



# GENESIS

*The Story of Fulfillment*

# Why Genesis?

In Genesis, we discover God's purposes for the earth and humanity, which is disrupted by sin infiltrating all the earth. God's story of redemption is revealed to one man: Abraham. Through Abraham, we see God's plan of blessing to all nations. Genesis is foundational to the whole Bible and captures God's heart for His creation and particularly for every human life. Genesis tells us who God is, who we are, how things went wrong, and the plan for reconciliation.

God's great plan for humanity began intentionally, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.' (Gen. 1:28)

Along with the other books of the Pentateuch (Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy), Genesis has been ascribed to Moses.

## What about you?

Thinking about the many historical stories in Genesis, how do you see its themes and purposes, interacting in the rest of the Bible?

This will form a large part of our discoveries in this series. We want to uncover how Genesis has a foundational role for the entire Bible.

This first book of Genesis is framed by genealogies. We will encounter the purpose of these people, contained within an otherwise boring list of names, having an important part in the promises that we find in this book.

We pray God will bless these studies and our discussions as we seek to learn and grow.



# Let's Make a Start Creation



## Read Genesis 1:1 - 2:3

**What it's About** God created the heavens and the earth and desires humanity to populate the earth as his image-bearers.

**Making a Start** Where did it begin? This simple questing and its answer affects the way we view the entire world. The history of Genesis 1-11 reveals God's purposes for the world. Genesis 1 begins "In the beginning, God," announcing to us that it all starts with God.

### Going Deeper Questions

Gen 1:5, 8, 13, 19,  
23, 31

Gen 1:3, 6, 9, 11,  
14, 20, 24, 26, 29

Gen 1:10, 12, 18,  
21, 25

Ex 25:1; 30:11, 17,  
22, 34; 31:1, 12

- What was created on each of the seven days of creation?
- What did God say at the conclusion of each day?
- What words or phrases are repeated? Repetition indicates their importance. Take time to reflect on each of these repeated phrases and their significance.
- "And there was evening, and there was morning, the \_\_\_ day". What does this rhythm and balance of God's orderly creation communicate?
- "And God said". This word which God speaks, creates. How does the creative power of God's word strengthen our resolve to meditate on the written Word of God in our own lives?
- "God saw that it was good" and in Gen 1:31 as a culmination, God sees "everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good". What suggestions for a proper relationship between humanity and creation are provided in Genesis 1?
- Chapter 1 climaxes with the creation of humanity. In which ways is the final creative act of God different from His previous creative acts? And how is the uniqueness of humanity emphasized in Gen 1:26-31?
- What is the distinctive purpose for humanity in God's creation?
- Read Psalm 78:69. The climax of the week of creation in God's Sabbath rest on the seventh day. The psalmist explicitly compares the building of the sanctuary to creation. God's Sabbath rest hints at the purpose of creation. The phrase "And God said" frames the seven days of creation just as "And Yahweh said" frames the seven speeches for the creation of the tabernacle. In light of all this, how should an understanding of the heavens and the earth as a divine sanctuary affect our understanding of the purpose of the world?

# Let's Make a Start Creation



Read through the following. Then take time to reflect on the personal Implications these may have for your walk with the Lord.

## **Coming Together in the whole Bible**

John 1:14

We clearly see the power of God's Word in this passage. God creates by the power of his Word (cf. John 1:1–3). This same Word "became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth". The Word is active in creation is revealed as a Person who becomes flesh and blood in redemption, to come and save.

Gen 2:2

When God finished His work, "he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done". He did not rest because he was tired, but to enjoy the world that he had worked to create. In Christ, this rest is fulfilled, so that "there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God".

Heb 4:9

Jesus offers the key to enter that rest, since he invites us, "Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest".

Matt 11:28

In creation, the pattern was work then rest. In the Gospel, the pattern is rest then work.

1 Cor. 15:9–10;

Phil. 2:12–13

## **As You Finish this Week**

Pray that God would seal the insights that you have obtained about God's purposes in creation. May the riches of this chapter move your heart to marvel at the greatness of God in full measure.

Highlight a few areas for further reflection to come back to at a later time

# Sin Comes In



## Read Genesis 2:4 - 3:24

**What it's About** Humanity, the Purpose, and pinnacle of creation with a commission to fill the earth with image-bearers, fails in that calling and faces consequences.

**Making a Start** God's purpose for humanity is amplified in greater detail. The terse, poetic language of chapter 1 is explained in a narrative of the creation of humanity in the garden-sanctuary of Eden in chapter 2. When God's command to Adam and Eve is disobeyed in chapter 3, at the instigation of the serpent, consequences ensue for everyone involved. Sin invades the universe. Nevertheless, God's grace still abounds in his judgment, as the offspring of the woman will conquer the serpent and procreation and dominion will continue, though only through pain .

Gen 3:15; 3:16–19

### Going Deeper Questions

Gen 2:4–9

Gen 2:10 – 14

Eze 47:1–12;

Rev 22:1–2

Gen 2:12, Rev 21:18

Num 11:7, Ex 25:7;  
28:9

Gen 3:24,

Ex 37:7-9, Sam 4:4

Ps 78:69,

Ezek 28:13-14

### God has a role for Humanity - Genesis 2

God's special role for humanity in Genesis 1:26–30 is now amplified.

- How is God's special blessing on humanity evident?

Eden is recognized as the first sanctuary and dwelling place of God, corresponding to the later temple. As a river "flowed out of Eden to water the garden" next to the tree of life, so in the Bible's climactic vision, a river flows from the presence of God in the temple, surrounded by trees that bring life. This river is surrounded by gold, bdellium, and onyx stone, just as gold filled the temple, bdellium recalled the manna in the ark of the covenant, and onyx stones were placed on the clothing of the priests. Finally, after sin enters the garden, cherubim protect the garden and tree of life from unclean humanity, just as the cherubim guard the ark of the covenant. Indeed, "he built his sanctuary like the high heavens, like the earth, which he has founded forever", and Eden is called "the garden of God" and "the holy mountain of God".

- Consider the significance of Eden as the first temple.
- If Eden is the sanctuary of God, what does that tell us about the whole cosmos, or about Adam's role?

Gen 2:15

Just as Adam was to "to work and keep" the garden sanctuary of Eden, so the priests were to keep "all the furnishings of the tent of meeting...as they minister at the tabernacle".

Num 3:8

1 Cor 15:45; Heb  
7:23–28

- What does this teach us about Adam's role? Consider also that Jesus, the Second Adam was himself the final priest?
- In Genesis 2:18–25, how does God provide help for Adam to fulfill his calling?

# Sin Comes In



## Going Deeper Questions

Gen 1:28; 2:15–17

Gen 3:24

### Humanity's Failure - Genesis 3

While Adam and Eve were to care for the sanctuary of Eden by subduing the beasts and obeying God's word, they end up being subdued by a beast by compromising God's word and are exiled it.

- Compare carefully how God's instructions are subtly changed from God's original instructions in Genesis 2:16–17 to their recollection in Genesis 3:1–5. What changes do you see?
- How does sin break down relationships, both vertically between God and humanity, and horizontally between Adam and Eve, based on the consequences of sin in Genesis 3:7–13?
- Describe the punishment for each sin of 1) the Serpent, 2) Adam, 3) Eve. Noting how Adam and Eve's punishments link up with their original calling in Genesis 1:28.
- Notice, even during punishment, God's grace and gospel are evident. Describe the promise that is present even in the punishment of 1) Adam and 2) Eve.
- How is God's grace evident in Genesis 3:20–21?
- What hints do we have about the coming sacrificial system and Jesus, the "Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world"?

John 1:29

Read through the following. Then take time to reflect on the personal Implications they may have for your walk with the Lord.

## Coming Together in the whole Bible

Genesis 3:15 is widely seen to be the "early gospel", the earliest declaration of the divine grace of the gospel. Although the serpent would bruise the heel of the offspring of the woman, the offspring of the woman would crush the head of the serpent. Genesis, therefore, traces the line of the offspring of the woman through many genealogies, finally crystallizing around the seed of David. The serpent does bruise the heel of Jesus at the cross, but Jesus crushes his head at the resurrection. Furthermore, a glorious promise is given to those who are in Christ, that "the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet" (Rom. 16:20).

# Sin Comes In



## **Coming Together in the whole Bible**

Although Genesis 3 ends with the account of God's punishment for Adam and Eve, His promise endures even in the face of His punishment. Though Eve will have pain in childbearing, she will still bring forth children. Though Adam will have pain in eating what comes from the ground, the ground will still produce food for him. Disobedience does not remove them completely from the realm of God's promise, but this promise endures even in the face of their disobedience.

Gen 3:8

John 1:29,  
Zech 3:1–5

Rom. 13:12, 14;  
Eph 4:22–24;  
Col 3:9–10

## **As You Finish this Week**

The first animal is killed to clothe Adam and Eve's nakedness in Genesis 3:21. Though nakedness did not cause them shame before the fall, sin immediately brought shame at their nakedness, so that they hide themselves. However, God covers their nakedness with the skin of an animal. This looks forward to the ministry of the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. In a similar manner, we are to "cast off the works of darkness and put on the armour of light," which is to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ".

Pray that God would seal the insights that you have obtained about His purposes for humanity and the consequences of sin. May the riches of this chapter move your heart to marvel at the grace of God even in judgment. Highlight a few areas for further reflection to come back to at a later time.

# Going in a Wrong Direction



Read Genesis 4:1 - 11:26

**What it's About** The fall initiates a downward spiral of sin, beginning with Cain's murder of Abel and culminating in the Tower of Babel.

**Making a Start** Sometimes sin has immediate consequences; sometimes it does not. In chapter 3, we saw sin's immediate consequences. Adam and Eve realized they were naked, they hid from God, and God punished them for their sins. In the next major section in Genesis, we see the longer-term consequences of sin, how it just seems to get worse and worse. The scope of Genesis 4–11 is macro-cosmic (big picture): instead of the earth being filled with representatives of God, it is filled with the consequences of sin. Nevertheless, God's grace abounds even in the face of sin. We see God's mercy evident amid this macro-cosmic picture of the spread of sin with Seth, Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and this prepares the way for the micro-cosmic (zeroed in) focus beginning in chapter 12 with Abraham, who will bring blessing to the nations.

**Going Deeper Questions** In order to get a basic snapshot of this section, skim through the following passages, and for each jot down brief answers to the following questions

- How does sin spread?
- What is God's punishment for that sin?
- How do you see God's grace in this passage?
  - a. Cain and Abel (Gen. 4:1–26)
  - b. Noah (Gen. 6:1–22 and 8:20–9:7)
  - c. Noah and his sons (Gen. 9:18–29)
  - d. The Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1–9)
- As you think back over Genesis 4–11, what is the main point?

# Going in a Wrong Direction



Read through the following. Then take time to reflect on the personal Implications these may have for your walk with the Lord.

## **Coming Together in the whole Bible**

John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus by saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” Matt 3:21. Similarly, Genesis 4–11 prepares the way for Abraham by showing the profound depths of human sinfulness, when left unchecked. The purpose of these chapters, as Dutch theologian Geerhardus Vos says is to “bring out the consequences of sin when left so far as possible to itself... Hence, before the work of redemption is further carried out, the downward tendency of sin is clearly illustrated, in order that subsequently in the light of this downgrade movement the true divine cause of the upward course of redemption (that is, the story of Abraham and the formation of the nation Israel) might be appreciated.” The ugliness of human sin prompts us to marvel at the even greater depths of God’s love in sending his own Son to suffer on behalf of sinners.

Gen 4:7

Even as God demonstrates the consequences of sin, grace abounds. The Lord warns Cain about the danger of sin, before the murder of Abel.

Gen 4:16

Even after that murder, God protects Cain with a mark, while he is exiled from the presence of the Lord to the land of Nod, east of Eden.

Gen 6:5

And when “the wickedness of man was great in the earth”, God saves Noah in an ark and resolves, “I will never again curse the ground

Gen 8:21

because of man, for the intention of man’s heart is evil from his youth”. Even as the Lord confuses human language at Babel and disperses them to cover the face of the earth, it is largely to protect them from their own sin. Most importantly, throughout the downward spiral of sin in Genesis 4–11, God actively develops and preserves a line of holy offspring, preparing the way for the account of Abraham starting in Genesis 12.

## **As You Finish this Week**

Col 3:17

Pray that God would give you an attitude that agrees with Him about sin and it’s consequence. Confess any known sin and seek God’s favour on your life and ministry. We know God’s grace abounds and we can take heart from His faithful promises for eternity through Jesus. “And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”

# The Plan of Salvation Abraham



Read Genesis 11:27 - 16:16

**What it's About** God promises to bless the nations through the offspring of Abram.

**Making a Start** We move from the macro-cosmic picture of the nations in Genesis 4–11 to the micro-cosmic story of one man, Abram (not yet renamed Abraham), and his family, beginning in Genesis 12. Yet the wide-angle picture of all nations is not lost in the story of Abram, since God promises to bless all nations through Abram's offspring. In this section, God makes a covenant with Abram and his descendants, a covenant that is not deserved by or based on Abram's faithfulness, but a covenant that God himself guarantees

## Going Deeper Questions

Gen 11:31

Genesis 11:27 begins a new section with the generations of Terah. The story of Terah, Abram's father, is told in the life of his son, Abram. Terah begins a journey to Canaan but settles in Haran. Genesis 12:1 begins, "Now the Lord said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you.'

Gen 12:1–3

- What are the ways that God promises to bless Abram?
- What is ironic about God's promise to make Abram's name great in light of the sin at the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11:4?
- What are some other contrasts you see between the call of Abram and the Tower of Babel?

Gen 12:2

Abram steps out in immediate obedience. At seventy-five years of age, he takes his entire family and sets out to go to the land of Canaan.

Gen 12:4–9

- How does God confirm his promise to Abram?

Despite Abram's faithful obedience in Genesis 12:4–9, his own faithlessness in Genesis 12:10–20 threatens the fulfillment of the promise.

Gen 12:10–20

When famine strikes Egypt, Abram lies to Pharaoh about his wife Sarai.

Gen 12:7

- How does this jeopardize the fulfillment of God's promise, "To your offspring I will give this land"?
- How does God intervene to ensure that his promises in these verses are fulfilled?

# The Plan of Salvation Abraham



## Going Deeper Questions

Gen 13:8–13  
Gen 14:12–16

After Abram's "exile" in Egypt, he demonstrates more faith in his relationship with Lot in Genesis 13:1–14:16. When the land cannot support both him and Lot, he allows Lot to choose whichever land he wants. And when Lot is taken captive in a war by the kings of that area, Abram goes to rescue him.

- How does the Lord affirm Abram's faith and his own promises in Genesis 13:1–14:16?

Read Genesis 14:17–24. Abram meets both Melchizedek, king of Salem, and the king of Sodom.

- How is Abram's faith demonstrated in this passage?

Genesis 15:6 is one of the best-known verses in the story of Abraham: "And he believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness."

While Jews around the time of Jesus generally celebrated Abram's act of sacrifice of Isaac as the pinnacle of his faith, the New Testament focuses on Abram's belief in God's promise. Ironically, though, the context preceding this verse focuses on God's promise in the face of Abram's faithlessness!

Rom.4:1–25; Gal  
3:1–9

- How is Abram's faithlessness evident in Genesis 15:1–5?

In Genesis 15:17, a smoking fire pot passes between the pieces of Abram's sacrifice. This is an odd scene! Covenants are usually accompanied with a sacrifice, and after the covenant is sealed, each of the parties would pass between the parts of the carcass of the sacrificed animal. Walking between the parts of the carcass is like saying, "Let it be done to me if I do not fulfill my part of the covenant". If fire and smoke represent the presence of God, then only God and not Abram passes between the pieces of the sacrifice.

cf. Jer. 34:18–20  
e.g. Ex. 19:18; Ex.  
3:2; 13:21–22)

- What does this imply about God's commitment to keeping the terms of this covenant?

Abram's remarkable encounter with God in Genesis 15 has not cured his faithlessness.

- What consequences does Abram's faithless inability to trust God for the fulfillment of the promise have in Genesis 16:1–16?
- Look back over Genesis 12–16. How do these chapters show God's commitment to his promise even in the face of human faithlessness?

# The Plan of Salvation Abraham



Read through the following. Then take time to reflect on the personal Implications these may have for your walk with the Lord.

## **Coming Together in the whole Bible**

God's radical commitment to His promise and covenant with Abraham is seen as He passes along through the pieces of the sacrifice in Genesis 15:17. If the terms of the covenant are not kept, then He will bring upon Himself the curses of the covenant. This radical commitment looks forward to Christ, who took upon Himself the curse of the covenant: "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree', so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith".

Gal 3:13–14

Jesus has taken the curse of disobedience upon Himself so that the nations might receive the blessing of Abraham. "And he believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness".

Gen 15:6

When Paul celebrates salvation by faith, he looks back to Abram's faith in Genesis 15:6. In Paul's day, the Jews looked to Abraham because of his obedience in being willing to sacrifice Isaac. However, the New Testament writers, focus more on Abram's trusting faith, and even references to the sacrifice of Isaac focus on his faith. "By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac". Even in Genesis, God's blessing and promise do not flow out of Abram's obedience. Rather, Abram's faith and obedience are a response to God's lavish promises. Abraham should be seen and celebrated as the father of faith.

Rom 4:1–8;

Gal 3:1–14

Heb 11:17

## **As You Finish this Week**

Praise God for his purpose to bless the nations through the offspring of Abraham. Pray that God would seal the insights that you have obtained about God's covenant with Abraham. Since "all the promises of God find their Yes in [Christ]" (2 Cor. 1:20), consider how the promises of Abraham can be fulfilled in your life as a spiritual child of Abraham.

# Promises Activated



## Read Genesis 17:1 - 22:24

**What it's About** God fulfills His promises and hears the prayers of His people.

**Making a Start** God promises that Abram, now renamed Abraham, will be “the father of a multitude of nations”. God calls Abraham to “walk before me, and be blameless, that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly”.

Gen 17:5

Gen 17:1-2

God’s intention to bless the nations through Abraham is evident throughout this section as Abraham intercedes for Sodom and Gomorrah and brings blessing to the Philistine king Abimelech. Also, we see both the miraculous birth of Isaac and later Abraham’s offering of Isaac. Throughout, God’s faithfulness is clear.

### Going Deeper Questions

#### Covenant Revealed

God reiterates His covenant promises to Abraham in Genesis 17:3–8. These promises revolve around the blessings of offspring, land, and God’s presence. In terms of offspring, God promises, “I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you”. For the land, “I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession”. God’s presence is promised, since “I will be their God”. God’s promise demands a response—circumcision.

Gen 17:6

Gen 17:8

- Read Genesis 17:9–14 carefully. Since God’s promises revolve around the promise of offspring, why do you think this sign is chosen as a sign of the covenant?
- In what ways is this sign uniquely appropriate?

God changes Abram’s name to Abraham (meaning “exalted father”), and he changes Sarai’s name to Sarah. God then reiterates His promise to bless Sarah and bring a child from her womb.

- Read Genesis 17:15–21; 18:9–15. How do you see Abraham and Sarah’s incredulity in the face of God’s promise?

Even in the face of his incredulity, Abraham still responds to God’s promise with obedience and circumcises his son Ishmael and the men born in his house. Notice that the covenant of circumcision does not only cover his own biological children but also includes “all those born in his house or bought with his money”.

Gen 17:23

Gen 12:3

- How might this begin to reflect God’s promise that “in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed”?

## Going Deeper Questions

### Abraham and the Nations

God's purpose for the nations continues to be seen in Genesis 18. In Genesis 18:1–8, the Lord appears to Abraham with three men, and Abraham immediately responds with generous hospitality to them. After reiterating His promise in Gen. 18:9–15, God's judgment is sure against Sodom and Gomorrah. But Abraham seeks to bring blessing to these nations by interceding for them, a back and forth conversation between the Lord and Abraham. We clearly see Abraham's persistence, as he asks six times for God to lower the threshold for His judgment. Abraham's relationship with God allows him to ask questions of God and shows a remarkable persistence.

Gen 18:20

Gen 18:22-33

- What lessons can we learn about the nature of prayer from this?
- Why is it important to have an "Abraham" type figure to intercede in the face of God's judgment?

Read the description of the remarkable sinfulness of Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 19:1–11. Considering this, Lot leaves Sodom with his immediate family in Genesis 19:12–29, though his sons-in-law do not believe in the impending destruction. They flee to the city of Zoar, and the Lord rains down sulfur and fire from heaven to destroy the cities and the valley they have left behind. Lot's wife turns back during this time of destruction and is turned into a pillar of salt. Read this section carefully.

- Why do you think this story is included in the overall story of Abraham?
- How does this help us understand the promise, "In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed"?

Gen 12:3

The problems of the nations do not end with the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

- How do we see the questionable origins of the Ammonites and Moabites in Genesis 19:30–38?

Again, we see Abraham's interactions with the nations in Genesis 20.

- How does he bring blessing to the Philistines, even though he lies about the identity of his wife? Note also Genesis 21:22–34.
- What do we learn about Abraham and about the nature of sin when we compare Genesis 20:1–18 with Genesis 12:10–20?

# Promises Activated



## Going Deeper Questions

### Promise Fulfilled and Tested

In Genesis 21:1–7, Isaac is finally born. After waiting twenty-five years, Abraham is given a son.

- What can be seen in the name of Isaac, “he laughs”?

Now that Isaac is born, conflict arises with Ishmael, the son of Hagar.

Gen 21:10

Sarah tells her husband, “Cast out this slave woman with her son”.

God promises Abraham, even in the midst of his displeasure and

Gen 21:13

frustration, that “I will make a nation of the son of the slave woman also, because he is your offspring”. Observe carefully what happens to Hagar as she is sent away.

- How does Genesis 21:8–20 show God’s blessing resting on Ishmael and his descendants because of Abraham?

Gen 22:1

A final step of painful obedience is seen in Genesis 22:1–24. “God tested Abraham”. This sets the tone for the entire chapter, as God calls him to

Gen 22:2

“Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you”. This test is painful, but Abraham obeys immediately. Read through Gen. 22:1–8.

- How do you see Abraham taking deliberate steps of trusting obedience here? Note the way the covenant promises to Abraham are reiterated in Genesis 22:15–18.

# Promises Activated



Read through the following. Then take time to reflect on the personal Implications these may have for your walk with the Lord.

## **Coming Together in the whole Bible**

Ex 32:32

Ezek 22:30

Rom 9:3

Gal 3:13

As God reveals His impending judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham steps in as an intercessor and intermediary. Six times he comes before God and intercedes on their behalf. Similarly, when Israel sinned by making a golden calf and God was going to destroy them completely, Moses interceded for them, saying, "But now, if you will forgive their sin—but if not, please blot me out of your book that you have written". He stood "in the breach" and cried out for God's grace for Israel. Paul too cried out in his own day on behalf of the Israelites, "I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh". All these serve to point to Jesus, the ultimate intercessor and intermediary, who stood in the breach for us—He "redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us".

Gen 22:2

John 3:16

Gen 22:12

Rom 8:32

The sacrifice of Isaac looks forward to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. God commands Abraham, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and...offer him there as a burnt offering". This wording foreshadows the words in John's Gospel, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life".

Also, God commends Abraham, because "you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me", just as He Himself "did not spare His own Son but gave him up for us all". Abraham prepares to sacrifice his only beloved son, Isaac, but a ram is provided instead. Ultimately, however, God actually does offer His only, beloved Son as a sacrifice for us.

## **As You Finish this Week**

Praise God for His heart for the nations and commitment to His promises. Pray that God would keep you strong in the place of your testing. Write down some notes or questions for further reflection.

# Passing Promises Forward



## Read Genesis 23:1 - 26:33

**What it's About** At the twilight of Abraham's life, he passes down the Promise of his faith to Isaac, his son.

**Making a Start** In this section, God's promise is passed from Abraham to Isaac. In the closing days of Abraham's life, Sarah dies, and Abraham turns his attention to finding a wife for his son Isaac. The story of Abraham continues in the account of Isaac and the birth of his sons, Esau and Jacob. God's promises are reiterated to Isaac, just as they were previously to Abraham. God sees that His promises are passed forward through Abraham's descendants. Isaac not only receives the promises of God from Abraham but also inherits some of the same character faults, as we will see.

Gen 3:15

In this section, we want to focus on how God is preserving an offspring and ensuring His promises continue to go on from Abraham and forward to the next generation.

### Going Deeper Questions

Gen 24:1

Gen 24:3-4

#### Passing the Promise by Preserving the Lineage - Genesis 23-24

The chapters are a picture of transition. Chapter 23 captures the scene of Sarah's death. Chapter 24 opens with Abraham aging. He wants his son not to marry a Canaanite but a woman from his own country.

- Why is the matter of a wife for Isaac such a matter of grave concern for Abraham (cf. Deut. 7:3-4)?
- What is the significance of the location of Sarah's burial? Consider God's promises such as Genesis 12:1, 7; 13:15; 15:18; 17:8.
- How do the details of this story confirm Abraham's confidence that "the Lord, the God of heaven...will send his angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there"? Note again Abraham's concern about intermarriage.

Gen 24:7

# Passing Promises Forward



## Going Deeper Questions

### Passing the Promise from Abraham to Isaac - Genesis 25–26

- In what ways do you see the faith of Abraham passed on to Isaac in Genesis 25:19–26?
- Observe, among other things, also how long it takes for Isaac to have his first son.

Gen 25:20,26

Conflict sets the stage for the story of Isaac. Jacob is born grasping the heel of his brother Esau, and so is named “Jacob”, which means “he cheats”. Division between the brothers is clear from birth, and Isaac favours Esau while Rebekah favours Jacob.

- How does Gen. 25:29–34 underscore the appropriateness of Jacob’s name?

Gen 26:3-4

Read Genesis 26:1–16. Immediately after God confirms his covenant promises to Isaac, Isaac utters the exact same lie about his wife that his father did—even in the same place (Gerar) with the same king (Abimelech). The Lord blesses Isaac abundantly in that land. He has so many possessions that the Philistines envy him!

Gen 20

Gen 26:12-16, 7-11

- Why do you think this account of blessing is compared with the account of Isaac’s deception?
- What does this suggest about the nature of God’s blessing in our lives?

Read Genesis 26:17–33. The focus here is how Isaac moves about and digs the wells that Abraham had dug. This is not merely about water. It is about something more, since Isaac gives them the names that his father had given them. Beersheba is dug with remarkable similarities to how it was originally dug in Abraham’s time.

Gen 21:22-23

Gen 26:4

- God has promised Isaac that “in your offspring all the nations of the earth shall be blessed”. How is this seen in these verses?

# Passing Promises Forward



Read through the following. Then take time to reflect on the personal Implications these may have for your walk with the Lord.

## **Coming Together in the whole Bible**

Gen 24:12

Gen 24:27

Gen 25:21

Matt 6:26-29

Rom 8:32

Gen 26:24

Ex 3:14-17

Isa 7:14

Matt 1:21-23

John 1:14

## **As You Finish this Week**

Throughout this section, we see how God provides in response to prayer. The servant's prayer for finding a wife for Isaac is answered, and the servant celebrates: "Blessed be the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken His steadfast love and His faithfulness toward my master". Isaac's prayer for his barren wife Rebekah is answered so that she conceives. Indeed, the God who cares for the lilies of the field and the birds of the air cares for his children as well. God's fatherly care is ultimately seen in the gift of His Son. This gift reminds us, "He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?". The gospel shows that God cares intensely even for the personal needs of His people, and in His Son's work any reason for God to resist hearing us has been swept away. We can come before Him boldly in prayer.

God appears to Isaac as he settles in Gerar, and God appears to him at Beersheba to remind him, "I am the God of Abraham your father. Fear not, for I am with you and will bless you and multiply your offspring for my servant Abraham's sake". Similarly, God calls Moses to lead Israel out of slavery, assuring him that, "I am who I am," and, "The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob...will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt". When God's people are under threat, God gives a sign to Ahaz that "the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel", which means "God is with us." God's presence is assured during the exile, just as God assured Isaac of His presence in Gerar and Moses in Midian. Ultimately, Jesus manifests God's presence with us to save us from our sins, fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14. Indeed, in Jesus, "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us".

Praise God for how the promises and blessings of Abraham are passed on to his son Isaac and to all his offspring, including us. What aspects of the promise stand out to you? What convictions is God laying on your heart in this study? Respond to God in a moment of unhurried prayer.

# A Test of Character



## Read Genesis 26:34 - 31:55

**What it's About** Sinful deception banishes Jacob into personal exile, but the punishment of sin prepares Jacob for his encounter with God at Bethel and beyond. His character is continually tested.

**Making a Start** In the previous section, we saw that the promises of God to Abraham are passed on to Isaac. However, the story of Isaac is ultimately told in the life of his son Jacob. Jacob's grasping at birth and manipulating of his brother Esau foreshadow the outright deception that Jacob engages in to steal Esau's birthright in Genesis 27. This section traces the consequences of Jacob's deception in his exile to Laban's country, as Jacob the deceiver is deceived, and the manipulator is manipulated. There is a very strong test of character within this section of Scripture.

Gen 25:26

Gen 25:29-34

### Going Deeper Questions

e.g. 1 Sam 3:1-2

e.g. Deut 34:7

Gen 24:1

Gen 26:34 - 27:4

Gen 27:5-46

Genesis 27:1 begins, "When Isaac was old and his eyes were dim so that he could not see . . ." In the Bible, dim eyesight can refer not only to physical eyesight but also spiritual discernment, while undimmed eyesight may symbolize physical and spiritual vigour. In light of these other passages, it seems that Isaac's dim eyes may be not only physical but also spiritual. When "Abraham was old, well advanced in years", his concern was singularly focused on providing a proper spouse for Isaac.

- What evidences are there for Isaac's lack of spiritual discernment?

Read the story of Jacob and Rebekah's deception of Isaac for Jacob to get his blessing. While the deception succeeds, by the end of the chapter it is clear that everybody loses. Isaac's spiritual blurriness leads to painful consequences for his entire family.

- Note the painful consequences that are experienced by 1) Isaac, 2) Esau, 3) Jacob, 4) Rebekah.
- What evidences do you see throughout Genesis 28 of God confirming to Jacob the same covenant promises made to his father, Isaac, and his grandfather, Abraham?

Gen 27:42-45; 28:5

Gen 29:10

Gen 29:13

For his deception, Jacob must go into "exile" to the land of Laban because his brother desires to kill him. Jacob's encounter with God at Bethel propels him forward in obedience in Genesis 29:1-14. Unlike the deceiving and manipulating Jacob of the past, he shows generosity and candour to his uncle Laban. However, in exile in the land of Laban, Jacob the deceiver feels the pain of deception in Genesis 27:15-30. Read that story.

# A Test of Character



## Going Deeper

### Questions

Gen 29:25

- How does Jacob's declaration to Laban, "Why then have you deceived me?", ironically echo Isaac's declaration to Esau in Genesis 27:35?

Gen 25:28

Gen 29:30

Gen 29:31- 30:24

• What might God be teaching Jacob through the pain of this situation? Jacob is not only deceived but also manipulated. While Jacob should have known the pain of favouritism because of his father's favouritism toward Esau, he shows the same favouritism toward his wife Rachel. As a result, Jacob is manipulated by his own wives repeatedly.

- Describe some ways in which we see Jacob himself being manipulated
- Read about Jacob's relationship with Laban in Genesis 30:1–43. Laban tries to cheat Jacob out of his wages by removing the striped and spotted goats and black lambs from the flock. However, Jacob employs an odd mating technique and he prospers.
- How does Jacob experience God's grace in the face of Laban's manipulative techniques here?

The Lord clearly calls Jacob to return home from his exile: "Return to the land of your fathers and to your kindred, and I will be with you".

Gen 31:3

- How are Jacob's old ways still evident as his family flees from Laban in Genesis 31:14–35?
- Read Genesis 31:43-55. Note the reconciliation between Jacob and Laban. What broken relationship still needs to be reconciled for Jacob?

## Coming Together in the whole Bible

Heb 7:23–28

Leah was unloved, but God blessed her with many children. Her sons include Judah and Levi. Judah becomes the father of the royal tribe of David and ultimately Jesus, and Levi is the father of the priestly tribe, which also culminates in the true and final priest, Jesus. It is surprising that both the royal and priestly lines are children of Leah, the unloved and neglected wife of Jacob. God shines the grace and power of his purposes in the most unlikely of places.

Heb 12:6

"The Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives". Jacob experiences a painful exile from the land of Canaan because of his deception, and he must flee to the land of Laban. There, the deceiver is deceived and the manipulator is manipulated, but those twenty years of "exile" form Jacob's character and prepare him for a remarkable reconciliation with his brother Esau and with God himself.

# A Test of Character



Read through the following. Then take time to reflect on the personal Implications they may have for your walk with the Lord.

## **Coming Together in the whole Bible**

What Jacob (Israel) experiences individually through repentance and restoration through exile, God prophecies would happen to Israel corporately after exile. Corporate Israel experiences the pain of exile to Assyria and Babylon, but the full blessing after exile is not realized until Jesus comes. Jesus experiences temporary "exile" to Egypt and ultimate exile when He was forsaken by God on the cross.

Matt 2:13-15

Matt 27:46

Seeing Jesus undergo the exile from the Father that we deserve, our hearts are transformed to love Him unreservedly.

Gen 27:1

Just as Isaac's eyesight was "dim so that he could not see", so later the priest Eli's "eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see" during a time when "the word of the Lord was rare . . . there was no frequent vision". Both Isaac and Eli's lack of spiritual discernment affected their children. Isaac failed to get a proper wife for his son Esau,

1 Sam 3:1-2

and Eli failed to teach his sons properly the ways of the priesthood. Later, Jesus drew an analogy between physical and spiritual sight: "The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!"

1 Sam 2:12-7

Bethel is a significant place in the story of Jacob. After his first meeting of God at Bethel, he vows to return there "if God will be with me and will keep me in this way that I go". He is testing to see if God is real. But, as he experiences God's provision, he sees God as "the God of Bethel".

Matt 6:22-23

Gen 28:20

Gen 31:13; 35:7

Throughout this account, Jacob, the deceiver, is the recipient of incredibly undeserved blessing. He prospers greatly in the land of Laban, as he "increased greatly and had large flocks, female servants and male servants, and camels and donkeys". Jacob recognizes God's gracious hand and concludes, "If the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, had not been on my side, surely now you would have sent me away empty-handed. God saw my affliction and the labour of my hands".

Gen 30:43

Gen 31:42

## **As You Finish this Week**

Just as God disciplined Jacob, so God disciplines us for our good. How has God's discipline rested on your life? How do you continue to see his discipline working out in you? What good has emerged from it? Take time to reflect on the nature of God's discipline in your own life.

# Learning a hard lesson God's Way



## Read Genesis 32:1 - 35:29

**What it's About** Crippled for life after wrestling with God, Jacob reconciles with Esau and finishes his journey to Bethel. He learns some hard lessons along the way.

**Making a Start** In the previous section, we saw that Jacob goes into "exile" in the land of Laban and experiences the very pain of deception that he had inflicted upon his brother Esau. During the twenty years in that land, God had worked in Jacob's heart. In this section, Jacob faces his greatest fears in reconciling with his brother Esau. As he does so, we see a dramatic picture of the grace of God through Esau.

Gen 25:26

Gen 25:29-34

### Going Deeper Questions

Gen 31:3

In the opening scene of Genesis 32:1-8, Jacob is gripped with fear. To his credit, he is on the journey, on the way to the Promised Land in obedience to the word of God. Yet as he faces the prospect of seeing his brother Esau again, fear grips Jacob's heart as he hears that his brother is approaching with four hundred men. However, Jacob brings this fear before God in prayer in Genesis 32:9-12. Read this prayer carefully.

- What characteristics and promises of God strengthen Jacob to cast his fears upon God?

Jacob not only wrestles with God in prayer but also with the reality of repentance. Read Genesis 32:13-21. He sends a very lavish present to Esau ahead of him - goats, ewes, rams, camels, cows, bulls, and donkeys. The purpose of these gifts are to "appease him with the present" so that "he will accept me." This language is often used of sacrifices before God.

Gen 32:20

- How do these gifts reflect the reality of repentance in Jacob's life?

We see a dramatic turning point in Jacob's life in Genesis 32:22-32.

Gen 32:22-24

He wrestles with a man, just as he has been wrestling with different situations up to this point. The turning point for Jacob, though, is the confession of his weakness. In Genesis 32:27, after wrestling with God, Jacob confesses that his name is "Jacob," the cheater.

- Considering Gen 27:36, what might be the significance of Jacob's confession?

God gives Jacob a new name, Israel, meaning "he strives with God."

- What message was there for Jacob in this new name?

# Learning a hard lesson God's Way



## Going Deeper Questions

Gen 33:1–2; cf.  
Gen. 33:8

• Jacob plead with God to bless him. Was his prayer answered? How? Read Genesis 33:1–11. At first, it seems that Jacob is back to his old scheming, as he divides his family to prevent them from total slaughter.

- Yet, what evidence do we see that Jacob takes responsibility and actively pursues reconciliation in these verses?
- List any hints you see of Jacob's heart of repentance and active pursuit of reconciliation in these verses.

Gen 27:41

Though Esau had been deeply wronged and formerly wanted to kill Jacob, we see a remarkable change in him as he “ran to meet [Jacob] and embraced him and fell on his neck and kissed him”. In Genesis 33:12–20, Esau offers to go with Jacob, or at least provide a bodyguard to be with him. Jacob refuses. God had promised him the land of Canaan and had promised to be his protection and bodyguard, so he did not need the protection of Esau. Another reason Jacob may have refused to go with Esau was that he had vowed to return to Bethel. God had told him to return to the land of his fathers and fulfill his vow.

Gen 33:4

Gen 31:3

Gen 28:20-22

Gen 31:3, 13

Also in Gen 13:15,  
17; 15:7, 18; 17:8

- How does all this tie in to God's original promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:1?

Look carefully at Jacob's response in Genesis 34:5–7, 30–31. Jacob tends toward passivity and cowardice, as in the past. Jacob also favoured Rachel over Leah, and here he favours the children of Rachel over the children of Leah, as Dinah is the daughter of Leah.

- How would you describe Jacob's response here? Where is his focus?
- Look at the response of the sons of Jacob to this tragedy. How do their actions reflect some of the characteristics of their father?

Gen 34:13

In spite of the disaster of Genesis 34, God does not give up on Jacob. God reaffirms his call to Jacob in Genesis 35:1.

- As Jacob responds to this call in Genesis 35:2–4, what must he and his family do before they arise and go up to Bethel?
- What is the significance of this? How does God confirm his promise to Jacob in Genesis 35:9–15?
- How does this confirmation pick up on things God has said to Abraham and Isaac, as well as on God's original words to Adam and Eve in Genesis 1:28?

# Learning a hard lesson God's Way



Read through the following. Then take time to reflect on the personal Implications they may have for your walk with the Lord.

## **Coming Together in the whole Bible**

Esau unexpectedly runs to welcome his brother Jacob, who has stolen his blessing and birthright. Though Jacob had sinned against Esau, Esau welcomes him back with open arms. Similarly, we have sinned against God, but God the Father welcomes us back with open arms. In fact, just as Esau “ran to meet him and embraced him and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept”, so the father in the story of the prodigal son “ran and embraced him and kissed him”. Just as Jacob stole the father’s blessing, so the prodigal son prematurely demanded the father’s blessing. Just as Esau unexpectedly welcomes back the rebel Jacob, so the father unexpectedly welcomes back the son. What a beautiful picture of the gospel in an unexpected place!

Gen 33:4

Luke 15:20

Gen 33:11

Gen 27:35

Gen 32:30

Luke 19:8

Eph 2:1-10 & 11-22

Jacob takes seriously the task of reconciliation with his brother Esau. He sends forth a sizeable present, a “blessing”, presumably repaying the blessing that he had stolen from his brother many years earlier. When his life is realigned to God after wrestling at Peniel, this realignment with God is immediately seen in reconciliation with his brother. Similarly, when Jesus encounters Zacchaeus the tax collector, Zacchaeus immediately responds by paying back what he has stolen from others. The gospel not only reconciles us to God, but also restores our relationships with one another.

Gen 49:5-7

Gen 25:26

Gen 27:36

The two brothers, Simeon and Levi play a critical role in God’s plan. Although they arrange the bloodbath of the city of Shechem and are later cursed for their part in it, Levi would ultimately become the father of the tribe of the priesthood of all of Israel (the Levites). Simeon is also the father of one of the major tribes of Israel. Jacob is born a cheater and lives up to his name by deceiving his brother Esau for his father’s blessing. Despite Jacob’s unsavoury character, God’s undeserved blessing and promise continue to rest upon him. When he wrestles with God, confessing his name as Jacob in Genesis 32:27, God renames him Israel.

# Learning a hard lesson God's Way



## **Coming Together in the whole Bible**

Gen 46:2,5

Gen 34; 37:3

Gen 46:5

Hos 12:2–6

Rom 9:10–16

Even after he receives his new name, he is still called Jacob and manifests his old character in failing to rebuke his sons for the murder of the men of the city of Shechem, and in his doting on Joseph. Indeed, both the old name Jacob and new name Israel are used, even in the same verse. He is both a failure and a loved one at the same time. Generations later in the time of the prophet Hosea, rebellious Israel is called Jacob, indicted, and called to repentance. For Paul, Jacob illustrates God's mercy and compassion.

Gen 32:10

God's character, and especially His persevering steadfast love, is continually shown to Jacob. He recognizes that "I am not worthy of the least of all the deeds of steadfast love and all the faithfulness that You have shown to your servant". God's mercy, not Jacob's merit, is the basis of God's blessing. Even when Jacob waits too long at Shechem and reverts to the old Jacob, God renews his call to him to go to Bethel, and reaffirms His promises to him. God's steadfast love is not fickle or easily offended. It reflects who He is.

Gen 35:1, 91-2

Gen 31:3

Gen 31:1-2

Gen 33:5, 11

Gen 34:30

When God commanded Jacob to return to the land of his fathers, he promised, "I will be with you". As Jacob goes on his way, the angels of God meet him and he declares, "This is God's camp!". Jacob recognizes God's gracious protection and provision. When Jacob is terrified of the Canaanites and Perizzites after the slaughter in the city of Shechem, God sends forth "a terror from God" upon the cities that surround him as he moves forward in obedience. As Jacob moves forward in God's purposes, he experiences God's powerful protection. God is the ever-present protector of his people.

## **As You Finish this Week**

Matt 5:24

John 13:35

How has the gospel of Jesus Christ reconciled you, not only to God, but also to your neighbour? Are there broken relationships that need to be healed? Jesus instructed us, "First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift [to God]". Similarly, the gospel propels us into healed and reconciled relationships with one another—for "by this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another".

# Experience of God and favour - Joseph



Read Genesis 36:1 - 41:57

**What it's About** The dreamer Joseph is sold into slavery and forgotten in prison, but God providentially preserves him and his family and bestows His favour.

**Making a Start** While the story of Jacob has shown the establishment of the twelve tribes of Israel, his story shows how God preserved Israel outside the Promised Land. It can be seen as a bridge between the stories of the patriarchs and the events of the book of Exodus. In this opening section of the Joseph story, Joseph's immaturity, and hardship lead to painful affliction in Egypt. This paves the way, however, for the dramatic reversal and salvation of the entire family of Israel and the experience of God's favour.

Gen 25:26

Gen 25:29-34

## Going Deeper Questions

Genesis 36:1 begins, "These are the generations of Esau (that is, Edom)," and Genesis 37:2 begins, "These are the generations of Jacob." This is a common refrain throughout Genesis. While we usually think of the story of our life in terms of our own accomplishments, the story of Esau is told in the generations of those who follow him, and the story of Jacob is primarily told in the life of Joseph.

- What implications might this have for our own lives?
- Read Genesis 37:1–11. Joseph's dreams will turn out to be prophetic and accurate. What do we discover about Joseph in these verses?
- Does he display relational wisdom?

In Genesis 37:12–36 we see a series of unexpected circumstances.

Though this chapter is marked by unexpected suffering, we will see God's hand of providence continues to guide.

- How does the unexpected strike, 1) Israel, 2) Joseph, and 3) Reuben.

While the story of Joseph is dominant in the closing sections of Genesis, Judah makes an unexpected entrance on the scene in Genesis 38. In the conspiracy against Joseph, Judah took the initiative to sell Joseph into slavery rather than kill him. Yet in chapter 38, we see that the sin of the Canaanites infiltrates the family of Israel through Judah.

Gen 37:26-27

- What compromises do you see by Judah and his family here?

Against the darkness of Judah's compromise in Genesis 38, Joseph's strong resistance to temptation in chapter 39 shines brightly.

# Experience of God and favour - Joseph



## Going Deeper Questions

- How does Joseph deliberately respond to the temptations of Potiphar's wife in Genesis 39?

Despite God's wonderful plans for Joseph, he goes from slavery to prison.

- What marks of Joseph's integrity and ongoing trust in God are evident even while he is in prison, as narrated in Genesis 40?

Despite Joseph's integrity in Potiphar's house, he is imprisoned. Despite his integrity and interpretation of dreams in prison, he is forgotten. Yet God forges Joseph's character in the dungeon. Read Genesis 41:1–36. Even after years of being forgotten in prison, Joseph does not show any traces of bitterness.

- What evidence do you see of Joseph's humble dependence on God to interpret Pharaoh's dream?

As a result, Pharaoh himself recognizes that Joseph has the Spirit of God in him and immediately promotes him to second in his land.

- Read Genesis 41:37-57. How is God's favour abundantly evident in Joseph's life?

Read through the following. Then take time to reflect on the personal Implications these may have for your walk with the Lord.

## Coming Together in the whole Bible

Judah is clearly the black sheep of the family of Israel—intermarrying with the Canaanites, failing to care properly for Tamar his daughter-in-law, and inadvertently sleeping with her and having twins by her. Against the shining story of Joseph's integrity, Judah's compromise appears heinous. However, Judah's failure does not remove him from the activity of God's grace. Later, Jacob blesses him: "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples". In the ensuing story line of Scripture, the tribe of Judah emerges as the line that would produce King David and ultimately King Jesus. Here again, God's grace rules over and even defies human merit as He uses people in His redemptive purposes.

Gen 49:10

# Experience of God and favour - Joseph



## Coming Together in the whole Bible

Ex 4:22

Ex 19:6

1 Pet 2:9

Joseph makes the unexpected journey from slavery to second in command of Egypt. This journey precipitates Israel's journey from slavery in Egypt to become God's firstborn son and "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation". Similarly, Christ rescues us from slavery to sin so that we might be "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession". Born into spiritual slavery, we are graced with undeserved royal dignity as God's own children, all through the work of Jesus on our behalf.

Gen 41:52

Gen 1:28

Ex 1:7

Ex 1:11-12

Joseph names his second child Ephraim, which means "fruitfulness", "For God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction". This fulfills God's original command in, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth." While the children of Israel do not fill the earth, Joseph's fruitfulness paves the way for the Israelites to fill the land of Egypt. Affliction sets the context for Joseph's fruitfulness, just as Genesis 3:16 had predicted. His affliction as a slave of Potiphar and prisoner in Egypt foreshadow the affliction of Israel, as slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt. Just as God makes Joseph fruitful in the land of his affliction, so He "has taken [Israel] and brought [Israel] out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt, to be a people of his own inheritance, as you are this day". The supreme evidence in the Bible of God bringing fruitfulness out of affliction is Christ Himself, whose affliction at the cross was the means of the most glorious fruit the world has ever known —glory for Himself and eternal life for sinners.

Deut 4:20

Gen 47:9

Gen 23:4

Lev 25:23; 1 Chron.

29:15; Ps. 39:12;

119:19

Lev 25:23

However, Jesus experienced isolation in His life that parallels the relative isolation of the patriarchs. Genesis 37:1 begins, "Jacob lived in the land of his father's sojourning's, in the land of Canaan." At the end of his life, Jacob tells Pharaoh, "The days of the years of my sojourning are 130 years". Similarly, Abraham views himself as a sojourner in the land. As sojourners, they have settled in the land for some time and have a certain status but are not permanent residents. Israel is repeatedly referred to as a stranger and sojourner before the Lord. The land is also seen as perpetually belonging to the Lord and therefore must not be sold permanently.

# Experience of God and favour - Joseph



## **Coming Together in the whole Bible**

1 Peter 2:11

John 6:51

In the New Testament, Peter picks up this theme in his call for holiness: “Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul”. We are enabled to do this knowing that Christ left His home in heaven to sojourn among us, dying for us, so that we might be fully restored to our true home, God himself.

## **As You Finish this Week**

God clearly forms Joseph’s character in the dungeon of affliction. How is God forming your character in the dungeon of affliction? How has God used seasons, when you felt forgotten or neglected by God, to forge your character? How might God be forging your character today? Take some time to recognize God’s shaping hand even in the dungeons of affliction today.

# It comes down to Reconciliation



## Read Genesis 42:1 - 47:31

**What it's About** Joseph reconciles with his brothers and brings his family down to Egypt.

**Making a Start** Stories of reconciliation dominate the book of Genesis. We saw Jacob's reconciliation with Esau. In Genesis 42–47 we see Joseph's reconciliation with his brothers and reunion with his father. This story shows the result of Joseph's experience in the dungeon and the fruit of the ongoing activity of God's grace in Joseph's life. Overall, the journey to Egypt in this section fulfills God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 15:12–16, and sets the stage for the exodus. This is a story of reconciliation.

### Going Deeper Questions

Gen 12:10; Gen 26:1–4

Famine drives the sons of Israel to Egypt again. Just as famine drove Abraham to Egypt and Isaac toward Egypt (though he sojourns in Gerar instead), so famine drives the sons of Israel to Egypt to buy grain. Joseph's dream that his brothers would bow down to him is fulfilled in Genesis 42:6.

- Read through chapters 42–44 and jot down notes on how the pain and scars from the past still affect the following people in Genesis: 1) Jacob/Israel, 2) Joseph, 3) Reuben, 4) Judah.
- Joseph clearly struggles with conflicted emotions toward his brothers throughout chapters 42–44. How do we see this?

Gen 37-50

Genesis 45 provides the climax to the whole Joseph story. Imagine the feelings of the brothers at Joseph's declaration, "I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?". He does not explode in vindictive anger but is gracious and compassionate. Read Genesis 45:4–8 carefully.

Gen 45:3

- How does Joseph interpret his many years of affliction?

In Genesis 45:16–46:34, we read the moving account of the restoration of Joseph to his father Jacob, who thought that his son was dead. Once Jacob hears the news that Joseph is alive and sees the wagons that Joseph has sent, his spirit revives. The narrator begins to call him Israel consistently from this point forward.

- What characteristics of Israel, the overcomer, do you see in this section?
- How is God's blessing seen in his life?

# It comes down to Reconciliation



## Going Deeper Questions

Gen 12:3

In Genesis 47:1–12, Jacob’s family settles in Goshen, as shepherds in that land. God had earlier promised Abraham, “in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed”.

- How does Jacob advance this prophecy as he appears before Pharaoh?

Gen 1:28; 47:27

While Adam and Eve were commanded to “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth”, the Israelites “were fruitful and multiplied greatly”—but in Egypt, rather than in the Promised Land of Canaan!

Gen 12:3

- In light of God’s promise to bless all the families on the earth in Abraham’s offspring, how should we put together Israel’s multiplying in Egypt with God’s desire to bring blessing to all nations?

Read through the following. Then take time to reflect on the personal Implications these may have for your walk with the Lord.

## Coming Together in the whole Bible

Gen 32:7; 42:4

Gen 43:14

God’s work in Jacob’s life is ongoing. In Genesis 42:4, Jacob is gripped by fear once again. Like his fear in meeting Esau, he is afraid to send his son Benjamin to buy grain in Egypt. Only after much convincing does he send Benjamin to Egypt, trusting in God’s mercy. Jacob’s fear does not, however, exempt him from God’s purposes. God continually pursues Jacob, and God Himself assures Jacob: “I am God, the God of your father. Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for there I will make you into a great nation”. God’s goodness to His children is not what they deserve. It is the action of His grace.

Gen 46:3

God’s work is not limited to the land of Canaan; He saves the family of Israel in Egypt through Joseph. This is an example of reconciliation. Reconciliation has much to do with transformation; it’s the moving from a place of separation, hurt, and brokenness to a place of healing, wholeness, forgiveness, and reunion. The Greek word for reconciliation is “katallage,” which translates to “adjustment of a difference” or “restoration to favour,” while the Hebrew word is “kaphar” or “kaphar,” which translates to “cover over” or “atone.” Reconciliation is coming back to what should be.

# It comes down to Reconciliation



## Coming Together in the whole Bible

Spiritual reconciliation is taking the wrong and covering it with the cleansing power of God, restoring it to a new state of transformative unity with the Lord and all creation. Reconciliation is merging two separate, closed-off pieces into one unit. It's bringing that lost sheep back into the proverbial fold.

Genesis 2

This study has reminded us that in the beginning, humanity was in perfect harmony with the Lord in the Garden of Eden. We spoke with God directly and felt no shame, for we were one with Him. But then came our fall from that perfect union, when man and woman disobeyed God. We were cast out from the garden and that beautiful, original relationship with our Creator. The whole message of the Gospel is one of reconciliation: A people who sinned over and over against God were given Jesus to believe in, model after, and follow, so that in their faith and following of Jesus they are restored to God and full unity. As Jesus told His disciples, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me". Only in Jesus can we have that wholeness and perfect healing.

John 14:6

Acts 7:2; 7:9-10;  
7:30-34; 38

Acts 7:44

Acts 7:48-50

Acts 8:1

Before Stephen's martyrdom, he recounts a summary of gracious salvation history, demonstrating that God's presence was not limited to the temple in Jerusalem. God appeared to Abraham in Mesopotamia, to Joseph in Egypt, to Moses in the wilderness, and to Israel at Mount Sinai. God not limited to any one location, traveling as he did in the "tent of witness in the wilderness". Even Solomon's temple could not contain Him. This summary of salvation history provides the theological foundation for the gospel to expand outward from Jerusalem into Judea and Samaria. We must not limit God to any one location but recognize that He is Lord over all and in all places.

## As You Finish this Week

How can a rich understanding of providence rescue your heart from bitterness? Remember the powerful act of grace and reconciliation plan God implements through time culminating is the personal gift of Jesus. Bring your own resentments for past hurts before the Lord, and ask that he would shine a light on His providence in them. Thank You Jesus!

# GENESIS

*The Story of Fulfillment*



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