

Bible Study # 11  
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Old Testament Series—Genesis 12—36

This is a very important area of Scripture. Genesis 12 **begins to narrow its focus on one man, Abraham.** The rest of the book of Genesis deals with Abraham and his family up until they went into Egypt. Throughout the rest of the book, we **focus on the family through which God was going to work in the future—the literal descendants of Abraham—his son, grandson and great grandchildren.** Then we pick up the story several generations later, in Exodus, to see what has transpired.

It is important for us to understand this section. You cannot understand prophecy unless you understand about Abraham and his descendants. Why would God single out Abraham? Everyone who inherits anything will ultimately inherit through Abraham. He is the father of the faithful. The ultimate fulfillment of God's blessings upon Abraham includes the promise that he and his spiritual offspring would inherit the earth (Romans 4). There are two aspects of that promise: the spiritual inheritance and the physical promises made to Abraham. (For further study read: *What's Ahead for America and Britain?* booklet)

Genesis 12:1-3, "Now the Lord had said to Abram: 'Get out of your country, from your kindred and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you: and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'"

What originally was offered to Abraham was the birthright blessings. It was a great but rather vague promise. It was an unspecified land and a promise that his descendants would be a great nation. A lot of details were not given.

Verse 4, "So Abram departed as the Lord had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran."

Verse 7, "Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, 'to your descendants I will give this land....'"

We are going to see that Abraham was called "the father of the faithful." He acted on faith. Verse 6, he found the Canaanites were there.

Verse 10, he shows up just in time. There was a famine in the land and Abraham has to go on down to Egypt to find something to eat.

Verses 11-12, "And it came to pass, when he was close to entering Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife, 'Indeed I know that you are a woman of beautiful countenance. Therefore it will happen, when the Egyptians see you that they will say, "This is his wife"; and they will kill me, but they will let you live.'" Abraham began to get scared that Pharaoh was going to kill him in order to take his wife.

Verse 13, "'Please say you are my sister, that it may be well with me for your sake, and that I may live because of you.'" Abraham used human reasoning. She was his half-sister (Genesis 20:12), but the intent was to mislead.

Verses 17-20, "But the Lord plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife. And Pharaoh called Abram and said, 'What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? Why did you say, "She is my sister?" I might have taken her as my wife. Now therefore, here is your wife take her and go your way.' So Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him; and they sent him away, with his wife and all that he had."

Abraham told Pharaoh Sarai was his sister. As a result of his human reasoning, he got himself in a mess. Abraham had to grow in faith. He had the same doubts we have. Ever notice how your faith goes up and down. It seems like one situation has passed, another one comes, and you cave in. Then you wonder, 'How did I ever do that?' Abraham became the person that most exemplified faith. God had to work with Abraham for years to teach him. Patience builds faith.

Genesis 13:5-8, "Lot also, who went with Abram, had flocks and herds and tents. Now the land was not able to support them that they might dwell together, for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together. And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock... So Abram said to Lot, 'Please let there be no strife between you and me, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen; for we are brethren.'"

Abraham told Lot, 'I don't want there to be trouble with us.'

Verse 9, "'Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me. If you take the left, then I will go to the right; or, if you go to the right, then I will go to the left.'" Abraham said,

'You take the part you want and I will take the rest of it.' Abraham didn't have to give him first choice, but he exemplified a Godly attitude.

Verse 10, "And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere...like the garden of the Lord..." Lot picked the best. So Abraham said, 'Fine, go to it.'

Let's notice the series of mistakes that Lot made. He was greedy. He chose the best part, not just the ordinary "run-of-the-mill-greedy" but over and above.

Verse 12, "...Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain and pitched his tent even as far as Sodom." Lot got as close to Sodom as he could. He liked the "bright-lights" atmosphere. Lot didn't do all the things they did, but he was not careful of his associates.

Genesis 14:1-12, there was an invasion and Sodom and Gomorrah were captured.

Verse 14, Lot and his family were taken captive. By this time he was dwelling in Sodom. Lot was taken a prisoner of war for being in Sodom.

Verse 13, someone told Abraham what had happened.

Genesis 14:14-16, "Now when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his three hundred and eighteen trained servants...he and his servants attacked them and pursued them...So he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his brother Lot and his goods, as well as the women and the people."

Verses 18-20, "Then Melchizedek King of Salem brought out bread and wine; He was the priest of God Most High. And He blessed him and said: 'Blessed be Abram of God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand.' And he gave him a tithe of all." Abraham tithed to Melchizedek.

In Hebrews 7:7, Paul explains this, showing that Melchizedek was superior to Abraham.

Hebrews 7:1-3, "For this Melchizedek, King of Salem, Priest of the Most High God...first being translated 'king of righteousness,' and then also king of Salem, meaning 'king of peace', without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually." Melchizedek was King of Righteousness and King of Peace—those are divine titles.

Verse 17 shows that Christ is a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek.

Hebrew 6:20, "Where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest

forever according to the order of Melchizedek." Melchizedek was the manifestation of the One that we know in the New Testament as Jesus Christ. "Melchizedek" means "King of Righteousness." That is a title that would be blasphemous to use for any human being. Abraham tithed to Melchizedek and was blessed by Him.

Genesis 15:1-2, God told Abraham, "...I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward.' But Abram said, 'Lord God what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?'" He said, 'Look, You haven't given me any offspring. I am childless. To whom will I pass on these blessings?'

Verses 4-6, "And behold, the word of the Lord came to him saying, 'This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from you own body shall be your heir.' Then he brought him outside and said, 'Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.' And He said to him, 'So shall your descendants be.' And he believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness."

God said, 'I am going to give you descendants that you will not even be able to number,' and Abraham believed Him. God said, 'I am going to bless you,' and he believed it.

Verses 13-16, "Then He said to Abram: 'Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.'"

They will come here again in the fourth generation. God said, 'I can look and see what is going to happen, but I am not going to deal with this people right now because their iniquity is not yet full. But I can see the way it is headed and I know what is going to happen.'

Verses 18-21, "On the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying: 'To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates—the Kenites, the Kenezites, and the Kadmonites; the Hittites, the Perizzites, and the Rephaim; the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.'" God expands the promise.

Genesis 16:1-3, "Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. And she had an Egyptian maidservant whose name was Hagar. So Sarai

said to Abram, 'See now, the Lord has restrained me from bearing children. Please, go in to my maid; perhaps I shall obtain children by her.' And Abram heeded the voice of Sarai. Then Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar her maid, the Egyptian, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan."

Now Sarai comes up with an idea. She used a little human reasoning. 'God has not answered on our time schedule, so maybe we better solve it our own way.' These are lessons of faith God is teaching them. God doesn't operate according to our time schedule. By this time, he had dwelt in the land 10 years and he was 85 years old. He told him at the age of 75 to get up and go to another land.

Verse 4, "So he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived her mistress became despised in her eyes." From the time this started, there was trouble. It was apparent that this was not going to work. Sarai was jealous of Hagar. Sarai came to greatly regret taking matters into her own hands.

Verses 6-9, Hagar fled; God told her to go back.

Verses 11-12, "And the Angel of the Lord said to her: 'Behold, you are with child, and you shall bear a son. You shall call his name Ishmael...He shall be a wild man; his hand shall be against every man, and every man's hand against him. And he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.'"

New English Bible, "... 'He shall be a man like the wild ass...his hand is against every man and every man's hand is against him. He lives at odds with all of his kinsman.'" This is a description of the Arab world. Ishmael is the ancestor of the Arab people. It is understood throughout the Arab world. Here is a description of the Arab world. They are continually fighting among themselves. Ever wonder why 200 million Arabs can't get rid of a few million Jews? They are too busy fighting among themselves. They are a very independent-minded people. The Arab world has continually been a scene of turmoil.

Genesis 17:1-5, "When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him. 'I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless. And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly.' Then Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying: 'As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations. No longer shall your

name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations.'" "Abraham" means "father of many nations."

Verses 6-8, "I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you. Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.'" Years later when Abraham was 99, his name was changed to Abraham; now it is many nations and a royal line, a kingship. The promise is being expanded.

Verses 10-17, "This is My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised; ...it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you. He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised, every male child in your generations, he who is born in your house or bought with money from any stranger who is not your descendant...and the uncircumcised male child, who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant.' Then God said to Abraham, 'As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. And I will bless her and also give you a son by her, then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples shall be from her.' Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, 'Shall a child be born to a man who is one hundred years old? And shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?'"

Abraham fell on his face and laughed. Put yourself in Abraham's place. Abraham told God, 'Please don't make fun of me; don't kid me that way.'

Verse 19, "Then God said: 'No, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son and you shall call his name Isaac; I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his descendants after him.'" "Isaac" means "laughing."

Verse 25, "And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old when he was circumcised..." The Arabs circumcise today when they are 13 years of age. They just didn't get the point.

Genesis 18:1-8, Abraham entertains three men (18:2). Two were angels (19:1) and one was the Lord (18:13, 33).

Genesis 18:9-15, “Then they said to him, ‘Where is Sarah your wife?’ And he said, ‘Here, in the tent.’ And He said, ‘I will certainly return to you according to the time of life, and behold, Sarah your wife shall have a son.’ And Sarah was listening in the tent door, which was behind him. Now Abraham and Sarah were old, well advanced in age; and Sarah had passed the age of childbearing. Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, ‘After I have grown old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?’ And the Lord said to Abraham, ‘Why did Sarah laugh, saying, “Shall I surely bear a child, since I am old?” Is anything too hard for the Lord? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.’ But Sarah denied it, saying, ‘I did not laugh,’ for she was afraid. And He said, ‘No, but you did laugh!’” “Yes, you were laughing. I heard you.” Verse 17, “And the Lord [the One who became Jesus Christ] said....”

Verse 19, ““For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and justice that the Lord may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him.”” God knew He could depend on Abraham to teach his family. Twenty-five years had gone by since God had called him. God let 25 years go by before Abraham had the son God promised. God wasn’t in a hurry. He wanted to make sure that Abraham knew that this was a miracle from God and that it was God’s promise.

Verses 20-21, “And the Lord said, ‘Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous, I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry against it that has come to Me; and if not, I will know.’” Abraham got scared because Lot was there.

Verse 23-31, Abraham began to bargain with God. He got down to 40, 30 and then 20.

Verse 31, “...And He said, ‘I will not destroy it for the sake of twenty.’”

Verse 32, “...‘I will not destroy it for the sake of ten.’”

Genesis 19:1, “Now the two angels came to Sodom....” The two angels were two of the three that had appeared to Abraham (18:2).

Verse 12, “Then the men said to Lot, ‘Have you anyone else here? Son-in-law, your sons, your daughters, and whomever you have in the city—take them out of this place!’” “Take them out!”

Verse 14, “So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law...and said, ‘Get up, get out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city!’ But to his sons-in-law he seemed to be joking.” They laughed at him.

Verse 15, when the morning came, the angels said, ‘Get out of here!’

Verse 16, “And while he lingered, the men took hold of his hand, his wife’s hand, and the hands of his daughters, the Lord being merciful to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city.” He was lingering because he was going to have to leave his grown children and grandchildren behind. The angels said, ‘We can’t destroy it with you here. You have to get out.’

Verse 17, “So it came to pass, when they had brought them outside, that he said, ‘Escape for your life! Do not look behind you nor stay anywhere in the plain. Escape to the mountains, lest you be destroyed.’” They said, ‘Flee to the mountains.’

Verses 18-19, “Then Lot said to them, ‘Please, no, my lords! Indeed now, your servant has found favor in your sight, and you have increased your mercy which you have shown me by saving my life; but I cannot escape to the mountains, lest some evil overtake me and I die.’”

Verse 20, ““See now, this city is near enough to flee to, and it is a little one; please let me escape there (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live.”” He said, ‘Let me go to that little city over there.’ Lot was an individual who kept getting as close to the world as he could get. He kind of compromised around the edges.

Verse 22, ““Hurry, escape there. For I cannot do anything until you arrive there.’ Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar.”

“Zoar” means “little.” They said, ‘Okay, but get out of here!’ Lot had just not quite gotten the point. He wanted to go to the city.

Verse 24, “Then the Lord rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the Lord out of the heavens.” All of a sudden the mountains didn’t look so bad.

Verses 25-26, “So He overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. But his wife looked back behind him and she became a pillar of salt.” Lot’s wife looked back longingly. She couldn’t turn loose of what was back there.

Verses 27-30, “And Abraham went early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the Lord. Then he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and he saw, and behold, the smoke of the land

which went up like the smoke of a furnace. And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities in which Lot had dwelt. Then Lot went up out of Zoar and dwelt in the mountains and his two daughters were with him; for he was afraid to dwell in Zoar. And he and his two daughters dwelt in a cave.”

The difference is: look at how Lot raised his children and how Abraham raised his. Look at where Abraham had pitched his tent. He was not part of society. Lot kept getting as close to it as he could; finally he just went and moved in. Lot compromised and let things happen. What happened was his children mixed and dated with the people of Sodom. His daughters had intermarried there. The result was that when it was time to go, they were not going to go with him. They laughed at him.

Abraham didn't allow Isaac that kind of involvement with the people around. When it came time for Isaac to get married, he sent his servant back to Ur of the Chaldean. Not much of anything, in a positive way, came of Lot's family, even though he himself was saved by the "skin of his teeth." A lot that was important went "down the drain." Peter says he was "just Lot" (KJV, II Peter 2:7), but he was just barely "just Lot." We could have an entire sermon on the contrast of how Lot raised his children and how Abraham did. He allowed his children too much freedom.

Lot's daughters thought the whole world had burnt up.

Verses 31-38, "Now the firstborn said to the younger, 'Our father is old, and there is no man on the earth to come in to us as is the custom of all the earth. Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve the lineage of our father.' So they made their father drink wine that night. And the firstborn went in and lay with her father, and he did not know...It happened on the next day that the firstborn said to the younger...let us make him drink wine tonight also, and you go in and lie with him, that we may preserve the lineage of our father...Thus both the daughters of Lot were with child by their father. The firstborn bore a son and called his name Moah; he is the father of the Moabites to this day. And the younger, she also bore a son and called his name Ben-Ammi; he is the father of the people of Ammon to this day."

They thought everybody had been burned up and decided to solve it their own way. They decided

to get Lot drunk and have children by him. Ammon is the capitol of Jordan to this day. We see all the feuding and the problems that are so apparent.

Genesis 20:1-3, "And Abraham journeyed from there to the South and dwelt between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourned in Gerar. Now Abraham said of Sarah his wife, 'She is my sister.' And Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah. But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, 'Indeed you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is a man's wife.'"

We find Abraham again messing up. Again God had to teach Abraham a lesson about trusting Him—not getting fearful and trying to solve it his own way.

Genesis 21:1-5, "And the Lord visited Sarah as He had said, and the Lord did for Sarah as He had spoken. For Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age; at the set time of which God had spoken to him. And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him—whom Sarah bore to him—Isaac. Then Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. Now Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him." Abraham was 100 years of age when Isaac was born.

Abraham had his ups and downs; at times he sought to obey God, and at times he caved in. Now God was going to put him to the test. God gave Abraham the supreme test.

Genesis 22:1-2, "Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, 'Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.' And He said, 'Take now 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.'"

Some say the land of Moriah is the Temple Mount. It may have been on Mount Moriah. Another possibility is that it was just across the valley from Mount Moriah. Abraham called the name of the place, "The-Lord-Will-Provide."

Verses 5-12, "And Abraham said to his young men, 'stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship and we will come back to you.' So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together. But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, 'My father!' And he said, 'Here I am, my son.' And he said, 'Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?' Then they came to

the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order, and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the Angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, 'Abraham, Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.' And He said, 'Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.'"

Verse 14, "And Abraham called the name of the place, The-Lord-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, 'In the Mount of the Lord it shall be provided.'" God did provide a sacrifice—His Son.

Verses 16-17, "and said, 'By Myself I have sworn, says the Lord, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld you son, your only son, in blessing I will bless you, in multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies.'" Another blessing was added to the promise—his seed would possess the gate of his enemies.

Verse 18, "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."

Genesis 23:1-2, we have the death of Sarah at the age of 127.

Genesis 24:1-4, "Now Abraham was old, well advanced in age; and the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things. So Abraham said to the oldest servant of his house... 'I will make you swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell; but you shall go to my country and to my kindred, and take a wife for my son Isaac.'"

Abraham told him he was sending him back to the area where he came from, and he was to find a wife there for Isaac.

Verse 6, "But Abraham said to him, 'Beware that you do not take my son back there.'" Isaac was not to return back to Babylon.

In verses 12-14, he prayed and asked God to lead him to the one.

Verse 15, "And it happened, before he had finished speaking, that behold, Rebekah, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, came out with her pitcher on her shoulder." It turned out she was of the same family.

Verse 53, "Then the servant brought out jewelry of silver, jewelry of gold, and clothing, and gave them to Rebekah. He also gave precious things to her brother and her mother." He demonstrates to the family that Abraham's family can take care of her.

Verses 57-58, "So they said, 'we will call the young woman and ask her personally.' Then they called Rebekah and said to her, 'Will you go with this man?' And she said, 'I will go.'" Rebekah had a choice in the matter. She also acted on faith.

Verse 63, "And Isaac went out to meditate in the field in the evening..." Isaac was close to God. He trusted God to pick out the right wife. He was an example of a son who exemplified obedience. Did Abraham do a good job in bringing up Isaac? Through this family, God could accomplish His work. He allowed 25 years, and it came to the point where He knew Abraham would do what He wanted him to do. Sometimes we look back and think about doing things differently with our children, but God allowed Abraham to learn the lessons he needed to learn.

Genesis 25:1, Abraham remarried.

Genesis 25:7, "This is the sum of the years of Abraham's life which he lived: one hundred and seventy-five years." Abraham lived 175 years and he died.

Verse 11, "And it came to pass, after the death of Abraham, that God blessed his son Isaac..." God blessed Isaac.

Verse 12, "Now this is the genealogy of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's maidservant, bore to Abraham." —The genealogy of Ishmael.

Verse 19, "This is the genealogy of Isaac, Abraham's son..."

Verses 21-23, "Now Isaac pleaded with the Lord for his wife, because she was barren; and the Lord granted his plea, and Rebekah his wife conceived. But the children struggled together within her; and she said, 'If all is well, why am I this way?' So she went to inquire of the Lord. And the Lord said to her: 'Two nations are in your womb, two peoples shall be separated from your body; one people shall be stronger than the other, and the older shall serve the younger.'"

Verses 24-26, "So when her days were fulfilled for her to give birth, indeed there were twins in her womb. And the first came out red. He was like a hairy garment all over; so they called his name Esau. Afterwards his brother came out, and his hand took hold of Esau's heel; so his name

was called Jacob....” They were not identical twins.

Verses 27-34, “So the boys grew. And Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field; but Jacob was a mild man, dwelling in tents. And Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob. Now Jacob cooked a stew; and Esau came in from the field, and he was weary. And Esau said to Jacob, ‘Please feed me with that same red stew, for I am weary.’ Therefore his name was called Edom. But Jacob said, ‘Sell me your birthright as of this day.’ And Esau said, ‘Look, I am about to die; so what profit shall this birthright be to me?’ Then Jacob said, ‘Swear to me as of this day.’ So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. And Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils; then he ate and drank, arose, and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.”

We see something about Esau’s character. He treated his birthright cheaply. He didn’t regard it. He had no vision or forethought. He wanted things for the moment. Esau was self-willed.

Genesis 26:34-35, “When Esau was forty years old, he took wives Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite. And they were a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebekah.” Rebekah and Isaac were upset that he had married someone of the land.

In Genesis 27:6-29, Jacob is instructed by Rebekah and obtains the blessing. Jacob was a very crafty fellow; always trying to finagle around to get his way. He was going to have to learn some hard lessons.

In verses 41-44, he created such a problem that he was going to have to get out.

Genesis 27:46, “And Rebekah said to Isaac, ‘I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth; if Jacob takes a wife of the daughter of Heth, like these who are the daughters of the land, what good will my life be to me?’”

Genesis 28:1-2, “Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him, and charged him, and said to him: ‘you shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan. Arise, go to Padan Aram, to the house of Bethuel your mother’s father; and take yourself a wife from there of the daughters of Laban your mother’s brother.’”

Jacob has a dream.

Verses 11-15, “So he came to a certain place and stayed there all night, because the sun had set. And he took one of the stones of that place and put it at his head, and he lay down in that place to sleep. Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were

ascending and descending on it. And behold, the Lord stood above it and said; ‘I am the Lord God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you.’” He had this very vivid dream.

Verses 20-21, “Then Jacob made a vow, saying, ‘If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, so that I come back to my father’s house in peace, then the Lord shall be my God.’” Jacob said, ‘God, if You will take care of me, then I will worship you.’ Ever try to make a bargain with God? “...so that I come back to my father’s house in peace...” –He was afraid Esau was going to kill him.

He was in for a lesson. Genesis 29, he found his uncle.

Genesis 29:18, “Now Jacob loved Rachel; and he said, ‘I will serve you seven years for Rachel your younger daughter.’”

Verse 20, “So Jacob served seven years for Rachel....” Seven years passed and he got married, but it wasn’t Rachael. It was Leah (vv. 23-25).

Verse 25, “...‘why then have you deceived me?’” He said, ‘You tricked me.’ Wonder if he remembered anyone he had tricked?

Verse 30, He served another seven years for Rachael.

Genesis 30:31-32, “So he said, ‘What shall I give you?’ And Jacob said, ‘You shall not give me anything. If you will do this thing for me, I will again feed and keep your flocks: Let me pass through all your flock today, removing from there all the speckled and spotted sheep, and all the brown ones among the lambs, and the spotted and speckled among the goats; and these shall be my wages.’”

In Genesis 31:7, over the course of the next few years, Laban changed his wages ten times. When you deal with people in this kind of way, it is not very pleasant to be on the receiving end of it. He wound up 20 years on the receiving end of Laban. God was teaching him a lesson. He was a shyster from the word “go.” It took Jacob 20 years to extricate himself from this mess (Genesis 31:41).

There were two major differences between Esau and Jacob. Esau had a major character flaw. He was a “quitter.” When the going got tough, he quit. Esau was willing to trade the long term for the immediate, the right now. He didn’t have any vision.

Jacob also had a character flaw. He was a crooked dealer. He was always “wheeling and dealing.” The lesson God wanted Jacob to learn: when you deal with people in this kind of way, it isn’t pleasant to be on the receiving end. And God dealt with him. He learned the lessons the hard way and he came to repentance.

God tested him. God wanted to test Jacob to see if he was a “quitter.”

Genesis 32:24-28, “Then Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day. Now when He saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob’s hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him. And He said, ‘Let Me go, for the day breaks.’ But he said, ‘I will not let You go unless You bless me!’ So He said to him, ‘What is your name?’ And he said, ‘Jacob’. And He said, ‘Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed.’” Jacob prevailed with God.

Genesis 34:1-4, “Now Dinah the daughter of Leah, whom she had borne to Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land. And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her and lay with her, and violated her. His soul was strongly attracted to Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the young woman and spoke kindly to the young woman. So Shechem spoke to his father Hamor, saying, ‘Get me this young woman as a wife.’”

Jacob allowed too much freedom to his daughter. They committed fornication then wanted to marry.

Verse 7, “And the sons of Jacob came in from the field when they heard it; and the men were grieved and very angry, because he had done a disgraceful thing in Israel by lying with Jacob’s daughter, a thing which ought not to be done.”

Verse 22, ““Only on this condition will the men consent to dwell with us, to be one people: if every male among us is circumcised as they are circumcised.””

Verse 25, “Now it came to pass on the third day, when they were in pain, that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah’s brothers, each took his sword and came boldly upon the city

and killed all the males.” The brothers wiped out the whole place.

Genesis 35:1, “Then God said to Jacob, ‘Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there....’”

Verses 16-18, this is where Rachael dies giving birth to Benjamin.

Genesis 36 gives the generations of Esau.

### Questions

1. What was originally offered to Abraham as the beginning of the birthright blessings?

What was originally offered to Abraham, as the birthright blessings, was a vague promise—an unspecified land, a promise that his descendants would be a great nation. A lot of details were not given.

2. What did Abraham tell Pharaoh about Sarah and why?

He told Pharaoh she was his sister (she was his half-sister, but the intent was to mislead) because he was afraid that Pharaoh was going to kill him in order to take Sarah as his wife.

3. Show a series of mistakes that Lot made that almost resulted in the destruction of him and his family.

He was greedy. He chose the best part of the land. He got as close to Sodom as he could; he liked the bright-lights atmosphere. He was not careful of his associates. He finally just went and moved into Sodom.

4. Contrast Abraham’s example and actions with those of Lot.

Lot was an individual who kept getting as close to the world as he could get. He got as close to that society as he could. Abraham, on the other hand, kept his distance.

5. What are the two examples of tithing given in the book of Genesis?

Genesis 14:20; Genesis 28:22.

6. What was the age difference between Isaac and Ishmael?

The age difference was 14 years. Genesis 16:3, Abraham had dwelt in the land ten years. Genesis 12:4, he was 75 when he departed from Haran, so that means he was 85 when Ishmael was conceived. Genesis 21:5, he was 100 years old when Isaac was born.

7. What is the prophecy that God made about Ishmael and his descendants (check the New English Bible)?

Like a wild ass living at odds with all, of his kinsman (Genesis 16:11-12, NEB). He had 12 sons—12 tribes (Genesis 17:20).

8. What was the physical sign of the covenant that God made with Abraham?  
Circumcision (Genesis 17:10-12).

9. What did God know that Abraham would do that would allow God to bring all the blessings He has promised upon him?

Genesis 18:19, ““For I know him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, and they keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and justice, that the Lord may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him.”” He would properly rear his family and teach them God’s way.

10. What is the origin of the Moabites and Ammonites?

They were children of Lot through his daughters (Genesis 19:36-38).

11. What was the supreme test that God put Abraham to? After that, was the receiving of the birthright blessings by Abraham’s descendants conditional upon anything?

The supreme test was the sacrifice of Isaac. The receiving of the birthright blessings became unconditional. The conditions had been met. ‘Now I will do this because you have met the conditions.’

Genesis 22:16-18, “and said, ‘By Myself have I sworn, says the Lord, for because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son, that in blessing I will bless you and in multiplying I will multiply your seed as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is upon the sea shore, and your seed shall possess the gate of his enemies. And in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed because you have obeyed My voice.’”

12. What was the only part of the Promised Land that Abraham actually owned during his lifetime?

The only part was a cave near Hebron, as a burial place for his wife Sarah (Genesis 23:4-6).

13. Was the marriage of Isaac and Rebecca forced?

No. Genesis 24:57-58, “So they said, ‘We will call the young woman and ask her personally.’ Then they called Rebekah and said to her, ‘Will you go with this man?’ And she said, ‘I will go.’”

14. What bad character trait did Jacob have that he had to learn the evils of the hard way?  
He was devious and cunning to get his own way. He met up with Laban to learn the hard way.

15. How long did Jacob serve Laban?  
Twenty years. Fourteen years for his wives and six years for wages.

Genesis 31:41, ““Thus have I been twenty years in your house. I served fourteen years for your two daughters and six years for your cattle and you have changed my wages ten times.””

16. Why was Jacob very upset when he heard that Esau was coming out to meet him on his return home?

When he left, Esau was ready to kill him (Genesis 27:41-42).

17. What serious mistake did Jacob make in regard to his daughter Dinah and what was the consequence of it?

He allowed her too much freedom. She “palled around” with the Canaanite girls and dated the prince. Simeon and Levi wiped out all the males in the city (Genesis 34). The attitude and streak of Simeon and Levi was that they were not going to take anything from anybody.

18. How did Reuben disqualify himself for the birthright?

Genesis 35:22, “And it happened when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father’s concubine; and Israel heard about it....”

I Corinthians 5:1, ““It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles—that a man has his father’s wife!”” He committed adultery with his father’s concubine and disqualified himself—a lack of stability in regard to morality. This was not going to be the birthright tribe. They were not going to be the birthright tribe because of this lack of morality.

19. Where was Rachael buried?

Genesis 35:19, “So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem).” Bethlehem was regarded as her city.

Matthew 2:18, “...Rachel weeping for her children...” was an illusion to the slaughter of Bethlehem.