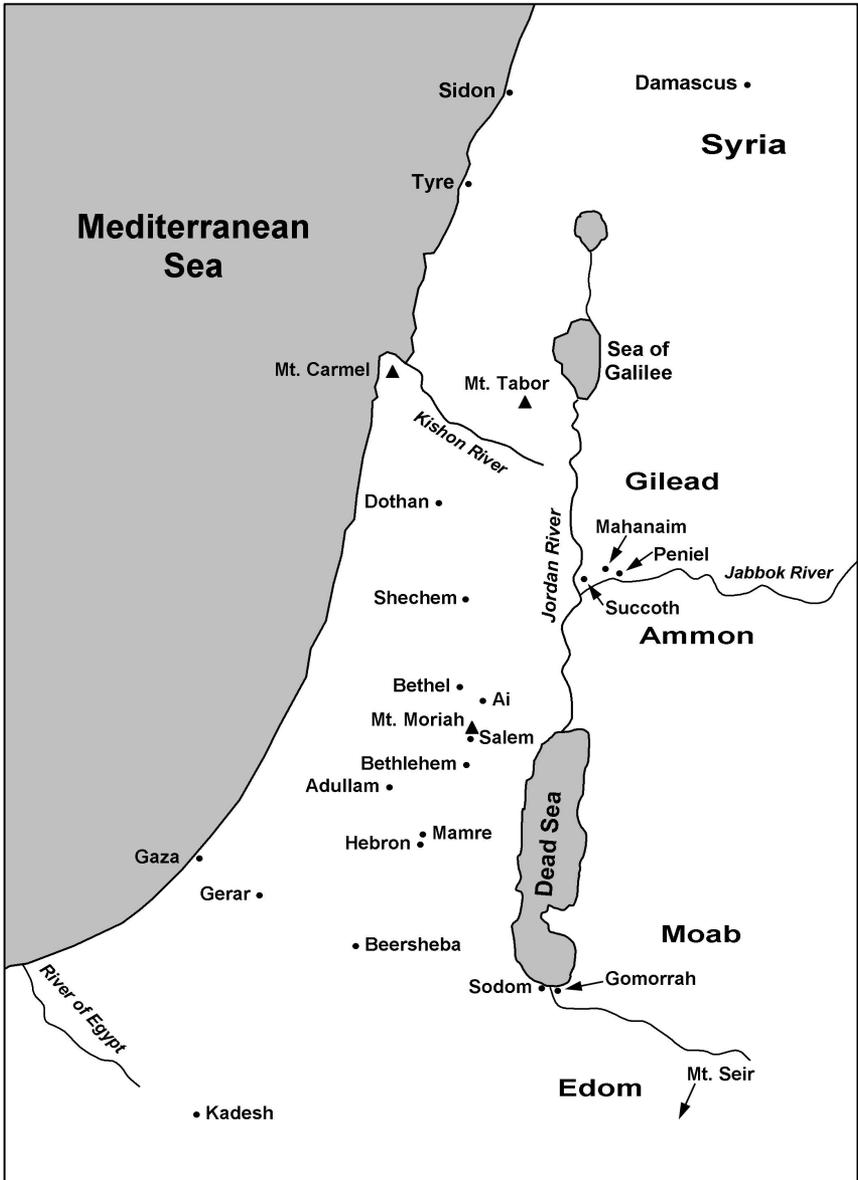
Week of February 22 – 27

Mon: Genesis 48; **Tues:** Genesis 49; **Wed:** Genesis 50;
Thurs: Memorize Genesis 50:20; **Fri:** Genesis 48;
Sat: Genesis 49 – 50

Map of the Ancient World



Map of Canaan



Introduction to Genesis 25 – 50

Author: Moses

Date: 1450-1410 B.C.

Genesis is the book of beginnings. Its name comes from the Greek translation of the book's first word, which simply means "*beginning*." Moses wrote Genesis sometime between 1450 and 1410 B.C., but the chapters we will study this quarter cover the 200-year time span from the birth of Jacob in 2005 B.C. to the death of Joseph in 1804 B.C.

These chapters tell amazing stories of how **God changes lives**. **Jacob**, the main character of the first half of the quarter, was transformed from a selfish deceiver who was willing to manipulate, lie, and steal to get his way, into a humble worshiper who led his family to "clean house" and worship God. Along the way we will also learn that Jacob's brother Esau was changed from a man with murder in his heart to one who loved, forgave, and received the brother who had hurt him so badly.

The main character of the second half of the quarter is **Joseph**, whom God transformed from being a hated and resented younger brother into a revered and respected ruler. Joseph's brothers were changed, too. They started out hateful and murderous, but ended up humble and thankful. One of them was even willing to lay down his life to save his younger brother's life.

These are interesting stories, but the good news is that **God still changes lives today**. Perhaps He will change yours as you study Genesis 25 – 50.

A Despised Birthright

A yard sale can be a great way to clean out the garage or attic and make a little money at the same time. Sellers can get rid of some space-consuming “junk” and buyers can pick up some bargains. Yard sales can benefit both parties.

Sometimes we don't recognize the true value of things. For example, one woman bought an old oil painting at a yard sale for \$20, but later discovered that it was a valuable piece of art worth more than \$10,000. The seller didn't like the painting; he was happy to get rid of it and make \$20 at the same time. He lost a fortune by not recognizing the painting's true value.

Some items have monetary value while others hold sentimental or historical value. You wouldn't want to sell a prized family heirloom for a few dollars at a yard sale, would you? In this week's lesson you will learn about a man who didn't understand the value of something and carelessly sold it for a yard sale price.

Gen. 25:19-20 Isaac was _____ son. Isaac's wife was named _____.

In last week's lesson you learned that Abraham sought out a bride for Isaac from among his family. Later Abraham died (Gen. 25:8).

Gen. 25:21 What did Isaac do about Rebekah's barrenness?

Gen. 25:22-23 Rebekah prayed about her difficult pregnancy. Note what God said: “Two _____ are in thy womb, and _____ manner of _____ shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be _____ than the other people; **and the _____ shall serve the _____.**”

Gen. 25:24-26 What did Rebekah name her twin boys?

The name **Esau** means “*hairy*” and **Jacob** means “*heel holder*” or “*supplanter*” (one who uses trickery to take the place of another).

Gen. 25:27-28 The boys grew up to be quite different. Who did Isaac love?
Who did Rebekah love?

Favoritism within a family is always hurtful and harmful.

Gen. 25:29 Jacob cooked some soup. Esau came in hungry.

Gen. 25:30 What did Esau ask Jacob?

Gen. 25:31 How did Jacob respond?

The **birthright** was very important in ancient cultures. It entitled the firstborn son to a double share of the family estate and to lead the family upon the death of his father. Younger brothers and sisters were required to obey and serve the firstborn son.

Gen. 25:32 What did Esau say about the birthright?

Gen. 25:33 “And Jacob said, _____ to me this day; and he _____ unto him: and he _____ his _____ unto _____.”

Gen. 25:34 What did Esau get in exchange for his birthright?

How did Esau feel about his birthright?

Esau did not recognize the value of his birthright, so he casually sold it for a bowl of soup and some bread. Hebrews 12:16 says it this way: “*Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.*” The birthright was priceless, but Esau sold it for a yard sale price.

Gen. 26:1 Why did Isaac move to **Gerar** (see the map on p. 6)?

Gen. 26:2 What did God tell Isaac?

God restated to Isaac the covenant promises He had previously made to his father, Abraham. Notice all that God promised:

- Gen. 26:3**
1. I will be _____ thee,
 2. and will _____ thee;
 3. for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will _____ all these countries,
 4. and I will _____ the oath which I _____ unto Abraham thy father
- Gen. 26:4**
5. and I will make thy seed to _____ as the stars of heaven,
 6. and will _____ unto thy seed all these _____;
 7. and in thy _____ shall all the _____ of the earth be _____.

Gen. 26:5 Why did God promise to do these things?

Gen. 26:23-24 God appeared to Isaac and made more promises.

Gen. 26:25 What did Isaac do after this?

Concluding Thoughts: If you don't place the proper value on things you might sell them for yard sale prices. If you belong to Jesus Christ, then you have a very special birthright as a child of God. The Bible says it this way: "*Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God*" (1 John 3:1). Read the following verses that tell more about our standing as children of God: John 1:12; Rom. 8:14-21; Gal. 3:26-29; Phil. 2:15-16; and 1 John 3:2-10.

Don't "sell" your birthright as a child of God for a cheap bowl of the world's sinful "soup." Value things that are truly valuable.

Project: Memorize **1 John 3:1**. Live up to your birthright this week. Don't forget to do the **Daily Bible Readings** (found on pages 3 and 4) each day.

December 13, 2020

Genesis 27 – 28

“Helping” God

Trey’s dad promised to give him his truck if he kept up his grades and graduated from high school. With graduation still months away, Trey grew impatient. His buddies had their own vehicles to drive, but he was still begging rides or borrowing his mom’s minivan. One night he could wait no longer. Trey snuck out after his parents went to bed and took his dad’s truck to go out joyriding with the guys. As they were laughing and having a great time, Trey ran a stop sign and hit another vehicle. The truck was totaled.

Trey was going to receive the truck later, but he couldn’t wait for his father’s timing so he “helped” things along a little. The result was disastrous. We sometimes “help” God by taking matters into our own hands rather than waiting on God’s will and timing.

God planned for Jacob to be the next head of the family (Gen. 25:23), but Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob, and Esau refused to accept God’s will or wait on His timing. They tried to “help” God.

Isaac’s Plan – Violate God’s Will

Gen. 27:1 Isaac was old and could not see. Who did he call?

Gen. 27:3-4 What did Isaac tell Esau and what did he promise?

In direct violation of God’s revealed plan, Isaac wanted to bless Esau and make him the new ruler of the family (Gen. 27:29).

Rebekah’s Method – Lies & Trickery

Gen. 27:5-7 Rebekah overheard? Who did she tell?

Gen. 27:8-9 What did she tell Jacob to do?

Gen. 27:10 What was her ultimate goal?

While Isaac was trying to **violate** God’s will, Rebekah was trying to do God’s will **through her own deceitful methods**.

Jacob’s Fear – Being Cursed Instead of Blessed

Gen. 27:11-12 What was Jacob’s fear?

Gen. 27:13 How did Rebekah calm his fears?

Jacob wasn’t worried about doing wrong or lying to his father, only about getting caught.

Jacob’s Method – Lie to Get What He Wanted

Gen. 27:14-16 Jacob obeyed Rebekah. How did she disguise him?

Gen. 27:17-26 What lies did Jacob tell?

Gen. 27:28-29 What blessings did Isaac bestow upon Jacob?

God intended Jacob to inherit these blessings, but rather than wait for God to do His will in His way and in His time, **Jacob “helped” God along by deceptively stealing the blessing.**

Esau’s Desire – Another Blessing

Gen. 27:30-33 What happened when Esau arrived?

Gen. 27:34 Esau wept bitterly and cried out, “_____ me, even me _____, O my father.”

Gen. 27:36 What did Esau say about Jacob?

Gen. 27:37-38 What did Isaac say? What did Esau ask with tears?

Esau probably knew it was God’s plan for Jacob to rule over the family. He had already sold his birthright, making Jacob legally the firstborn. Now, Isaac had given the patriarchal blessing to Jacob. In spite of all this, Esau still wanted a blessing. He selfishly cried like a baby and **begged for another blessing**.

Gen. 27:41 How did Esau feel about Jacob?

What did he plan to do after his father died?

Rebekah deceived Isaac into sending Jacob away to her brother's home in **Padan-aram**, 450 miles away in northern Syria (see the map on p. 5). Jacob began his journey and stopped for the night.

Gen.
28:12-15 What did he see in his dream?

What did God promise Jacob?

Gen.
28:16-17 What did Jacob say about the place?

Gen.
28:20-22 Jacob made a vow to God. He accepted Jehovah as his own God. What did he promise in verse 22?

Concluding Thoughts: The people in this lesson were not willing to wait for God to accomplish His will in His way, so they all tried to “help” out. Isaac and Esau thought God was mistaken so they tried to change God’s will. Rebekah and Jacob were fearful God wouldn’t be able to carry out His plan, so they used lies, deception, and trickery to try to “help” God.

Do you ever try to “help” God accomplish His will? Are you ever tempted to resort to lies or other sins to do God’s will. We face a choice every day: will we trust God or our own wits and skill? Trusting God brings blessings, but our schemes usually cause hurt and heartache. Trust God to do His will in His time.

While Jacob was running **away** from his brother, he unexpectedly ran right **into** God! He had a personal encounter with the true and living God. Prior to this Jacob knew the Lord only as the God of his father and grandfather. After this encounter the Lord became **Jacob’s** God. Have you had a personal encounter with the Lord?

Project: Memorize **Genesis 28:15**. Don’t try to “help” God.

December 20, 2020

Luke 1 & 2

The Promised Savior

We've all heard the Christmas story a thousand times. Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem. There was no room at the inn, so they stayed in a stable or cave. Baby Jesus was born and laid in a feeding trough. The shepherds and wise men came to visit.

This week's lesson deals with that familiar story, but you will also learn about the "story behind the story." As you study Luke 1:26-33 and 2:1-11, you will also look up and read a few of the Old Testament's prophecies concerning Jesus' birth in Bethlehem. The prophets told us many details about His birth, hundreds of years **before** He was born. Faithful Jews were looking forward to the coming of the Messiah, but this Christmas lesson looks back to the announcement and birth of Jesus Christ.

Luke 1:26 Where did God send the angel Gabriel?

Luke 1:27 How is Mary described?

Mary was a virgin. She and Joseph were espoused (engaged), but they had not yet had any physical, marriage relationship. This is important, because if Jesus was the son of Joseph, He **couldn't** have been the Son of God. Jesus Christ could not have been the Savior unless He was born of a virgin. Look up the following:

Isaiah 7:14 "Behold, a _____ shall conceive, and bear a _____." **The verse you just read was written about 730 years before Jesus was born!** Jesus' miraculous virgin birth fulfilled prophecy.

Luke 1:28-30 How did Mary react to the angel's appearance?

Luke 1:31 What did the angel tell this young virgin?

Read **Matthew 1:18-25**. The Bible makes it clear Mary was a virgin when Jesus was born and that Jesus' virgin birth fulfilled the Old Testament prophecy of Isaiah. Turn back to **Luke 1**.

Luke 1:32 "He shall be _____, and shall be called the Son of the _____: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the _____ of His father _____."

Luke 1:33 How long will Jesus' reign last?

Those verses said Jesus was great, the Son of God, and would reign forever on the throne of King David. Prophecies concerning these facts are found in the following verses.

Isaiah 9:6 "For unto us a _____ is born, unto us a _____ is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His _____ shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty _____, The everlasting _____, The Prince of Peace." This prophecy shows Jesus to be great and to be God.

Isaiah 9:7 How long will His kingdom last?

Whose throne will He sit upon?

Again, these prophecies were written **700 years** before Jesus was born. For another prophecy about Jesus' reign, read the following:

Jeremiah 23:5 Whose descendant will the King be?

That prophecy was written **600 years** before Jesus was born. Now turn to **Luke 2** and let's see how Jesus' birth fulfilled prophecy.

Luke 2:1-4 Joseph was a descendant of _____. Where did Joseph and Mary go?

Now turn back to the Old Testament book of Micah.

Micah 5:2 Where was the great Ruler to come from?

The Roman taxation forced Joseph and Mary to go to Bethlehem, because that is where Jesus had to be born. Micah's prophecy was written **700 years before Caesar decided to tax his empire.**

Luke 2:5-7 What happened while they were in Bethlehem?

Luke 2:8-10 The angel brought good news to the shepherds.

Luke 2:11 "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a _____, which is _____ the _____."

That verse reminds us of Isaiah 9:6 – "*For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.*" The angel called Jesus **Christ**, which is the New Testament Greek equivalent of the Old Testament Hebrew word **Messiah**. It means the anointed or chosen one. He also said Jesus is Lord, meaning that He has supreme authority.

Concluding Thoughts: How could God's prophets possibly know, hundreds of years before it took place, that Jesus Christ would be born of a virgin in the city of Bethlehem? The only explanation is that God planned all these things, told the prophets what to write, and then made certain everything happened just as He had planned.

Why did God do all that? "*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life*" (John 3:16). God did that so **YOU** could be saved. If you've never trusted Jesus Christ for salvation, read the verses printed on the back of this book, confess your sins, and turn to Jesus for salvation now.

As you celebrate Christmas, thank God for planning to send His Son, prophesying His Son's arrival, and then providing His Son – all so you could be saved. Thank Him for that right now.

Project: Look for opportunities to tell others that Jesus' birth in Bethlehem was prophesied hundreds of years before it occurred.

December 27, 2020

Genesis 29

Love and Trickery

This lesson is about two very different things: **love** and **trickery**.

Our world often corrupts the meaning of the word love. When speaking of human relationships the word “love” is frequently used when the word “lust” is really more truthful. Lustful men say to women, “If you love me you won’t make me wait” (for a sexual relationship). The phrase “True Love Waits” is true: genuine, sincere love can wait for the proper time and circumstances for intimacy, but lust wants it now. Today you will learn about a man whose genuine love enabled him to be patient.

You will also learn about some bold and brazen trickery. Jacob used trickery to steal his brother’s blessing and get sent away to safety, but in this lesson he meets a man even trickier than himself.

Gen. 29:1 Jacob continued his trip toward his uncle’s home.

Gen. 29:2 What did he find?

The shepherds gathered their flocks to give the sheep water.

Gen. 29:4-5 What did Jacob ask the shepherds?

Laban was Jacob’s uncle. Isaac had told him to go and choose a wife from among Laban’s daughters (Gen. 28:2).

Gen. 29:6 Who did they say was coming?

Gen. 29:7-8 Jacob tried to send the other shepherds away, but they refused to leave.

Gen. 29:10 What did he do when he saw Rachel and the sheep?

Gen. 29:11 What did Jacob do next?

This kiss was an appropriate greeting between relatives (Laban kissed Jacob in verse 13). Jacob rejoiced that his long journey was over. He had traveled 450 miles and found his uncle's family.

Gen. 29:12-14 Jacob told Rachel who he was. She told her father, who greeted Jacob. Laban brought Jacob into their house where he stayed for a month.

Jacob got busy helping with Laban's flocks. This also gave him the opportunity to spend time with Rachel.

Gen. 29:15 Laban said Jacob should not work without pay. What did he ask Jacob?

Gen. 29:16-17 Laban had two daughters. How does the Bible describe the older daughter, Leah?

How does it describe Rachel?

Gen. 29:18 How did Jacob feel about Rachel?

What did he offer to do?

In ancient times it was common to pay a price for a bride. Jacob had no money so he offered to work. Laban agreed to accept seven years of free labor in exchange for his daughter's hand. He and Jacob agreed to the deal.

Gen. 29:20 "And Jacob served seven years for _____; and they seemed unto him but a few _____, for the _____ he had to her."

Gen. 29:21-22 At the end of seven years Jacob asked for his wife. Laban threw a big wedding feast.

Gen. 29:23 How did Laban trick Jacob?

Ancient brides often were heavily veiled, and the darkness of the night prevented Jacob from realizing he was being deceived.

- Gen. 29:25** Jacob confronted Laban about his trickery.
- Gen. 29:26** What excuse did Laban give for his deception?
- Gen. 29:27** Ancient marriages involved a weeklong celebration. What deal did Laban make with Jacob?
- Gen. 29:28-30** Jacob now had two wives! He was also committed to seven more years of work without pay. How did Jacob feel about Rachel in comparison to Leah?

God has never ordained or approved of polygamy, but sinful men have practiced it almost from the beginning of time (Gen. 4:19). Because of Laban's trickery, Jacob now had two wives: one that he loved and the other that he tolerated. The two wives were sisters; they had grown up together knowing one was beautiful and the other was not. Now one was loved and the other was not. The stage was set for more family strife and trouble in Jacob's family.

Concluding Thoughts: Jacob truly loved Rachel and was willing to work and wait seven years for the privilege of marrying her. That was true love. Most people today aren't even willing to wait for marriage to have a sexual relationship. Many supposedly "engaged" couples are actually living together outside of wedlock.

Jacob was a selfish deceiver who bought his brother's birthright and later stole his brother's blessing. Through Uncle Laban, however, Jacob got a taste of his own deceptive "medicine." He learned about being on the receiving end of trickery and deceit. When you depend upon deception to get ahead you'd better watch out – there is always a better deceiver out there waiting for the opportunity to trick you! A life of integrity is much better. The only way to receive God's blessings is to do things God's way.

Project: Memorize **Genesis 29:20**. Wait for God's timing. Don't resort to deceit and trickery.

January 3, 2021

Genesis 29 – 30

Jacob's Family and Wealth Grew

Let's review what you have learned so far this quarter. Isaac and Rebekah had two sons, Esau and Jacob. Before they were born, God told Rebekah that the elder (Esau) would serve the younger (Jacob). Esau was Isaac's favorite and Jacob was Rebekah's favorite. When the boys grew up Esau did not value the birthright he possessed as the firstborn son, so he carelessly sold it to Jacob for a bowl of soup and some bread.

Years later, Isaac planned to bestow the blessing of the firstborn upon Esau, in direct violation of God's revealed will. Following Rebekah's instructions, Jacob masqueraded as Esau and stole his older brother's blessing. Esau determined to kill Jacob, so Rebekah lied to get Isaac to send Jacob away to safety. While on the run, Jacob met and began a personal relationship with God.

Jacob arrived at his uncle's home and fell in love with his cousin Rachel. He worked seven years to earn the privilege of marrying her, only to be tricked on his wedding night when her father substituted her older sister, Leah. At the end of last week's lesson Jacob had two wives (one loved and one hated) and the makings of family strife and conflict. Could God possibly bring any good out of such a mess?

Gen. 29:31 Why did God open Leah's womb?

Could Rachel (the beloved wife) bear children?

Gen. 29:32 Leah gave birth to her first son, **Reuben**. What did she hope would happen as a result of this birth?

Gen. 29:33 Why did Leah name her next son **Simeon**?

Gen. 29:34 What did she hope would happen after the birth of her third son, **Levi**?

Gen. 29:35 Why did she name her fourth son **Judah**?

Can you sense the hurt and rejection in the heart of this unloved and unattractive wife? She desperately wanted her husband to love her, but he loved his other wife (and her sister), Rachel. There's a lesson in this: **polygamy never works** – someone always gets hurt.

Gen. 30:1-2 How did Rachel feel toward her sister?

What did she say to Jacob?

How did he react?

Rachel turned to a legally acceptable tactic once used by Jacob's grandparents. She gave her servant Bilhah to Jacob as a concubine. Children of this union would legally belong to Rachel.

Gen. 30:5-6 Bilhah bore a son whom Rachel named _____.

Gen. 30:7-8 She named her sixth son _____.

Leah realized she was no longer bearing children. She did not want to be left out of this race to have sons, so she gave her servant to Jacob as another concubine. Zilpah bore two sons, whom Leah named _____ (v. 11) and _____ (v. 13).

Gen. 30:14-16 With what did Leah purchase the attention of Jacob?

Polygamy is both sordid and ridiculous! Leah gave birth to 2 more sons (**Issachar & Zebulun**) and a daughter (**Dinah**).

Gen. 30:22 “And God remembered _____, and God _____ to her, and _____ her womb.”

Gen. 30:23-24 What did she say when this son was born?

What did she name him?

Jacob had worked 14 years for his uncle (and father-in-law) Laban. He had 2 wives, 2 concubines, and 11 sons.

Gen. 30:25-26 What did Jacob ask Laban?

Gen. 30:27 Why did Laban want Jacob to stay?

Wouldn't it be wonderful if your boss told you the Lord was blessing his business because you worked there? We should strive to live in such a way that this could be said of us.

Gen. 30:28 What did Laban say to Jacob?

Jacob proposed that they remove all the speckled and spotted (less desirable) animals from Laban's flocks to a separate location. From that time onward any speckled or spotted animals born in Laban's solid-color flocks would belong to Jacob. Laban agreed.

Gen. 30:43 What does this verse say about Jacob's wealth?

Concluding Thoughts: Today's passage sounds more like a cheap soap opera than the Word of God. Why is this included in the Bible? Could God possibly bring anything good out of it?

In this lesson you saw a vivid illustration of why polygamy never works: family strife and conflicts always result. God's ideal of monogamy in marriage yields peace, security, and harmony. Favoritism within a family also brings hurt and heartache.

God promised to go with Jacob, bless him, and make his descendants numerous (Gen. 28:13-15). As we conclude this lesson, Jacob has eleven sons. Another will come later, making up the twelve tribes of Israel. Through one of those tribes the promised Messiah, Jesus Christ, would later be born. Praise God!

Thank God that He can still work out His plan, in spite of man's failures. Stay committed to your marriage.

Project: Come to Sunday School each week to learn more about Jacob and his family.

January 10, 2021

Genesis 31 – 33

A Life-Changing Encounter

Answer the following questions. Be honest with yourself.

- When God tells you to do something, do you obey in spite of any consequences your obedience might bring?
- Do you give credit to God for your successes?
- Do you pray to God when you are afraid?
- Have you ever “wrestled” with God over some decision?
- Can people tell by your behavior that you have been with God?

How did you answer those questions? In this lesson you will find Jacob’s answers. He was living in **Padan-aram** (see the map on page 5). He had a large family and great wealth in livestock.

Gen. 31:3 What did the Lord tell Jacob to do?

What did He promise Jacob?

Gen. 31:17-18 Did Jacob obey God?

The relationship between Jacob and Laban was strained. Laban deceived Jacob and often changed his wages. In spite of the fact it would be difficult and uncomfortable, Jacob obeyed God: he took his family and possessions and left for Canaan. Before they left, however, Rachel stole her father’s household gods. Laban pursued and caught them. After an ugly confrontation (verses 25-29) and a search for the stolen gods (verses 30-37), Jacob rebuked Laban.

Gen. 31:38 How long had Jacob served Laban?

Gen. 31:39 Who bore the cost of any animals lost to predators?

Gen. 31:40 How devoted was Jacob to his work?

Gen. 31:41 “I served thee _____ years for thy two _____, and _____ years for thy _____: and thou hast changed my wages _____ times.”

Gen. 31:42 To whom did Jacob give credit for his wealth?

While Jacob was certainly a faithful and devoted worker, he gave God the ultimate credit for his successes. He and Laban made a covenant, erected a monument, and parted company.

Gen. 32:1-2 Who did Jacob meet on his journey?

What did he say when he saw them?

Gen. 32:3-4 Jacob sent messengers ahead to his brother, Esau. How did he refer to Esau?

How did he refer to himself?

Gen. 32:5 What was Jacob’s desire?

Gen. 32:6-7 What news did the messenger bring?

How did Jacob feel when he heard this news?

Gen. 32:9-12 What did Jacob’s fear cause him to do?

Next, Jacob sent several flocks of animals ahead as gifts, hoping to appease his brother’s anger. He was left alone that night.

Gen. 32:24 What happened?

This “man” was a pre-incarnate appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ (see verse 30). The two wrestled all night.

Gen. 32:25 What did the Lord do to Jacob?

Gen. 32:26 Jacob refused to release Him until He blessed Jacob.

Gen. 32:28 “Thy name shall be called no more _____, but _____.”

Jacob’s name means “*heel holder*” or “*supplanter*” (one who takes by trickery), but his new name **Israel** means, “*God prevails.*” God said Jacob had power with God and with men and had prevailed.

Gen. 32:29-30 The Lord blessed Jacob. Why did he call the place **Peniel** (or Penuel)?

Gen. 32:31-32 What visible mark did Jacob carry forever?

Gen. 33:1 Who did Jacob see coming?

Gen. 33:3 How did Jacob approach Esau?

Gen. 33:4 How did Esau greet his brother?

Gen. 33:5 How did Jacob refer to himself?

Jacob was definitely a changed man! Previously he was a selfish deceiver who stole his brother’s blessing. Now he was a humble and generous man who bowed before his brother. Jacob returned to Canaan and bought some land near **Shechem** (see map on p. 6).

Gen. 33:20 What did he do there?

Concluding Thoughts: Let’s reconsider the five questions found at the beginning of this lesson.

- Jacob knew it would be hard to leave Laban’s home in Padan-aram. It was the only home his wives or children had ever known. Laban wanted him to stay and care for his livestock. Laban was a deceitful man who was willing to hurt others to benefit himself. Nevertheless, when God told Jacob to leave he obeyed. **When God tells you to do something, do you obey in spite of the consequences of that obedience?**

- Jacob gave the credit for his success to God. He acknowledged God and praised Him for the blessings he had received. **Do you give credit to God for your successes?**
- Jacob was afraid of his brother, Esau. The last time they had been together, Esau threatened to kill Jacob. Esau was approaching with 400 men. Jacob was afraid, so he prayed to God. **Do you pray to God when you are afraid?**
- Jacob wrestled with God one night. The struggle was so real and the encounter was so close that Jacob said he had seen the face of God. We get to know God better in such close encounters when we struggle with decisions. **Have you ever “wrestled” with God over some decision?** If so, who won?
- Jacob’s wrestling match left him with a permanent visible mark – he limped the rest of his life. Every step reminded him of his life-changing encounter with the Lord. People could tell Jacob had been with the Lord by the change in the way he walked. **Can people tell by your behavior that you have been with God?** Has your walk been changed by the Lord’s touch?

Confess your sins and shortcomings. Recommit yourself to obeying and following the Lord day by day.

Project: Memorize **Genesis 32:28**. Obey God’s voice this week.

<p>Summary of chapter 34: Jacob’s daughter Dinah was raped by a man named Shechem. Jacob’s sons Simeon and Levi took revenge by brutally slaughtering Shechem and all the men of his village.</p>

Steps Toward Revival

Brian received Christ when he was a young man. His life changed dramatically: he stopped partying and drinking, began reading his Bible, became a faithful churchgoer, and developed a network of Christian friends. He was enthusiastic about his new life in Christ. Over time, however, the “new” seemed to wear off. Brian’s Bible reading and church attendance became less regular. He was no longer as interested in spending time with his Christian friends.

Brian knew something was wrong. Spiritually speaking, he needed to get back where he had been in the early years after he was saved. He needed spiritual revival and renewal in his life.

If Brian came to you for advice, what would you tell him? If he asked how to experience revival, what would you say? In the final analysis, revival is the merciful work of God upon the heart of a straying or cold-hearted Christian; but there are some steps we can take to lead us toward revival. You will discover these steps as you learn about Jacob’s path toward revival.

Gen. 35:1 “And _____ said unto _____, Arise, go up to _____, and dwell there: and make there an _____ unto God, that _____ unto thee when thou _____ from the face of _____ thy brother.”

In Genesis 28 you learned that Jacob had a meaningful encounter with the Lord at Bethel. That was twenty years earlier.

Gen. 35:2 Jacob gave three instructions to his family & servants:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Many ancient people owned and worshiped small statues of their gods. Rachel stole her father's household idols (Gen. 31:19), and Jacob's concubines and foreign servants possessed many more.

Gen. 35:3 He said they were going to **Bethel** (see the Map of Canaan on page 6). What was he going to do there?

Gen. 35:4 What did his family & servants give him?

In ancient times earrings often represented devotion to false gods. Under God's protection, Jacob and his family traveled to Bethel.

Gen. 35:6 Luz was an ancient name of Bethel (Gen. 28:19).

Gen. 35:7 What did Jacob do when they got there?

In Hebrew, "*el*" means God and "*beth*" means house. Jacob called the place "*El-beth-el*," which means "God of the house of God."

Gen. 35:9 What happened when Jacob worshiped at his altar?

Gen. 35:10 "And God said unto him, Thy name is _____: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but _____ shall be thy name: and he called his name _____."

Gen. 35:11 God identified Himself as _____.
What did He say about Jacob's descendants?

Gen. 35:12 What did He say about the land?

Wow! Jacob (Israel) had a personal encounter with Almighty God. Let's see what he did to remember this important spiritual event.

Gen. 35:14 "And Jacob set up a _____ in the place where He _____ with him, even a _____ of _____."

Gen. 35:15 What did Jacob call the place?

Jacob experienced revival: a real encounter with Almighty God. Were all his troubles behind him? Getting right with God doesn't keep our troubles away, but God enables us to handle them.

Gen. 35:16-19 As they continued southward, Jacob's beloved wife Rachel went into hard labor. She died in childbirth but delivered Jacob's 12th son, **Benjamin**.

Gen. 35:22 What other trouble came into Jacob's family?

Gen. 35:28-29 What other heartache befell Jacob?

Concluding Thoughts: We have discovered the following steps Jacob took toward revival and what he did after revival came.

1. **Go back to where you used to be with God** (v. 1, 3). For Jacob, that meant going back to Bethel. For you, it may mean returning to regular church attendance and daily Bible reading.
2. **Put away your strange gods** (v. 2). Anything that takes God's rightful place of love and devotion in your life is an idol. You must get rid of idols to get right with God.
3. **Be clean and change your garments** (v. 2). Stop doing unclean things and don't wear worldly garments spotted by sin.
4. **Recall God's blessings in the past** (v. 3).
5. **Do what's necessary to worship God** (v. 7). Jacob had to build an altar. You must come to God through Jesus Christ.
6. **Listen when God speaks to you** (v. 9-13). Today God speaks primarily through His written Word, the Bible.
7. **Do something to remember this experience of renewal** (v. 14-15). What "pillar of remembrance" do you need to erect?

Do you need revival in your spiritual life? If you sincerely want to be right with God, then follow the steps listed above and ask God to renew your spiritual life. Start right now.

Project: Memorize **Genesis 35:2-3**. Thank God for spiritual renewal. Spend time with the Lord and in His Word every day.

Sold into Slavery

Human trafficking is a terrible modern problem. Each year 2.5 million children, women, and men worldwide are kidnapped and sold into slavery, where they are forced to work as prostitutes or slave laborers. It happens in America every day.

Imagine for a moment the terror of being kidnapped, held against your will in horrible conditions, sold to ruthless slave traders, and then shipped off into an unfamiliar land to face the unknown alone. That's what happened to Jacob's young son **Joseph**. We will learn about his frightening, life-threatening experience in this lesson.

Gen. 37:1 Where did Jacob live?

The previous lessons in this quarter's study of Genesis have focused on Jacob. From this point onward the focus changes to **Joseph**, Jacob's 11th – and favorite – son.

Gen. 37:2 How old was Joseph?

He was feeding the flocks with some of his brothers.
What did Joseph tell his father?

Gen. 37:3 How did Israel (Jacob) feel about Joseph?

What did he make for Joseph?

Jacob had twelve sons through his two wives and two concubines. What a formula for family strife! As if that wasn't bad enough, Jacob didn't try to hide the fact that he had favorites. He made Joseph a coat suitable for a ruler or person of leisure, not a laborer.

Gen. 37:4 How did Joseph's brothers feel toward him?

Gen. 37:5 Joseph had a dream and told his brothers about it.
How did they feel then?

Gen. 37:6-7 The word **obeisance** means to bow low or prostrate oneself. What did Joseph dream?

Gen. 37:8 What did his brothers ask?

How did this make them feel toward Joseph?

Gen. 37:9-10 Joseph dreamed another similar dream. What did his father ask him?

Joseph's brothers hated and envied him. They went to feed the flocks in Shechem. Jacob sent Joseph to see how they were doing.

Gen. 37:18 Joseph's brothers saw him coming. What did they plan to do?

Gen. 37:20 How were they going to hide their crime?

Gen. 37:21 Who intervened to spare Joseph's life?

Gen. 37:22 Why did Reuben suggest an alternate plan?

Gen. 37:23-24 What did the brothers do?

Gen. 37:25 What did they do while Joseph was in the pit?

Who did they see?

Gen. 37:26-27 What did Judah suggest?

Gen. 37:28 What did the brothers do?

Gen. 37:29-30 Why do you think Reuben was so upset when he discovered that Joseph was gone?

Gen. 37:31 How did the brothers hide their crime?

Gen. 37:32 What did they tell their father?

Gen. 37:33 What did their father assume had happened?

Gen. 37:34 How did Jacob react to this news?

Gen. 37:35 Who tried to comfort him?

How did Jacob respond?

Gen. 37:36 Where did the traders take Joseph?

They sold Joseph to _____.

Concluding Thoughts: Seventeen-year-old Joseph, Jacob's favorite and most beloved son, was cruelly sold into slavery by his jealous brothers. He was hundreds of miles from home, in an unfamiliar place, serving as a slave to an Egyptian officer. He was in a strange land where people spoke a strange language, had strange customs, and worshiped strange gods.

What a transformation! Overnight, Joseph went from being a pampered and favored son to being a lowly slave. Why did such a terrible thing happen to a nice young man? Because of his brothers' envy and hatred which was fueled by their father's favoritism and Joseph's arrogance. Favoritism is never healthy in family relationships. Neither is boasting or arrogance.

Joseph was transformed from a son to a slave, in bondage in sinful Egypt. If you belong to Jesus Christ you can never lose your salvation (your position as a child of God), but you can enslave yourself to sinful behaviors and habits. When you are a slave to sin you lose some of the privileges and joys of being a son.

If you have allowed yourself to become enslaved to sin, you need to confess your sin and turn away from it. Please do it now.

Project: Read the Bible every day, following the **Daily Bible Reading Guide** found on pages 3 and 4.

Resisting Temptation

We live in the most sexually charged society in history. Most TV shows and movies either depict or at least talk about illicit sexual behavior. As sexual talk and explicit portrayals have flooded the entertainment industry, the moral climate of America has taken a nosedive. Immodest dress, inappropriate behavior, and suggestive language have become commonplace. Rape, teen pregnancies, and sexually transmitted diseases are at record levels.

How can God's people remain pure in such a suggestive world? How can we resist temptation? In this lesson you will learn how Joseph, now a slave in Egypt, resisted temptation.

Joseph was Promoted in Potiphar's House

Gen. 39:1 Who bought Joseph as a slave?

Gen. 39:2 "And the _____ was with _____." God blessed Joseph, making him profitable to his master.

Gen. 39:3 What did Potiphar recognize about Joseph?

Gen. 39:4 "And Joseph found _____ in his sight." What position did Potiphar give him?

What did he entrust to Joseph?

Gen. 39:5 What did the LORD do because of Joseph?

Gen. 39:6 How much trust did Potiphar place in Joseph?

Potiphar's Wife Tried to Seduce Joseph

Gen. 39:7 Joseph was a very handsome young man. What did Potiphar's wife say to him?

Gen. 39:8 How did Joseph respond to her advances?

Gen. 39:9 Joseph understood the limit of his authority. Notice what he asked her: “How then can I do this great _____, and _____ against _____?”

Gen. 39:10 Did she stop trying to seduce Joseph?

What did he do?

Gen. 39:11 One day Joseph went into the house when none of the men were present.

Gen. 39:12 What did Potiphar’s wife do?

What did Joseph do?

Joseph had the opportunity to sin, but refused to do it. If you had been in his place what would you have done? Joseph understood the time for talking was over and that he must get away from the source of temptation. “*Flee fornication*” (1 Cor. 6:18).

Joseph was Falsely Accused

Gen. 39:13-14 What did Potiphar’s wife do next?

Gen. 39:14-15 What did she say about Joseph?

Gen. 39:16 What did she keep to “prove” her charge?

Gen. 39:17-18 What did she tell her husband?

Gen. 39:19 How did Potiphar react to this story?

Joseph was Sent to Prison

Gen. 39:20 “And Joseph’s master took him, and put him into the _____, a place where the king’s prisoners were _____; and he was there in the _____.”

Joseph resisted temptation. He did nothing wrong, but he still ended up in prison. We may suffer even when we do the right thing. We must resist temptation regardless of the consequences.

Joseph was Promoted in Prison

Gen. 39:21 “But the _____ was with _____, and showed him _____, and gave him _____ in the sight of the _____ of the prison.”

Gen. 39:22 What did the keeper of the prison do?

Gen. 39:23 How much trust did he place in Joseph?

What did the LORD do?

Wherever Joseph landed, the Lord was with him and blessed him.

Concluding Thoughts: What can we learn from Joseph’s story of resisting temptation?

- First, we should **avoid situations** that might lead to temptation. If you are tempted to sin when you go to certain places or hang around certain people, then avoid them like the plague.
- Secondly, you must be careful to **protect your testimony**. Joseph got into trouble when he was in the house alone with Potiphar’s wife. Don’t allow yourself to be in situations where you can be falsely accused.
- Third, **when temptation comes along, run!** It is better to lose your cloak and be falsely accused than to do something you will regret for the rest of your life.
- Fourth, remember that **you may still suffer** even when you do the right thing.
- Finally, if you belong to Jesus Christ remember that **God will never leave you**, no matter what men might do to you.

Project: Memorize **Genesis 39:9**. Resist temptation every day.

February 7, 2021

Genesis 40 – 41

From Forgotten to Famous

Jim was upset and envious. It seemed every time an opportunity for promotion or advancement came along, someone else in the company got it. He thought he had the skill and ability to move “up the ladder,” but never seemed to get the chance. Jim felt ignored, overlooked, and unappreciated.

One day Jim shared his frustration and discouragement with an older and wiser employee named Rob. After listening carefully, Rob said, “Jim, you’re so focused on your dreams for advancement and notoriety that it is hurting your job performance right now. You may become president of the company one day, but right now you’re not. My advice to you is to do the very best job you can where you are right now. If God wants you in a higher position someday, He will see to it that you are promoted.”

Everyone wants to succeed, but your schedule for reaching the top may not be the same as God’s. He may want you to learn some important lessons through hard times, before He promotes you to a higher position. Last week you learned that Joseph was sent to prison for a crime he didn’t commit. In time the keeper of the prison made Joseph the chief trustee and overseer of the prison.

Gen. 40:1-3 What two royal servants were sent to prison?

Gen. 40:4 Who was charged with caring for them?

Gen. 40:5-8 Why were the two men so sad?

What did Joseph tell them in verse 8?

Notice that Joseph gave credit for the ability to interpret their dreams to **God**. He did not claim the credit or glory for himself. In verses 9-11 the chief butler (literally the king’s cupbearer) told his dream to Joseph, who then explained what the dream meant.

Gen. 40:13 What did Joseph say would happen to the butler?

Gen. 40:14 What did Joseph ask?

Gen. 40:15 What did he say about himself?

When the chief baker saw that Joseph had given the butler such a good message, he also told his dream to Joseph (verses 16-17).

Gen. 40:19 What did Joseph say would happen to the baker?

Gen. 40:20-22 What happened to the two men?

Gen. 40:23 “Yet did _____ the chief butler _____ Joseph, but _____ him.”

Gen. 41:1 How much more time did Joseph spend in prison?

Pharaoh had a dream in which 7 fat cows came up out of the river, followed by 7 thin, sickly cows. The thin cows ate the fat cows. Next, he dreamed that 7 plump ears grew on one corn stalk, followed by 7 withered ears. The withered ears ate the plump ears. Pharaoh was troubled by the dreams so he called his magicians and wise men, but none of them could interpret the dreams. Finally, the butler remembered Joseph, who was brought to Pharaoh.

Gen. 41:16 What did he say about his ability to interpret dreams?

Gen. 41:25 Who was revealing the future to Pharaoh (see also v. 28)?

Gen. 41:29-30 What did Joseph say would happen?

Gen. 41:33-36 What plan of action did Joseph suggest to Pharaoh?

Pharaoh was pleased with Joseph's plan.

Gen. 41:39-41 What did Pharaoh do?

Joseph was promoted to ruler of all Egypt, second only to Pharaoh himself! He was given an Egyptian name and an Egyptian wife.

Gen. 41:46 How old was Joseph?

Joseph was sold into slavery at the age of 17. He had been in Egypt for 13 years: part of that time as a slave in Potiphar's house and the rest in prison for a crime he did not commit.

The seven plentiful years came and Joseph gathered huge amounts of food into storehouses. He and his wife had two sons. Later the famine came, and all Egypt went to Joseph for food. People from other countries also traveled to Egypt to buy food from Joseph.

Concluding Thoughts: Some people today are intrigued by the interpretation of dreams, but we must remember that God does not need to communicate with us through dreams anymore. We have His complete message to man recorded in the Bible. Never trust a dream or someone who claims to have had a dream if the message does not **perfectly** match the teachings of the **Bible**.

What can we learn from this lesson? Consider the following:

- **God's timing is not always our timing.** Joseph did not choose to spend 13 years as a slave and in prison, but God used that time to develop humility, character, and wisdom in Joseph.
- Like Joseph, **give glory to God for the things He enables you to do.** Joseph never took credit for his abilities, but continually directed attention to God (Gen. 40:8; 41:16, 25, 28, 32)
- **God will exalt you in His time if He chooses.** It's not God's will for everyone to be supervisor or CEO. Do your best where you are and leave the future to God.

Project: Memorize **Colossians 3:23**. Serve the Lord faithfully where you are, waiting for Him to promote you if He chooses.

February 14, 2021

Genesis 42 – 44

Humility and Sacrifice

Do you remember Joseph's brothers? The last we heard of them (in chapter 37) they were hateful, angry young men who callously sold their younger brother into a horrible life of slavery. They fabricated an elaborate cover-up and lied to their father. For years they hid their terrible secret while their father mourned for Joseph.

Twenty-two years passed. Joseph spent a total of thirteen years in slavery and in prison. After that he was suddenly elevated to rule all of Egypt, second only to Pharaoh in power and authority. Through seven bountiful years Joseph led the Egyptians to stockpile food. Then the famine began. Conditions were so bad that people from other countries came to Egypt to buy grain. Joseph's older brothers were in their forties now, with wives and children to feed. Let's see if the years have brought any changes to the cold, uncaring men who sold their young brother into slavery.

Gen. 42:1-2 What did Jacob tell his sons to do?

Gen. 42:3-5 The brothers went to Egypt. Who stayed home?

Gen. 42:6 Who sold the grain to those who needed it?

The brothers did not recognize Joseph. What did they do (in fulfillment of Gen. 37:7, 9)?

Gen. 42:7 Joseph recognized them. How did he speak to them?

Why didn't the men recognize their own brother? They knew him as a teenager; now he was almost forty. They knew him as a Hebrew; now he was dressed as an Egyptian ruler, spoke like an Egyptian, and had an Egyptian name. Also, they never expected to see him again. Joseph accused them of being spies (verses 9-12).

Gen. 42:13 What did they say about their family?

Joseph put his brothers in prison for three days.

Gen. 42:19-20 What two demands did he make?

The brothers talked among themselves, not realizing Joseph could understand them.

Gen. 42:21-22 Why did they say this trouble had befallen them?

Gen. 42:24 What did Joseph do when he heard this?

Joseph put Simeon in prison. He sent the other brothers home with the grain they had purchased, but he secretly returned each man's money. They went home and told Jacob what had transpired.

Gen. 42:38 Did Jacob agree to let Benjamin go back with them?

Gen. 43:1-2 What happened when they had eaten all the food they bought in Egypt?

Judah told his father they could not go back to Egypt unless they took Benjamin with them. Jacob did not want Benjamin to go.

Gen. 43:8 What did Judah say?

Gen. 43:9 "I will be _____ for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him _____ unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the _____ for ever."

The word **surety** means something of value given to guarantee future payment. Judah guaranteed Benjamin's safety – with his own life! God was truly changing these men. Judah was the one who suggested selling Joseph into slavery (Gen. 37:26-27). Now he was willing to give his life to guarantee the safety of his brother.

Jacob finally agreed, so all the brothers, including Benjamin, traveled back to Egypt to buy more grain.

Gen. 43:16 What did Joseph do when he saw them?

Gen. 43:26 What did the brothers do when they met Joseph?

Gen. 43:28 “And they _____ down their _____, and made _____.”

Joseph hosted a luncheon for his brothers at his home. He was almost overcome with emotion at the sight of Benjamin, but he continued playing the role of the Egyptian ruler. He seated his brothers in birth order around the table and showed favoritism to Benjamin by giving him more food than all the rest.

Joseph sent his brothers away with the grain they wanted, but he secretly hid his silver cup in Benjamin’s sack. When the men had barely gotten outside the city, Joseph sent his steward to catch them and search for the supposedly “stolen” cup. When the cup was found in Benjamin’s sack, they all went back to Joseph.

Gen. 44:14 What did they do when they came before Joseph?

Gen. 44:17 What did Joseph say would happen to them?

In verses 18-31 Judah told Joseph their story. He explained why Benjamin was so important to their father, and said if Benjamin did not return their father would surely die.

Gen. 44:32 What did Judah tell Joseph?

Gen. 44:33 “Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide _____ of the lad a _____ to my lord; and let the _____ go up with his brethren.”

Judah carried through on the promise he had made to his father. Even though he had a wife and children back home, he was willing to stay in Egypt forever as a slave so that Benjamin could go home. Judah **was willing to lay down his life for his brother** (John 15:13).

Concluding Thoughts: This quarter’s study is all about how God changes lives. This lesson is a vivid illustration. Twenty-two years earlier the older brothers hated Joseph and wanted to kill him. They sold him into slavery and thought they would never see him again. They never intended to bow before their younger brother, but in this lesson they did just that four times (Gen. 42:6; 43:26, 28; 44:14). Previously the brothers were selfish, envious, and murderously hateful; but twenty-two years later they were much more humble. In fact, Judah – the very one who wanted to sell Joseph into slavery – was now willing to sacrifice his own life to spare his brother’s. Far from being selfish, Judah was now more concerned about the welfare of his younger brother and aged father than his own. Joseph’s brothers had been changed from jealous, murderous haters to humble, self-sacrificing servants.

Interestingly, Judah had a very famous descendant who laid down His life for others. You see, if you follow the lineage of Judah for about another 1,900 years you come to an individual known as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Lord Jesus Christ. Just as Judah was willing to sacrifice himself for his brother, the Lion of Judah (Jesus Christ) sacrificed Himself for us. He took our sins upon Himself and paid the penalty we deserved for those sins: death.

God changed Joseph’s brothers and He is still changing lives today. The Bible says those who come to Jesus Christ in faith are transformed into new creatures: “*Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new*” (2 Cor. 5:17).

Has God ever changed your life like that? If not, please read the verses printed on the back of this book, confess and turn away from your sins, and trust Jesus to save you and give you a new life. Please do that right now. If you have any questions, call your Sunday School teacher or someone else who knows the Lord. He or she will be happy to talk with you.

Project: God changes lives. This week spend some time thinking of ways God has changed your life. Thank Him for the changes He has made, and yield to His influence in your life.

Providence, Provision, and Promises

*The American Heritage College Dictionary*¹ defines **providence** as: “Care or preparation in advance; foresight,” and “The care, guardianship, and control exercised by a deity; divine direction.” That same dictionary defines the word **provision** this way: “The act of supplying or fitting out,” and “A stock of necessary supplies, esp. food.” The word **promise** is defined as: “A declaration that one will or will not do something; a vow.”

Providence, provision, and promises. We will find all three of those things in this lesson; but first, we need to get back to the story of Joseph and his brothers. Last week’s lesson ended with Judah offering to sacrifice himself so that young Benjamin could return home to his father. Let’s see what happened next.

Gen. 45:1 Joseph could not contain his emotions any longer.
What did he do?

Why did he send out everyone except his brothers?

Gen. 45:2 How loudly did he weep?

Gen. 45:3 “And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am _____; doth my _____ yet _____?”
Why do you think his brothers were troubled?

Gen. 45:4 He went on to say: “I am Joseph your _____, whom ye _____ into Egypt.”

Gen. 45:5 Who did Joseph say sent him to Egypt?

Why?

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Joseph told them there would be five more years of famine.

Gen. 45:7 Why did God send him to Egypt?

Gen. 45:8 “So now it was not _____ that sent me hither, but _____.”

This is a beautiful testament to **providence**, God’s unseen hand in the affairs of men, whereby He ultimately accomplishes His desired purpose. God sometimes uses difficult or unpleasant circumstances today to bring about something good later on. Joseph spent all of his young adult years either in slavery or in prison, but he held no animosity toward his brothers. Rather than seeking revenge, Joseph praised God for His providence.

Gen. 45:9 What did he tell his brothers to do?

Gen. 45:10 Where did he say they could all live?

Goshen was fertile grazing land on the northeastern side of the Nile River delta (see the map on page 5).

Gen. 45:11 What **provision** would he make for them?

When Pharaoh heard about Joseph’s brothers, he provided wagons with which to move their families and belongings to Egypt.

Gen. 45:26-27 Jacob could not believe the good news. What finally convinced him?

The large family began its journey. God spoke to Jacob (Israel).

Gen. 46:3 “And he said, I am _____, the God of thy father: _____ not to go down into _____; for I will there make of thee a great _____.”

Gen. 46:4 What did God **promise**?

Jacob’s family arrived in Egypt and settled in Goshen. Joseph introduced his father and brothers to Pharaoh.

Gen. 47:12 What did Joseph do for his family?

Jacob was 130 years old when he came to Egypt, and he lived there 17 more years. His family grew and prospered.

Gen. 47:29 Jacob realized he would soon die, so he called Joseph. What did he ask him to **promise**?

Gen. 47:30 Where did he want to be buried?

Concluding Thoughts: Providence, Provision, and Promises.

God's **providence** sent Joseph to Egypt. His wicked brothers wanted to harm him, but God providentially sent Joseph to Egypt and later elevated him to a high position so he could preserve and provide for his family. God's providence is at work in our lives today, whether we recognize it or not. When things don't go our way we should ask God to help us see His providential plan. He may be working out a good plan even though we are currently going through difficulty (Rom. 8:28). We must trust Him.

Joseph and Pharaoh made **provision** for the needs of Joseph's family. All the brothers wanted was to buy some grain, but Pharaoh and Joseph gave them food, gifts, and the best pastureland in all of Egypt. God provides for our needs both physically and spiritually. Not only does He give us food, water, and air to breathe; He also enables us to feast on spiritual riches in the midst of a spiritual famine.

God **promised** to make Israel a great nation while they were in Egypt, and He also promised to bring them out of Egypt one day and return them to the land of Canaan. God has also made many promises to us. He will go with us through this life and someday take us to our eternal home in heaven (Heb. 13:5; John 14:3).

Thank God for His **providence, provision, and promises.**

Project: Memorize **Genesis 45:8**. Cling to the Bible's promises.

God's Plans Revealed

Have you ever seen a set of blueprints (architectural drawings)? They are detailed plans that tell how a building is supposed to be built. A complete set includes floor plans and elevations, as well as detailed specifications for the foundation, roof structure, electrical wiring, plumbing, and ventilation ductwork. When you hire an architect, he will determine your needs and space requirements, and then produce a set of plans for your building. At some point he will sit down with you and unveil the plans he has created. The plans are not the finished project, but they tell you what the completed building will look like.

In this last lesson from the book of Genesis we will discover that God revealed a number of His plans for Israel's future as a nation. These plans came through the last words of Jacob, the aging patriarch whom God renamed Israel, and his son Joseph, whom God made ruler of Egypt. While these plans specifically apply to the nation of Israel, we will find that some relate to us, as well.

Gen. 48:1-2 Joseph learned that his father (Jacob) was nearing death, so he and his two sons went to see him.

Gen. 48:3 What did Jacob tell them?

Gen. 48:4 What promises did he repeat?

Gen. 48:5 What did Jacob say about Ephraim and Manasseh?

Jacob claimed Joseph's two sons as his own, elevating them to the place of heirs equal with his own children. Next, Jacob wanted to bless the two boys. Since Jacob was blind, Joseph positioned his sons so Jacob could easily place his right hand on Manasseh's head and give him the blessing belonging to the firstborn.

Gen. 48:14 What did Jacob (Israel) do?

Jacob elevated Ephraim to the position of firstborn. God revealed His plan for Israel's future through Jacob's blessing. Ephraim and Manasseh became heads of two of the twelve tribes of Israel (Jacob's son Levi did not receive an inheritance because his tribe became the priests and Levites who served in the Temple).

Gen. 48:21 What did he say God would do?

God's plan was to take the children of Israel out of Egypt and return them to Canaan, the land He had promised to give them.

Gen. 49:1-2 Why did Jacob call all his sons together?

Jacob named his sons one by one, said something about each one's character, and made a prophecy concerning the future of their tribe. Jacob rebuked Reuben for sexual immorality, and Simeon and Levi for their cruelty and anger. Next, he addressed Judah.

Gen. 49:9 "Judah is a _____'s whelp."

Gen. 49:10 "The _____ shall not depart from Judah, nor a _____ from between his feet, until Shiloh [the Messiah] come; and unto him shall the _____ of the people be."

Gen. 49:11 This verse mentions a **vine** (John 15:5) and a **donkey's colt** (Matt. 21:5). What did Jacob say the Messiah would wash His clothes in?

These prophecies revealed God's plan concerning Jesus Christ: the Lion of the tribe of Judah will rule forever over God's people after cleansing them through His own blood.

Jacob (Israel) gave prophecies concerning the rest of his sons.

Gen. 49:29-32 Where did he command them to bury him?

This emphasized Israel's connection to the land God gave them.

Jacob died. Joseph had his body embalmed and the Egyptian people mourned for him for 70 days. After that, Joseph, his brothers, and a large group of Egyptian officials took Jacob's body to Canaan and buried it in the cave near **Mamre** (see map on p. 6).

After Jacob's death, Joseph's brothers feared he would take vengeance upon them for selling him into slavery 39 years earlier.

Gen. 50:18 What did Joseph's brothers do and say?

Gen. 50:19 What did Joseph tell them?

Gen. 50:20 "But as for you, ye thought _____ against me; but God meant it unto _____, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people _____."

Gen. 50:21 What did Joseph promise?

A half-century later as Joseph neared death, he assured his family that one day God would deliver Israel from Egypt, just as He had promised (Gen. 50:24). He asked, when that time came, for his family to carry his bones back to Canaan for burial.

Concluding Thoughts: God revealed His plans for the makeup of the 12 tribes of Israel, and from which tribe Israel's great King and Messiah would one day come. He demonstrated Israel's connection with the Promised Land of Canaan through Jacob's burial there, and He repeated through both Jacob and Joseph His plans to deliver Israel from Egypt and return them to their land.

Just as God had plans for Israel's future, He also has plans for your future. If you know Jesus Christ as your Savior those plans will ultimately bring good your way (Rom. 8:28). If you don't know Jesus, however, God's plans for you are not good. Please turn to Jesus Christ for salvation today. Then you can thank Him and trust Him to carry out the good plans He has for your future.

Project: Memorize **Genesis 50:20**. Thank God for His plans.