



GENESIS 4–50

BIBLE STUDY LESSONS

LES BRIDGEMAN

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Academic Bible Studies with a Devotional Emphasis for ages 14 and up

Genesis 4–50: Bible Study Lessons, PDF

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Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel,
because you have struggled with God and with humans
and have overcome.

Genesis 32:28

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INTRODUCTION

The Bible is the world's best-selling book and its ideas have influenced millions of people throughout the centuries. Therefore, the Bible deserves our attention, both mentally and emotionally.

But understanding the Bible requires effort and assistance. The books of the Bible were written in ancient Hebrew and Greek 2,000–3,000 years ago. If effort and help is needed to understand Charles Dickens who wrote in English 100 years ago, how much more so with the Bible? This guide has been written to help readers understand the Bible and engage with its contents on an intellectual and emotional level.

These lessons are for you if you are looking for the following:

- an intellectual *and* devotional study of Genesis 4–50,
- interpretive difficulties addressed honestly and kept in perspective,
- exposure to different views, including theistic evolution, without indoctrination on the one right view,
- interaction with other parts of Scripture (Old and New Testament), and
- personal questions to engage the heart.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Genesis 4–50: Bible Study Lessons is the companion volume to *Genesis 1–3: Bible Study Lessons*. This self-study Bible course for ages 15 and up includes 34 lessons, 3 quizzes, 3 tests, and an answer key.

Lessons usually include a brief review of a concept or fact found in the previous lesson, questions to be answered, and comments on specific verses. **Bold superscript numbers** in the lessons, quizzes, and test indicate answers in the Answer section. Please be sure to read the Answer section because it contains important information. The **footnotes** (indicated in the lessons with roman numerals) mostly contain bibliographic information.

While there are many good English Bible translations, this course primarily uses the New International Version. Since our study covers Genesis 4–50, the entire text of Scripture is not included in this guide. However, you can find many free online Bible versions at biblegateway.com.

This is a self-study course so the pace of completing the lessons is up to you. There are 34 lessons and 3 tests so if you do 5 lessons each week, this course can be completed in about 7 weeks. If you do 3 lessons each week, this course can be completed in about 12 weeks.

How you take the quizzes and tests is also up to you (e.g., open notes, closed notes, or a combination). Space is provided in the lessons, quizzes, and tests for answering the questions, but if you need more space please use a personal notebook along with this study guide.

ABBREVIATIONS

General

= precedes a definition

v(v) – verse(s)

NASB – New American Standard Bible

NIV – New International Version

NT – New Testament

OT – Old Testament

Old Testament Books

Gen – Genesis

Exod – Exodus

Ps – Psalms

Prov – Proverbs

Isa – Isaiah

Jer – Jeremiah

Ezek – Ezekiel

Ezr – Ezra

Neh – Nehemiah

Mic – Micah

New Testament Books

Matt – Matthew

Mk – Mark

Lk – Luke

Jn – John

Rom – Romans

1 Cor – 1 Corinthians

2 Cor – 2 Corinthians

Gal – Galatians

Phil – Philippians
Heb – Hebrews

Lesson 1: Cain Kills Abel (Gen 4:1–17)

Welcome to our study of Genesis 4–50! Genesis is filled with fascinating characters and intriguing stories, which lay the foundation for the Old Testament.

1. In this lesson our story includes a struggle with God's fairness, sibling rivalry, jealousy, and finally, murder. Read Genesis 3:8–4:16 then make a list of similarities between God's actions and words in Genesis 3:8–24 and his actions and words in 4:1–16.¹

2. Read Genesis 4:3–5 below then highlight the repeated words.²

In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD. And Abel also brought an offering—fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering⁵ but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was down-cast.

3. Why have people throughout history and around the world given offerings to God/gods?³

4. Write out Romans 12:1.

5. How is the type of sacrifice mentioned in Romans 12:1 different from traditional sacrifices?⁴

6. Why was Cain angry and downcast in Genesis 4:5?⁵

7. When is the last time you were angry because you thought you had not been treated the same as someone else?

8. What is sin compared to in Genesis 4:7?⁶

9. **Fratricide** = the killing of one's brother. Why did Cain kill his brother? What was he thinking? He was jealous that his brother's offering was accepted while his was rejected. Jealousy continues to lead to hatred and even murder. How many times does the word brother appear in Genesis 4:8–11?⁷

10. How would you describe Cain's attitude in Genesis 4:9?⁸

11. While Cain doesn't confess his crime, the LORD knows what he has done because Abel's blood cries out for justice (v. 10). The author of Hebrews contrasts Abel's blood with Jesus' blood:

You have come to God, the Judge of all, to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. (Heb 12:23b–24)

12. How does Jesus' blood speak a better word than Abel's blood?⁹

13. Cain's punishment is given in verses 11–12.

- He'll be under a curse and driven from the ground
- The ground will no longer yield its crops for him (remember Cain was a farmer – Gen 4:2)
- He'll be a "restless wanderer" (used in verses 12 and 14) and according to verse 16 Cain moved to Nod. In Hebrew, **Nod** = wandering.

14. What does the LORD's response in verse 15 show you about the LORD?¹⁰

Lesson 2: Questions and Comments about Cain

Review: List three similarities between God's actions and words in Genesis 3 and his actions and words in Genesis 4.

1. In this lesson, we'll tie up some loose ends from the previous lesson. Specifically, we'll address three questions and note a parallel story in ancient Rome. From your reading of Genesis 4:3–7, why do you think God approved of Abel's offering but not Cain's?
2. Since Genesis 4:3–7 doesn't give us much detail, interpreters have had a difficult time explaining why God approved of Abel's offering, but not Cain's. The text allows us to make a couple of educated guesses.
 - Abel offered a more costly sacrifice than Cain. Notice that Abel's offering is described in more detail—"fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock" (v. 4). Since the firstborn were considered to be more valuable, Cain brought his best to God. But Cain simply brought "some of the fruits of the soil" (v. 3).
 - Cain was not living a righteous life. His attitude and actions were evil. This idea is implied in God's question to Cain in Genesis 4:7—"If you do what is right, will you not be accepted?" (Of course, that question can also be specifically related to Cain's inferior offering, but that offering came from a certain disposition. Why did Cain bring *that* kind of offering?) If that is the case, Cain was living a sinful lifestyle and trying to fulfill his religious duties by bringing his offering to God. Performing religious rituals while entertaining sin is a recurring problem throughout the Bible.

3. Summarize Isaiah 1:10–17.¹¹

4. Summarize Matthew 23:23–28.¹²

5. Write out the following verses.

- Hebrews 11:4 –

- 1 John 3:12 –

6. What was the mark God placed on Cain in verse 15? While there has been much speculation over Cain's mark, it is not identified in the text. It must have been something visible because it served as

a warning to others against killing Cain. In that sense, the mark was a sign of God's mercy. Sadly, some supporters of slavery equated the mark with darker skin. And they used that idea to justify slavery. In addition to being racist, there are two problems with that idea.

- The mark is not identified in the text.
- There's no indication that the mark could be passed down to Cain's descendants. The mark was a special concession given to Cain alone.

7. Cain and God acknowledge the existence of other people in verses 14–15. And then Cain's wife is mentioned. Fill in the blanks below.

- "_____ finds me will kill me" (v. 14)
- "_____ who kills Cain will suffer vengeance seven times over" (v. 15)
- "Cain made love to his _____" (v. 17)

8. Who are the people that Cain fears will kill him in verse 14 and who was Cain's wife in verse 17? After all, since Cain killed Abel, weren't Adam, Eve, and Cain the only people on earth at this time? Here are two possible answers:

- Cain's siblings. While Genesis doesn't tell us about Adam and Eve's other children at this time, they must have had other children. Therefore, Cain was worried about being killed by one of his siblings. And of necessity, he must have married one of his sisters. The prohibition against incest came later (Lev 18:9).
- Other people (or hominids) not directly related to Cain living outside of Eden.ⁱ Some interpreters believe that this idea makes the most sense of the references to others listed above, and of the statement that Cain was building a city in verse 17. If this idea is correct, what would it mean for our understanding of Adam and Eve? Here's one possibility: 1.) While there were other hominids, Adam and Eve were the two hominids specially-marked by God with his image and commanded to live under God's rule in the Garden.

ⁱ Humans are hominids but so are ape-like creatures. Evolutionary theory asserts that humans evolved from extinct hominids. And theistic evolution affirms that God began and directed the evolutionary process. For the different views on the origin of life see Lesson 22 in *Genesis 1–3: Bible Study Lessons*.

A Parallel Story

Notice that after Cain murders his brother, he builds a city in verse 17. This story parallels the founding story of Rome. Romulus and Remus were twin brothers who descended from the god Mars (god of war). During a quarrel over the city limits, Romulus killed Remus. Then Romulus built the city and named it Roma in 753 BC.

René Girard (1923–2015) was a professor of literature and anthropology. He claimed that the Cain and Abel story and the Romulus and Remus story show that human civilization is built on a founding murder. In the beginning, someone really was victimized and murdered leading to the birth of society. How so? Because people united in condemning and murdering the victim. And after they were united, society could develop.

But Girard believed that the only place where this historical fact is uncovered is in the Bible because rather than justifying the murder, the Bible condemns it. For example, Cain is clearly guilty in the biblical account, which means Abel was innocent. But Romulus's murder of Remus is justified because Remus trespassed the city limits.ⁱⁱ In summary, while ancient myths defend the survivor, the Bible consistently condemns the survivor, thus defending the victim.

9. What do you think about Girard's theory?

ⁱⁱ René Girard. *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987), 144–48.

Lesson 3: Genealogies (Gen 4:17–5:32)

Review: How is the Cain and Abel story similar to the Romulus and Remus story?

1. **Genealogy** = list of descendants. Reading genealogies in the Bible often puts people to sleep, but they serve an important purpose. Genealogies show that the message of the Bible is rooted in history.ⁱⁱⁱ The message of salvation is connected to real people who lived, had children, and died. Both the Old and New Testament begin with a genealogy (Gen 4–5, Matt 1). The Bible contains two types of genealogies: 1.) **linear** – one descendant listed for each generation, 2.) **segmented** – more than one descendant listed for each generation. Make a family tree below starting with your grandparents or great grandparents.

ⁱⁱⁱ Kenneth A. Matthews, *Genesis 1–11:26: The New American Commentary: Vol. 1A* (Broadman & Holman, 1996), 309.

2. Read Genesis 4:17–26 and make a genealogy for Cain (ends with Naamah).

3. Read Genesis 5:1–32 and make a genealogy for Seth (ends with Japheth).

4. Ancient genealogies often highlighted the seventh person. Who is the seventh from Adam in both Cain's genealogy (4:17–18) and Seth's genealogy (5:1–18)?¹³ How do the two genealogies highlight the seventh person?¹⁴

5. The repeated expression “then he died” in Genesis 5 shows that the sentence of death given in Genesis 3 is now in effect. But as usual, there’s a note of grace even in judgment. The death bell rings for everyone except Enoch (5:24). How many times does the phrase “then he died” appear in Genesis 5?¹⁵

6. The second murder in Genesis occurs when Lamech murders a young man for injuring him (4:23). After he kills the young man, Lamech recalls the murderous act of his great-great-great grandfather, Cain. And his threat of vengeance is eleven-times greater than Cain’s. He says, “If Cain is avenged seven times, then Lamech seventy-seven times” (4:24). What do the statements made by Cain (4:14) and Lamech (4:24) indicate about their emotions after their acts of murder?¹⁶

7. At 969 years, Methuselah is the oldest person in the Bible (Gen 5:27), but as you may have noticed many people live extraordinarily long lives in the early chapters of Genesis. How could that be?
 - Some have speculated that the atmospheric conditions before the flood enabled the human life span to reach several centuries. After stating that there is no evidence that ancient people counted years differently than we do, Hugh Ross, a scientist and Bible teacher, suggests that human exposure to radiation could have been much lower in the earliest days of humanity. He also proposes that since the deadly high energy cosmic rays from a supernova had not yet begun to reach Earth, humans could have lived much longer.^{iv}
 - Others think the ages shouldn’t be taken literally.

8. Some Bible scholars add up the years in the genealogies to arrive at the date of creation. By adding up the years in Genesis 5 and 11, Archbishop James Ussher (1581–1656) believed that the date of creation was October 22, 4004 BC. However, others believe the years listed can’t lead us to an accurate date of creation because:

^{iv} Hugh Ross, *Navigating Genesis: A Scientist’s Journey through Genesis 1–11* (Covina: Reasons to Believe, 2014), ch. 13.

- The lists omit names. (Compare Genesis 11:10–13 and Luke 3:36.)
- The words “became the father of” or “he begat” can be used in a general sense of a more remote descendant than a son.
- The list of names in Genesis 5 includes ten individuals and we find a list of ten names in other places (ex., Gen 11:10–26; Ruth 4:18–22), so the genealogies appears to follow a formula and may not be exhaustive,
- The names in the genealogies could be the names of kings/heroes as we find in ancient Sumerian lists.
- Extra-biblical evidence leads to the conclusion that human life on this planet goes back much further than 6,000 years.

Lesson 4: The Life of Enoch (Gen 5:21–24)

Review: How is a linear genealogy different from a segmented genealogy?

1. The name **Enoch** = beginner. In this lesson, we'll examine three references to Enoch using the three steps from the **inductive study method**—observe, interpret, apply. Answers are provided in the next lesson.

2. Read Genesis 5:21–24 then complete the three steps for the inductive study method below.

A. Observations – What do you see? (Make a list of concise statements that contain observational data. For example, list repeated words or phrases, keywords, beginning, ending, or middle of the passage etc. This step usually takes the longest and requires the most patience.)

B. Interpretation – What do your observations mean? (Use your observations to make a point. For example, explain what is being emphasized or highlighted.)

C. Application – How can we use the ideas in the passage in our daily lives? Or how can it help our faith?

2. Read Hebrews 11:5 then complete the three steps for the inductive study method.

A. Observations

B. Interpretation

C. Application

3. Read Jude 14–15 then complete the three steps for the inductive study method.

A. Observations

B. Interpretation

C. Application

4. Place a star beside your most important points of observation, interpretation, and application for the three passages above.
5. If you were going to teach on the life of Enoch, what questions would you ask to help your audience understand Enoch's life and its meaning for our lives?
6. If you can find a willing audience, I encourage you to share the insights you discovered. Sharing or teaching is one of the best ways to learn and solidify the information you acquired.

Lesson 5: Where's Enoch?

Review: List the three steps involved in the inductive study method.

1. Read through the points below for the three references examined in the previous lesson.

GENESIS 5:21–24

Observations

- Enoch started walking with God when he was 65 years old.
- Enoch walked with God for 300 years.
- While Enoch was walking with God, Enoch had other sons and daughters.
- God took Enoch away.

Interpretation

- Enoch had a turning point in his relationship with God when he was 65.
- Enoch chose to walk in God's ways, not vice versa. It says "Enoch walked with God" not "God walked with Enoch." We choose to walk in God's ways. Walking with God is mentioned throughout the Bible (Gen 3:8; 6:9; Lev 26:12; Mic 6:8; 2 Cor 6:16).
- Enoch persevered and made constant progress in his relationship with God for 300 years.
- Enoch seems to have lived a normal life while he was walking with God. He continued to have children and be a husband and father.
- God must have been really pleased with Enoch to take him away.

Application

- Join God by walking with him. And be patient and steadfast throughout the journey.

HEBREWS 11:5

Observations

- "Taken" is mentioned three times.

- Enoch was taken from this life by faith.
- Enoch did not experience death.
- Enoch pleased God.

Interpretation

- Our lives affect God's emotions.
- Pleasing God is rewarding.

Application

- Live a life of faith.

JUDE 14–15

Observations

- “Ungodly/ungodliness” is mentioned three times.
- Enoch prophesied or spoke for God.
- Enoch looked ahead to the Lord's coming.
- The Lord is coming to judge everyone and to convict the ungodly.

Interpretation

- Enoch looked ahead to what God was going to do.

Application

- Look ahead to the Lord's return.

2. What does walking with others signify?¹⁷

3. What would Enoch's departure have been like for his family and friends?¹⁸ Think about it, how did they know Enoch didn't die? Did they see him go? Were they looking for him?

4. How would Enoch feel about leaving his family and friends?

5. Enoch, Elijah (2 Ki. 2), and Jesus (Acts 1) were all taken up to heaven. And only Enoch and Elijah escaped death. But according to Paul, some will follow in their footsteps. Write out
Thessalonians 4:16–18. 1

Lesson 6: Grieving God (Gen 6:1–8)

Review: How old was Enoch when he had a major turning point in his relationship with God?

1. It's common to hear people talk about God's words, actions, and character, but we rarely hear much about God's emotions. Do you think God has feelings? If so, what emotion does he feel the most?

2. Why do we talk so little about God's feelings?

3. In Genesis 6:1–8 God feels grief. To grieve means to feel deeply saddened. What has caused you grief?

4. Can you imagine the God who made everything feeling really sad? Why or why not?

5. A weeping God can provide us with great comfort. While Mary and Martha were weeping over their brother Lazarus's death, Jesus entered into their sorrow and wept with them (Jn 11:35). And Jesus said, "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father" (Jn 14:9). So in weeping, Jesus gives us a picture

of a weeping God. Think of a time in your life when you were really sad and imagine God being sad with you. The knowledge that God grieves with us can help to alleviate pain.

6. God not only grieves with us, he grieves because of us. We can sadden God's heart. Read Genesis 6:1–8 then record your answers to the following items:

a. Make a list of things you learn about humans.¹⁹

b. Make a list of things you learn about God.²⁰

c. What do you not understand? (We'll address interpretive challenges in the next lesson.)

Lesson 7: Interpretation Challenges (Gen 6:1–8)

Review: How can the knowledge that God grieves help us in our relationship with God?

1. If you struggled to understand things in Genesis 6:1–8, you’re not alone. We’ll review the following three interpretation challenges in Genesis 6:1–8:

- Who are “the sons of God” in verses 2 and 4?
- What does “their days will be a hundred and twenty years” mean in verse 3?
- Who were the Nephilim in verse 4?

2. Who are “the sons of God” in verses 2 and 4? There are three primary options for the identity of the sons of God.

- **Godly men** – Male descendants of Seth who married female descendants of Cain resulting in an increase of corruption. The primary support for this idea comes from the immediate context of Genesis 4–5 where the lineage of Cain is contrasted with the lineage of Seth.
- **Human rulers** – The second option identifies the sons of God with powerful rulers based in part on Psalm 82 where human rulers are called “gods.”
- **Angels** – This presents us with one of the strangest ideas because, if correct, it would mean that angels married and procreated with humans. Let’s take a closer look at this idea.^v

a. Support for the angel view

- The phrase “sons of God” is used elsewhere for angels (Job 1:6; 2:1; Ps 29:1; 89:6). (If you’re using the NIV, check the footnotes for the references in Job. For Psalms see the footnotes for the references at bible.org/netbible.)
- There’s a contrast between the “daughters of *men*” who are clearly human beings and “the sons of *God*,” so the sons do not seem to be in the same category of creatures as the daughters. If the sons of God were angels and the daughters of men were human females, the contrast could be explained.

^v For more information on this topic see Kenneth A. Matthews, *Genesis 1–11:26: The New American Commentary: Vol. 1A* (Broadmans & Holman, 1996), 325–32. I’ve incorporated several of his insights into this lesson.

- Jude says that evil angels “left their proper dwelling” (Jude 6). While that is a general statement, it fits with the idea that angels trespassed by marrying humans.
- There’s an ancient idea that heavenly beings cohabited with humans. And the offspring of this cohabitation were giants or Nephilim.
- This is the oldest view among Jews promoted as early as 200 BC and the dominant view among the first Christian thinkers.

b. Problems with the angel view

- The text is focused on the sin and punishment of human beings not angels. If angels committed this sin we would expect to learn of their punishment, but we don’t hear of God punishing angels in this passage.
- There’s no biblical evidence that angels can procreate. They are spiritual beings (Heb 1:7, 14) and they don’t marry (Matt 22:30).
- The text doesn’t actually say that the Nephilim were the offspring of the sons of God and daughters of men. Instead it simply says, “The Nephilim were on the earth in those days” (6:4).

In conclusion, this interpretation challenge doesn’t have an easy solution. Some who hold to the angel view believe that the offspring were the Canaanites who God commanded Israel to destroy (see Deut 7:1–2). But keep in mind that the focus of the passage is on human sin.

3. What does “their days will be a hundred and twenty years” mean in verse 3? There are two basic interpretations of the 120 years.

- 120 more years until the flood
- life spans would become limited to 120 years (did not take effect immediately)

4. Who were the Nephilim in verse 4?

Genesis 6:1–8 doesn’t pose a difficulty regarding the identity of the Nephilim because it clearly states their identity: “They were the heroes of old, men of renown” (v. 4). So the Nephilim were male human beings who lived during the events of verse 2 and who were known for great exploits.

However, identifying the Nephilim becomes a problem when we get to Numbers 13. The Israelite spies described the people in the land of Canaan as giants who made them feel like grasshoppers

and they called those giants Nephilim (vv. 32–33). The Nephilim of Numbers 13, however, can't be the same as the Nephilim of Genesis 6, because the flood of Genesis 7 would have wiped out all Nephilim. So one commentator suggests that the word Nephilim was being used in a figurative sense in Numbers 13.^{vi}

5. Some interpretative difficulties are unsolvable. The best we can do is consider the options and then decide which one makes the most sense. Interpreting the Bible is not always as clear-cut as a mathematician solving an equation. Are you okay not being able to answer every Bible challenge? Why or why not?

6. Review Lessons 1–7 for a quiz in the next lesson. Memorize Hebrews 11:6 and Genesis 6:6. Remember, as stated in the introduction, how you take the quizzes and tests is up to you (e.g., open notes, closed notes, combination).

^{vi} Matthews, 337.

Lesson 8: Quiz 1; The Flood (Gen 6:9–8:22)

Quiz 1 (10 pts. each)

1. Write out Genesis 6:6.
2. Write out Hebrews 11:6.
3. How does God show mercy to Cain?
4. Define Nod –
5. Define fratricide –
6. Define genealogy –
7. _____ murdered Remus.
8. _____ committed the second murder in Genesis.
9. Scientifically, how do some believe humans could have lived for several hundred years?
10. The three steps of the inductive Bible study method are _____, _____, and _____.

Answers²¹

The Flood (Gen 6:9–8:22)

1. The story of the flood is not a fun Sunday school story. Think of what was going on outside the ark. Everything was destroyed. And living in the ark for more than a year would not have been enjoyable for Noah and his family. Describe the worst storm you have experienced.
2. Read Genesis 6:9–8:22 then list three or four repeated words and phrases below.
3. Imagine yourself as one of the people living in the ark, then write a journal entry or poem below from that person's perspective. Include your five senses and give it a title. (Or draw a picture of a scene from Genesis 6:9–8:22.)

Lesson 9: Review and Another Flood Story

1. Read the observation below on the Genesis flood story (Gen 6:9–8:22).
 - God was pleased with Noah both at the beginning and end of the story (6:8; 8:21).
 - Noah doesn't speak in the narrative; he simply obeys (6:22; 7:5).
 - Worldwide language seems to be used for the flood (6:12–13; 7:4, 19, 21–23; 8:21; cf. 2 Pet 3:6). Notice the words, "world," "earth," "all," "every," and "everything."
 - The specific sin mentioned before the flood is violence (6:11, 13).
 - The cubit was the standard length of measurement (6:15). One cubit was about 18 inches. This would make the ark about 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high.^{vii}
 - The flood narrative is filled with references to time:
 - 2nd month, 17th day – the flood begins (Gen 7:11).
 - 3rd month, 27th day (40 days later) – the rain stopped (7:17). Forty signifies a time of testing and trial in the Bible (7:17). Israel was in the wilderness for 40 years and Jesus was tempted in the desert for 40 days.
 - 7th month, 17th day – the flood water covered the earth for 150 days (7:24). (150 includes the 40 days of rain.)
 - 7th month, 17th day – the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat (8:4).
 - 10th month, 1st day – the tops of the mountains became visible (8:5).
 - 11th month, 10th day (40 days later) – Noah opened a window and sent out a raven (8:6) then he sent out a dove and received the dove when it returned (8:8–9).
 - 11th month, 17th day (7 days later) – Noah sent out the dove again and received it when it returned with a freshly plucked olive leaf (8:10–11).
 - 11th month, 24th day (7 days later) – Noah sent out the dove again, but this time it didn't return (8:12).
 - 1st month, 1st day of next year – the waters dried up from the earth (8:13).
 - 2nd month, 27th day (1 year and 10 days from the beginning of the flood) – the earth was completely dry (7:11; 8:14).

2. Was the flood regional or global? While worldwide language seems to be used in the flood story, Hugh Ross believes the biblical and scientific evidence leads to the conclusion that it was a regional flood that affected all of humanity. To support his view, he lists six places in Scripture where global language is used, but which don't literally refer to the entire earth. For example, the census that was

^{vii} Life-sized replicas of the ark have been built in the Netherlands and Kentucky. If you're interested, look them up online.

“taken of all the inhabited earth” (Lk 2:1 NASB), only refers to those in the Roman Empire. Second, the Hebrew word translated *earth* can also be translated *land*, meaning a specific territory. Third, the words, “world,” “all,” “every,” and “everything” are best understood as references to all of humanity, which at that time only inhabited the Mesopotamian and Persian Gulf regions. And fourth, the geological evidence doesn’t support a worldwide flood.^{viii}

3. Other ancient flood stories exist, such as the stories found in the *Atrahasis Epic* and the *Gilgamesh Epic*, which come from Mesopotamia around 2000 BC. Do an online search for the Wikipedia article on the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. Summarize the first three paragraphs below.

^{viii} Hugh Ross, *Navigating Genesis*, chs. 16–17.

4. The flood story is found on Tablet 11 of the *Gilgamesh Epic*. In the same Wikipedia article, scroll down to the heading *Content of the Standard Versions* then summarize the story found on Tablet 11. (If you're feeling more ambitious, search for the text of Tablet 11 then read and summarize.)

5. What similarities do you notice between the Genesis flood story and the Gilgamesh flood story?²²

6. What differences do you notice between the two stories?²³

Lesson 10: Noah and Sons (Gen 9)

Review: The name of the flood hero in the *Gilgamesh Epic* is _____.²⁴

1. Genesis 9 brings up interesting topics like eating meat, drinking alcohol, nakedness, and the death penalty. Is it a sin to drink alcohol?²⁵
2. Read Genesis 9 then list any questions you have about what you read.
3. In Genesis 9:3–4, God permits the eating of meat but includes a qualification—it must not be eaten with the blood in it. The only food mentioned for the humans in Genesis 1–2 is plant food (Gen 1:29; 2:16). Do you think Adam and Eve were originally vegetarians?²⁶
4. Notice the repetition in Genesis of humans being made in God's image (Gen 1:26–27; 5:1; 9:6). Some use Genesis 9:6 as support for capital punishment or the death penalty. Capital punishment gives the governing authorities the right to put certain people to death for criminal acts. Do you agree with using Genesis 9:6 as support for the death penalty in modern-day societies? Why or why not?²⁷

5. In verse 13, God says that he set his rainbow in the clouds. The same Hebrew word is used for bow and rainbow. Since covenants were usually made by invoking a threat to oneself if broken, some think the rainbow was God's way of pointing the bow at himself. Write out Genesis 9:13.

6. Noah's reaction to Ham seems extreme in Genesis 9:24–27. After all, didn't Ham simply see Noah's nakedness? Some have speculated that Ham must have done something more than merely look at his father's nakedness. The text, however, doesn't specify anything other than Ham seeing his father's nakedness.

7. Noah's three sons were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Because of Ham's sin, Noah cursed Ham's son, Canaan (v. 25) stating that Canaan would be the slave of his brothers (vv. 25–27). A few hundred years later, God gave Canaan's land to the people of Israel who were descendants of Shem. The name *Semite* probably comes from the name *Shem*. And the name *Eber* (Gen 10:21) may be the root for the word *Hebrew*. Eber was a descendant of Shem. Draw a family tree with the names, Noah, Shem, Ham, Japheth, and Canaan.

8. Just as we saw slaveowners seeking to justify themselves by the way they interpreted Cain's mark, the story of Noah cursing Canaan, "was used by 19th century 'Christians' as a justification for slavery since Ham's descendants were generally thought to be Africans, while Japheth's descendants were thought to be European."^{ix} But that is obviously wrong because Ham's descendants were the Canaanites who lived in the Middle East, not Africa.

9. In many ways, Genesis 9 sounds like Genesis 1 all over again. Make a list of similarities between Adam and Noah.²⁸

^{ix} David T. Lamb. *God Behaving Badly: Is the God of the Bible Angry, Sexist, and Racist?* (Downers Grove, IVP, 2011), 74.

Lesson 11: Covenants

Review: List two similarities between Noah and Adam.

1. Summarize the following references to the flood in the New Testament:

- Matthew 24:37–39

- Hebrews 11:7

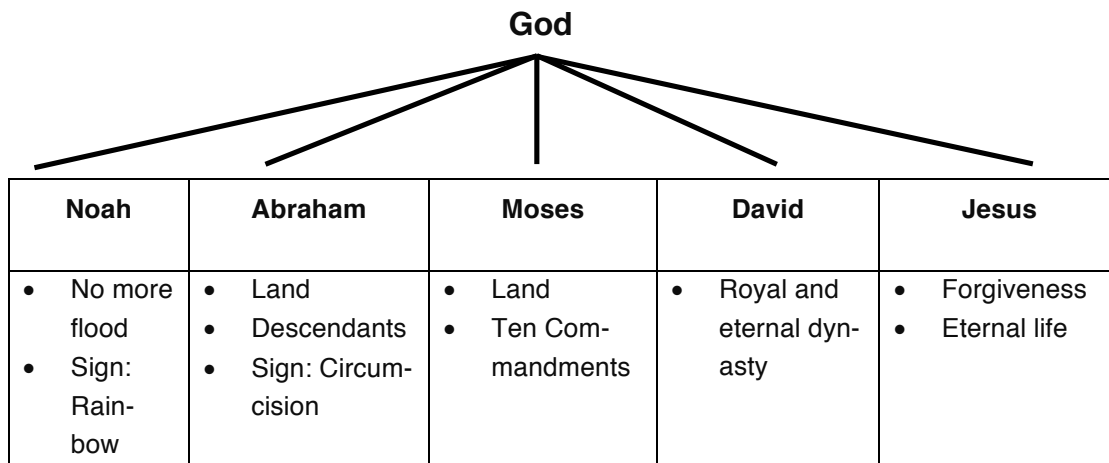
- 2 Peter 3:3–9

2. A key biblical word is used for the first time in Genesis 6:18, and it's repeated eight times in Genesis 9. That word is covenant. The word covenant can also be translated as "testament" or "will." There

are many technical definitions for the word covenant, but we'll keep it simple by defining covenant in this way: **covenant** = a solemn promise.

Many Christians believe the theme of covenant is the key to understanding the Bible. Why? Because covenant is the framework for understanding how God relates to human beings. God relates to us by making special promises to us. In the Old Testament, God gives a special promise to Abraham and his descendants. In the New Testament, God gives a special promise to all people who trust in Jesus. So our relationship with God is based on his promises or covenants with us. We see the importance of covenant even in the way the Christian Bible is divided: Old Covenant (or Testament) and New Covenant (or Testament).

There is disagreement over exactly how many covenants are in the Bible. Some see certain covenants as extensions of previous covenants, and others see a clear boundary between the covenants. For the sake of simplicity I've drawn lines in the diagram on the next page showing five examples of covenants along with their key aspects.



3. Read and summarize Jeremiah 31:31–34.²⁹

4. Write out Luke 22:20.

5. Write out Matthew 26:28.

6. In Hebrews 8–9, the author asserts that the new covenant is better than the old covenant because:

- The new covenant is established on better promises (8:6).
- The gifts and sacrifices in the old covenant were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper (9:9), but the blood of Christ is able to clear our consciences (9:14).
- Unlike the old covenant priests, Christ didn't enter a sanctuary made with human hands, he entered heaven itself where he appears in God's presence for us (9:24).

Lesson 12: The Tower of Babel (Gen 11:1–9)

Review: Define covenant.

1. Go online and skim the Wikipedia article on the tallest buildings in the world.
2. Why do people build tall buildings?³⁰
3. The tower in Genesis 11 couldn't have been nearly as tall as our modern-day skyscrapers. Only with the invention of steel in the early 1900s could skyscrapers be built. Read Genesis 11:1–9 then summarize below.
4. Genesis 11:1–9 is written using a poetic device called chiasm. **Chiasm** = a pattern of inverse repetition that places the most important item in the center. The center is the one item that is not repeated. What do you think is the center, and therefore, the most important part of the chiasm in Genesis 11:1–9?
5. Notice the parallel structure below with A and A', B and B', etc. And especially notice the letter G in the middle because the middle is the main point in a chiasm.

Chiasm (Gen 11:1–9)

A “the whole world had one language” (v. 1)

B “there” (v. 2)

C “each other” (v. 3)

D “Come, let’s make bricks” (v. 3)

E “Come, let us build ourselves” (v. 4)

F “a city, with a tower” (v. 4)

G “But the LORD came down . . .” (v. 5)

F’ “the city and the tower” (v. 5)

E’ “the people were building” (v. 5)

D’ “Come, let us . . . confuse” (v. 7)

C’ “each other” (v. 7)

B’ “from there” (v. 8)

A’ “the language of the whole world” (v. 9)

6. What’s the overall point of the tower of Babel story?³¹

7. Write out Proverbs 16:18.

8. Draw a comic strip of Genesis 11:1–9 using three boxes and label the first box, “The Human Plan,” the second box, “the LORD’s Visit,” and the third box, “the LORD’s Judgment.”

Lesson 13: Review

Review: What is a chiasm and what is the most important part of a chiasm?

1. From Genesis 3–8, list examples of the spread of sin and death.³²

2. From Genesis 3–8, list examples of God's mercy.³³

3. Review Lessons 1–12 then draw a diagram for two or three items that made the biggest impression on you and explain why.

4. Study Lessons 1–13 for a test in the next lesson on Genesis 4–11. Memorize 1 John 3:11–12, Hebrews 11:6, and Genesis 6:6.

TEST 1 (GENESIS 4–11)

Define the Following (3 pts. each)

1. Chiasm –
2. Covenant –
3. Genealogy –
4. Fratricide –

Fill in the Blank (2 pts. each)

5. _____ is the first person to die in the Bible.
6. “Without _____ it is _____ to _____ God” (Heb 11:6).
7. Noah cursed _____.
8. “The earth was corrupt in God’s sight and was full of _____” (Gen 6:11).
9. The rain came on the earth for _____ days.
10. _____, _____ and _____ were Noah’s three sons.
11. The oldest view for the identity of the “sons of God” is _____.
12. _____, _____ and _____ were Adam’s three sons.
13. Both Enoch and Noah, “_____ with God.”
14. _____ committed the second murder in the Bible.

True or False (2 pts. each)

- ___ 15. No one in the Bible lived for an entire millennium.
- ___ 16. Remus killed Romulus in the founding of Rome story.
- ___ 17. Canaan was Ham's son.
- ___ 18. God put a mark on Abel in order to protect him.
- ___ 19. Cain was a farmer.
- ___ 20. Hugh Ross believes the flood was regional and it affected all of humanity.
- ___ 21. Everyone agrees that the "sons of God" in Genesis 6 are angels.

Chapter Content: Write the corresponding chapter number in the blank (Gen 4–11 only) (2 pts. each)

- ___ 22. Enoch
- ___ 23. The rainbow
- ___ 24. God was grieved
- ___ 25. Cain and Abel
- ___ 26. Babel
- ___ 27. The flood begins
- ___ 28. Noah was drunk

Short Answer (6 pts. each)

- 29. What is the big difference between the Cain and Abel story and the founding of Rome story?

30. Write out 1 John 3:11–12.

31. Write out Genesis 6:6 then explain how it affects your view of God.

32. List three similarities between Adam and Noah.

33. List and explain the three steps to an inductive Bible study.

34. What's the problem with viewing Cain's mark as the color of his skin?

35. List two similarities and two differences between the *Epic of Gilgamesh* and the Genesis flood story.

Answers³⁴

Lesson 14: God Calls Abram (Gen 12:1–3)

1. We now begin a turning point in the book of Genesis. Genesis 1–11 focuses on world history: the creation of the world, the first humans, and the flood that affected all of humanity. But beginning with Genesis 12, and continuing through the rest of the Bible, the focus becomes Abraham (originally named Abram) and his descendants. Why is the Bible focused on Abraham and his descendants? Think about it, the Bible doesn't narrate the history of China or America or India. The Bible concentrates on the people of Israel, their land, and their founder, Abraham. Why?³⁵

2. Highlight the repeated words and phrases in Genesis 12:1–3 below.

The LORD had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you.

² "I will make you into a great nation,
and I will bless you;

I will make your name great,
and you will be a blessing.

³ I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will curse;
and all peoples on earth
will be blessed through you."

3. List the repeated words or phrases in Genesis 12:1–3.³⁶

4. From the repeated use of the word bless in Genesis 12:1–3 it seems that God is now overturning the curses of Genesis 1–11. **Curse** = a decree of disapproval. **Bless** = a decree of favor. Using the keyword search tool (upper left under Bible tab) on biblegateway.com summarize the six references to the word *curse(d)* in Genesis 1–11. (Under “Enter Word or Phrase” enter the word curse then under “Options” limit your search from Genesis to Genesis, to only get search results from the book of Genesis.)³⁷

5. Make a list of general things you learn about the LORD from Genesis 12:1–3.³⁸

6. Notice that God called Abram to do two things: leave and go. Can you relate with Abraham having to leave one place for another? Think of how difficult it must have been for Abraham to make this journey:

- he was old,
- he traveled on foot so his journey would take months,
- it was rare for people to leave their home and extended family, and
- he didn't have the luxury of seeing pictures or videos of his destination.

If Abraham obeyed, God would

- make him into a great nation and bless him,
- make his name great (remember the people at Babel wanted to make a name for themselves in Genesis 11:4, now God promises to make a great name for Abram),
- bless those who bless him and curse those who curse him, and
- bless all peoples on earth through him.

7. How would you answer someone who claimed that God was being unfair to others by showing favoritism to Abraham?³⁹

Lesson 15: Encounters with the LORD (Gen 12:4–15:21)

Review: Fill in the blanks in Genesis 12:1–3 below from memory first, then check your answers.

The LORD had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the _____ I will _____ you.

²“I will make you into a great _____,

and I will _____ you;

I will make your _____ great,

and you will be a blessing.

³ I will _____ those who _____ you,

and whoever curses you I will curse;

and _____ peoples on earth

will be _____ you.”

1. What are some big steps of faith you have taken in your life journey?

2. What are some big steps of faith you will be taking in the next five to ten years?

3. As you are reading the chapter summaries below, highlight the names of places.

Chapter Summaries

Abram left the city of Ur years earlier with his father, Terah. (Ur is located in modern-day Iraq.) Although they intended to reach Canaan, they settled in Harran (Gen 11:31). (Harran is located near the border of modern-day Turkey and Syria.)

Genesis 12: When his father died, the LORD commanded Abram to go to the land he would show him. Abram obeyed, and his nephew, Lot, joined him. At Shechem, the LORD appeared to Abram and promised to give him the land. In response, Abram built an altar to the LORD. Abram then moved to Bethel where he built another altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD.

Because of a famine in the land, Abram went to Egypt. But before he arrived, he made a secret plan with his wife, Sarai. Instead of telling the Egyptians that she was his wife, he told her to say that she was his sister. When they arrived in Egypt, Pharaoh took Sarai into his house. But the LORD inflicted diseases on Pharaoh, forcing him to let her go.

Genesis 13: Abram and Lot departed and traveled to the Negev. Abram had become very wealthy because he acquired servants and animals in Egypt. When he reached Bethel, he called on the name of the LORD. Since the land couldn't support both Lot and his animals and Abram and his animals, their herders began to quarrel. In response, Abram told Lot that they should separate and then gave Lot the first choice of the land. Lot settled near Sodom, while Abram settled in Canaan. After Lot departed, the LORD appeared to Abram again and promised to give him and his offspring the land forever and make his offspring like the dust of the earth. Abram then moved to Hebron where he built another altar to the LORD.

Genesis 14: Five kings, who had been subject to four kings for twelve years, rebelled. The five kings included the king of Sodom and the king of Gomorrah. The four kings were victorious and seized the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah including Lot and his possessions. When Abram heard what happened, he organized a rescue operation with the 318 trained men born in his household. After successfully rescuing Lot and all of his people and possessions, the king of Sodom and Melchizedek, the king of Salem, came out to meet Abram. Melchizedek blessed Abram by "God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth" (v. 19). Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything. When the king of Sodom told Abram to "Give me the people and keep the goods for yourself" (v. 21), Abram refused so that the king of Sodom would never be able to say, "I made Abram rich" (v. 23).

4. How would you describe Abram from Genesis 12–14?

5. Find a Bible map online then trace Abram's migration below with the following places labeled: Ur, Harran, Shechem, Bethel, Egypt, the Negev, Hebron, and Canaan.

6. Read and summarize Genesis 15.

7. In the ancient world, covenants were sometimes ratified, or made official, when the parties walked between the carcasses of animals and said something to this effect: "If I break this covenant may I be like them" (see Jer 34:18). Therefore, the smoking firepot and flaming torch was God walking between the carcasses and solemnly promising to keep his end of the covenant. How have you shown that you are making a special promise? What actions have you done or words have you spoken to confirm the seriousness of your promise?)

Lesson 16: Waiting and Mystery (Gen 16:1–18:22)

Review: How were covenants sometimes ratified in the ancient world?

1. Read Genesis 16:16–17:1 then state how much time elapsed between the end of Genesis 16 and the beginning of Genesis 17?⁴⁰
2. What do you think Abraham and Sarah were thinking during those years of waiting? Write a poem or journal entry for Abraham or Sarah during this time.

3. Read the chapter summaries below.

Genesis 16: Abram and Sarai (whose name was changed to Sarah in Gen 17:15) have been waiting for decades to have a child of their own. Out of frustration and desperation, Sarai told Abram to sleep with her slave, Hagar. She reasoned that if she couldn't have a child of her own, perhaps she could have one through Hagar.

Abram slept with Hagar and she conceived. While pregnant, Hagar began to despise Sarai. Sarai responded by mistreating Hagar causing her to flee. But the angel of the LORD found Hagar and told her to return to Sarai. The angel also told Hagar about the son in her womb and gave him the name

Ishmael. Hagar obeyed and gave birth to a son whom Abram named Ishmael. **Ishmael** = God hears. Abram was 86 when Ishmael was born.

Genesis 17: When Abram was ninety-nine years old, God commanded him and every male in his household, to be circumcised. Circumcision was the sign of God's covenant with Abraham (17:11). Abraham obeyed. God also changed Abram's name to Abraham. **Abram** = exalted father. **Abraham** = father of many. And Sarai's name to Sarah. **Sarai** and **Sarah** = princess or queen.

4. Read Genesis 18:1–19:1 then answer this question: Who were the three visitors in Genesis 18? Why?⁴¹

5. If the LORD was one of three visitors, Genesis 18 narrates a theophany. **Theophany** = an appearance of God. What other theophanies have we already encountered in Genesis?⁴²

6. Make a list of what you learn about God from this early theophany.⁴³

Lesson 17: Abraham Intercedes (Gen 18:16–19:29)

Review: Define theophany.

1. Have you ever wanted to get to know someone and become good friends with him or her? What about God? How much do you want to get to know God? In this section of Genesis, Abraham's intimate relationship with God is highlighted. But this part of Genesis also contains disturbing material. In fact, certain sections of the Bible should probably be rated R and Genesis 19 is one of them. In particular, Genesis 19 contains an attempted gang rape, Lot offering his daughters to wicked men in place of his visitors, and incest between Lot and his daughters. (For the sake of space, we're going to skip the incest section in Genesis 19:30–38.) Do you think some sections of the Bible should be limited to certain ages? Why or why not? (This becomes an urgent question to consider if you teach the Bible to children.)

2. Why is disturbing material included in the Bible?⁴⁴

3. When have you stood up for someone else? What did you say on their behalf?

4. What does intercede mean?⁴⁵

5. In Genesis 18, Abraham intercedes by:

- Approaching the LORD (v. 23)
- Questioning the LORD (vv. 23–25)
- Admitting that he’s nothing (v. 27)
- Repeatedly asking for the LORD to have mercy (vv. 27–32)

6. According to Paul, Christ is interceding for us. Write out Romans 8:34.

7. In Genesis 18:32, God promised that he wouldn’t destroy Sodom for the sake of ten righteous people. But in Genesis 19, he destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, which means that he couldn’t even find ten righteous people. But notice that God rescued the righteous people before sending judgment. Therefore, the “Judge of all the earth” did what was right (18:25). Would God have done what was just without Abraham’s prayer? If so, what is the purpose of this story?⁴⁶

8. Sodom is notorious for its wickedness. Summarize what the following references say about Sodom.⁴⁷

- Isaiah 1:9 –

- Isaiah 3:9 –
- Isaiah 13:19 –
- Ezekiel 16:49 –
- Ezekiel 16:53 –
- Matthew 11:23–24 –
- 2 Peter 2:4–9 –
- Jude 1:7 –

9. Did you catch the glimmer of hope for Sodom? Which reference offers hope to Sodom?⁴⁸

Lesson 18: The Promise Fulfilled (Gen 21:1–7)

Review: Define intercede.

1. What promises have others made to you? Did they keep their promises?
2. Read Genesis 21:1–7 then highlight the repeated words and phrases.⁴⁹

Now the LORD was gracious to Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah what he had promised.² Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the very time God had promised him.³ Abraham gave the name Isaac to the son Sarah bore him.⁴ When his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God commanded him.⁵ Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.

⁶ Sarah said, “God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me.”⁷ And she added, “Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age.”

3. What theme is repeated three times in Genesis 21:1–2?⁵⁰

4. List what the following references say about Abraham's offspring.⁵¹

a. Genesis 12:7 –

b. Genesis 13:15–16 –

c. Genesis 15:4 –

d. Genesis 15:13–14 –

e. Genesis 15:18 –

5. Who's missing from those promises?⁵²

6. Make a list of details from the following prophecies.⁵³

a. Genesis 17:16 –

b. Genesis 17:19 –

7. Write out the following verses:

- Genesis 17:21 –

- Genesis 18:10 –

- Genesis 18:14 –

8. What idea is repeated in the previous three promises?⁵⁴

9. The fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham and Sarah is more dramatic when Genesis 20 is kept in mind. While Abraham and Sarah were staying in Gerar, Abimelech, king of Gerar, took Sarah. How could God's promise to Abraham be fulfilled without Sarah? As the story proceeds, we learn that Sarah wasn't gone for long. God rescued Sarah by visiting Abimelech in a dream and threatening to kill him for taking Sarah. Abimelech responded wisely by sending Sarah back to Abraham along with gifts. God promised to give Sarah a son in one year's time and despite a threat to that promise, God's word was fulfilled. God's faithfulness to his promises is one of the most important themes in the Bible.

Lesson 19: Abraham's Greatest Test (Gen 22)

Review: How was God's promise to Abraham and Sarah threatened in Genesis 20?

1. List specific challenges or tests you have faced. (Think of mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual tests.)

2. So far, we've seen that Abraham's life was full of adversity.

- He had to make a major transition at an old age and leave everything he was familiar with (Gen 12).
- He faced danger in traveling as shown by Sarah being abducted twice (Gen 12 & 20).
- He faced the danger of warfare when he went out to rescue Lot (Gen 14).
- He had marital issues because of Hagar (Gen 21).
- He obeyed God's difficult command of circumcision (Gen 17).
- But most of all, Abraham had to wait. He waited twenty-five years for his promised son to arrive.

3. Why do you think God made Abraham wait so long?

4. In Genesis 22, Abraham is faced with his greatest test. Read Genesis 22:1–19 below. As you are reading highlight the repeated words or phrases in the story.

Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!"

"Here I am," he replied.

² Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, whom you love— Isaac—and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you."

³ Early the next morning Abraham got up and loaded his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about. ⁴ On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. ⁵ He said to his servants, "Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you."

⁶ Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together, ⁷ Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, "Father?"

"Yes, my son?" Abraham replied.

"The fire and wood are here," Isaac said, "but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?"

⁸ Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." And the two of them went on together.

⁹ When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. ¹⁰ Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. ¹¹ But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!"

"Here I am," he replied.

¹² "Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son."

¹³ Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his

son. ¹⁴ So Abraham called that place The LORD Will Provide. And to this day it is said, “On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided.”

¹⁵ The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time ¹⁶ and said, “I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷ I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, ¹⁸ and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.”

¹⁹ Then Abraham returned to his servants, and they set off together for Beersheba. And Abraham stayed in Beersheba.

5. List the repeated words and phrases in the story.⁵⁵

6. What do you think is a keyword in the story? (A keyword may appear only once, but it conveys a crucial idea to understanding the narrative.)⁵⁶

7. How would you respond to someone who claims that Genesis 22 shows that God was cruel to ask Abraham to sacrifice his son and Abraham was a bad father for obeying?

8. Here are a few key points that can help alleviate the accusations above.

- God was only *testing* Abraham (v. 1). He didn't want Abraham to actually kill Isaac and he showed that by stopping Abraham (v. 12). This was a one-time command, or better yet a one-time test, which ultimately pointed to Jesus.
- The name *Moriah* (v. 2), the place where God commanded Abraham to offer Isaac, comes from a Hebrew word meaning provide.^x Abraham was being tested to trust in God's provision and he knew it from the name of the place where he was told to go. Think of it this way: If God told you to go to a place called "Transportation" and burn your car, you would know something was up, even if you wouldn't know exactly what it was. The name Moriah together with what Abraham was being commanded to do there would have set off signals in his brain. Later we see that Abraham passed the test of trusting God's provision. When Isaac asked him, "where is the lamb?" Abraham replied, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son" (vv. 7–8).
- Although Abraham went to sacrifice his son Isaac as a burnt offering, he believed that somehow he would be returning with Isaac still alive. Abraham told his servants, "We will worship and then we will come back to you" (v. 5). Years earlier, Abraham had received God's promise regarding Isaac: "I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him" (17:19). So God's covenant would pass from Abraham to Isaac *and* to Isaac's offspring. But when God commanded Abraham to sacrifice Isaac in Genesis 22, Isaac didn't have offspring so if he died at that point, God's promise (17:19) would have been broken. And after his many years of learning about God, Abraham couldn't have imagined that God would break his promise. So somehow, even if that meant that God would have to raise Isaac from the dead, Abraham believed that Isaac would depart from Moriah on his own two feet.

9. Write out Hebrews 11:17–19.

^x Paul Copan, *Is God a Moral Monster? Making Sense of the Old Testament God* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 48.

10. List similarities between Isaac in Genesis 22 and Jesus.⁵⁷

Genesis 24 Summary

Scene 1: Mission Assigned (vv. 1–9): Abraham didn't want his son Isaac to marry one of the Canaanite women so when he was very old he made his servant swear to him to find a wife for his son Isaac from among his own relatives in Northwest Mesopotamia. The servant asked, "What if the woman is unwilling to come back with me to this land? Shall I then take your son back to the country you came from?" (v. 5). Abraham told the servant that if the woman was unwilling to return with him he was released from the oath.

Scene 2: Servant's Prayer (vv. 10–14): The servant departed with goods and camels. Near the town of Nahor, the servant had his camels kneel down near a well. Then he prayed for God to give him success on his mission. "May it be that when I say to a young woman, 'Please let down your jar that I may have a drink,' and she said, 'Drink, and I'll water your camels too'—let her be the one you have chosen for your servant Isaac'" (v. 14).

Scene 3: Prayer Answered (vv. 15–27): Before the prayer was finished, a beautiful woman named Rebekah came out with a jar on her shoulder. The servant hurried to meet her and asked for water. She gave him a drink and gave water to the camels. The servant watched closely and after Rebekah finished watering the camels, he gave her a gold nose ring and two gold bracelets. He then asked, "Whose daughter are you?" (v. 23). She then invited him to stay with her family.

Scene 4: Approval Granted (vv. 28–54): In the home, the servant explained that he was Abraham's servant and that he was given the mission to find a wife for Isaac. He then shared his prayer and how Rebekah was the answer to his prayer. Rebekah's brother, Laban, and her father, Bethuel, answered, "This is from the LORD we can say nothing to you one way or the other. Here is Rebekah; take her and go, and let her become the wife of your master's son, as the LORD has directed" (v. 51). The servant then gave them many gifts and they ate and drank.

Scene 5: Departure (vv. 55–66): The next morning Rebekah prepared to leave and and her family blessed her as and she departed.

Scene 6: Mission Accomplished (v. 67): While Isaac was out in the field, he looked up and saw camels approaching. "Rebekah also looked up and saw Isaac" (v. 64). The servant, who was with Rebekah, identified the man as Isaac. The servant then explained to Isaac everything that happened. Then Isaac married Rebekah.

5. A major feature of Genesis 24 is the servant's answered prayer. Have you ever had a prayer answered? If so, summarize your story below.

Lesson 21: Abraham's Significance

Review: Isaac married _____.

1. Abraham made a significant impact on the world. He is considered to be the patriarch of the three major monotheistic religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Let's review what the New Testament says about him. He is actually mentioned in the first verse of the New Testament. Write out Matthew 1:1.

2. Read the passages below then make a list of what each passage teaches about Abraham. Conclude with a one-sentence summary for each.

- Romans 4⁶² –

- Galatians 3⁶³ –

- Hebrews 11:8–19⁶⁴ –

- James 2:21–23⁶⁵ –

3. Do you think James disagrees with Paul on how Abraham was justified or made righteous? If not, how do you explain the difference?⁶⁶

Lesson 22: Review

Review: True or False. Abraham is mentioned in the first verse of the New Testament.

1. Read Stephen's summary of Abraham's life in Acts 7:1–8.
2. Skim through Genesis 12:1–25:11 then make a list of at least ten items describing Abraham. Your descriptions can be of his actions and/or character. And they can be in any form: adjectives, nouns, verbs, phrases. Include the Scripture references that correspond with each item.⁶⁷
3. Review Lessons 14–21 for a test in the next lesson. Memorize Genesis 12:2–3 and Galatians 3:29.

TEST 2 (GENESIS 12–25)

Define the Following (4 pts. each)

1. Abraham –
2. Abram –
3. Isaac –
4. Sarah –
5. Intercede –
6. Theophany –

Fill in the Blank (3 pts. each)

7. In Genesis 22, God t_____ Abraham.
8. Abraham was _____ years old when he left Harran.
9. Abraham was _____ years old when Isaac was born.
10. Sarah was _____ by Pharaoh and Abimelek.
11. According to Genesis 17, God commanded Abraham to be _____ as the sign of the covenant.
12. The name Moriah comes from a Hebrew word meaning _____.

Short Answer (8 pts. each)

13. Which three religions trace their roots back to Abraham?

14. List three difficult things that Abraham experienced.

15. Write out Genesis 12:2–3.

16. Why does it make sense to view the three visitors in Genesis 18 as two angels and the LORD?

17. Write out Galatians 3:29.

18. List three ways Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac reminds us of Jesus' death on the cross.18.

19. What impresses you the most about Abraham's life?

Lesson 23: Isaac is Blessed (Gen 25:19–28; 26:1–33)

1. The narrative of Genesis is focused on the following people:

- Abraham and Sarah (Gen 12–25)
- Isaac and Rebekah (Gen 22, 24–27, death in Gen 35)
- Jacob, Rachel, and Leah (Gen 25, 27–35, 37, interspersed in 42–50)
- Esau (Gen 25, 27, 36)
- Joseph (Gen 37, 39–50)

Judging by the amount of space given to each character, Genesis 12–50 primarily focuses on the lives of Abraham, Jacob, and Joseph. Since we’ve already paid special attention to Abraham, in this section we’ll take a close look at the lives of Jacob and Joseph. However, since God’s covenant to Abraham goes through Isaac, this lesson highlights the life of Isaac. Here’s what we’ve learned about Isaac:

- named by God before he was born and his name means laughter (Gen 17),
- the promised son of Abraham and Sarah who was born to them in their old age (Gen 21),
- mocked by his step-brother Ishmael (Gen 21),
- almost offered as a sacrifice by his father (Gen 22), and
- at the age of forty, married Rebekah, his second cousin (Gen 24).

2. Make a list of what you learn about Isaac from Genesis 25:19–34.⁶⁹

3. The LORD told Rebekah, “Two _____ are in your womb . . . the _____ will serve the _____” (Gen 25:23).

4. Read Genesis 26 and list additional facts you learn about Isaac.⁷⁰

5. The highlight of Genesis 26 is God giving the same promise to Isaac that he gave to Abraham. God is faithful from one generation to the next. Write out the LORD's words in Genesis 26:3-4, 24.

Lesson 24: Jacob is Blessed (Gen 25:19–34; 27:1–46)

Review: The LORD told Rebekah, “Two _____ are in your womb . . . the _____ will serve the _____ (Gen 25:23).

1. The next three lessons focus on the life of Jacob. The name **Jacob** = he deceives. We can divide the main narrative of Jacob’s life into the following sections:

- Jacob cunningly receives Esau’s blessing (Gen 25:19–34; 27:1–46)
- Jacob runs away from Esau (Gen 28:1–22)
- Jacob’s fruitful family and career (Gen 29:1–30:43)
- Jacob runs away from Laban (Gen 31:1–55)
- Jacob meets Esau (Gen 32:1–33:20)

2. List three differences between Esau and Jacob in Genesis 25:24–28.⁷¹

3. Read and summarize Genesis 25:29–34.

4. Read Genesis 25 and 27. As you're reading make two lists:

a. what you learn about Jacob⁷²

b. what you learn about Esau⁷³

5. In the previous lesson we saw that while Jacob certainly wasn't innocent, neither was Esau. Esau despised his birthright. In the ancient world, the firstborn received a greater inheritance than the other children, but Esau acted as if that special status was nothing and sold it for stew. The author of Hebrews uses Esau as a warning.

¹⁵ See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many. ¹⁶ See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son. ¹⁷ Afterward, as you know, when he wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected. Even though he sought the blessing with tears, he could not change what he had done. (Heb 12:15–17)

Lesson 25: Jacob's Family and Career (Gen 28–31)

Review: _____ sold his birthright for stew.

1. Laban is an easily overlooked character in Genesis, but he plays an important role. Laban was
 - the grandson of Nahor, Abraham's brother (Gen 25:20; 11:29),
 - the brother of Rebekah (Gen 27:43),
 - the father of Rachel and Leah (Gen 29),
 - Jacob's father-in-law and employer (Gen 29), and
 - the one who gave his sister, Rebekah, in marriage to Isaac (Gen 24), and his daughters, Rachel and Leah, in marriage to Jacob (Gen 29).
2. In Genesis 28, Jacob went to Paddan Aram (the region where Harran was located) to find a wife. On his way, he had a dream of a stairway to heaven with angels ascending and descending on it. The LORD stood above the stairway and promised to bless all people through him. Jacob woke up and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place" and he named it Bethel. **Bethel** = house of God. He then made an offering and vow to the LORD. Read Genesis 28:10–15 then draw something in that passage.
3. Jesus compared himself to the stairway in Jacob's dream. Write out John 1:51.

4. In Genesis 29, Jacob arrived in Paddan Aram where he met Rachel at a well. Rachel is the daughter of Jacob's uncle, Laban. Rachel took Jacob to meet her family. After working for Laban for a month, Laban offered to pay Jacob. Jacob said that he would serve Laban for seven years for the right to marry his daughter Rachel. The seven years felt like only a few days to Jacob because of his love for Rachel. When the seven years were completed, Laban had a wedding feast for Jacob and his daughter. But the morning after the wedding, Jacob realized that he had been tricked. Instead of marrying Rachel, he married Rachel's sister, Leah. Laban then convinced Jacob to work for another seven years for the right to marry Rachel and Jacob agreed. (He married Rachel a week later.) While Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah, Leah conceived first and a bitter rivalry began between the two sisters. Leah gave birth to the first four sons of Jacob: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah. **Polygamy** = having more than one spouse at one time. We have already seen that Lamech had two wives (Gen 4:23) and now Jacob has two wives. Do you think the Bible approves of polygamous relationships? Why or why not?⁷⁴

5. In Genesis 30, Jacob had more children through his two wives and their servants. Rachel was upset with her inability to conceive and jealous of her sister, so she gave Jacob her servant, Bilhah, to have children for her. Bilhah gave birth to Dan and Naphtali. Leah then followed Rachel's example and gave her servant, Zilpah, to Jacob. Zilpah gives birth to Gad and Asher. Leah then had two more sons, Issachar and Zebulun, and a daughter named Dinah. Finally, Rachel gave birth to Joseph. (Later, as she was dying, Rachel gave birth to the last of Jacob's twelve sons, Benjamin, in Genesis 35:18). After fourteen years of service, Jacob asked for Laban's permission to leave, but Laban asked him to stay. Jacob told Laban that if he allowed him to take the speckled and spotted sheep and goats as his wages, he would continue working for Laban, and Laban agreed. Jacob's flocks increased as he continued working for Laban for another six years. Have you ever been in a bad situation and felt you couldn't get out of it?

6. Read Genesis 31 then either summarize it or draw a picture of something in it.⁷⁵

7. What life lessons can you derive from Genesis 28–31?⁷⁶

8. What lessons about God can you derive from Genesis 28–31?⁷⁷

Lesson 26: Jacob Meets Esau (Gen 32–33)

Review: Rachel's father was _____.

1. Genesis 32:1–33:20 is one of the most intriguing stories in the entire Bible. Movie producers couldn't write a more dramatic script. It tells the story of Jacob returning home after his twenty-year stay with Laban. But on the way he had to face Esau, the brother he cheated and ran away from. Read and summarize Genesis 32:1–33:20.⁷⁸

2. List the main points of Jacob's prayer in Genesis 32:9–12.⁷⁹

3. What other prayers have we encountered in Genesis that were given considerable attention?⁸⁰

4. Why do you think Jacob wanted to be left alone in Genesis 32:22–24?⁸¹

5. Make a list of what we know about Jacob's wrestling partner from Genesis 32:24–30.⁸²

6. Who do you think the wrestler was?

7. Read Hosea 12:2–4 then state Hosea's view of the identity of Jacob's opponent.⁸³

8. Write out Genesis 32:30.

9. Write out Genesis 33:10.

10. What's the connection between Jacob's wrestling match and Jacob finding favor with Esau the next day? Did Jacob's wrestling match help him with his meeting with his brother?⁸⁴

11. Study Lessons 22–26 for a quiz in the next lesson.

Lesson 27: Quiz 2; Joseph the Dreamer (Gen 37)

Quiz 2 (7 pts. each)

1. What do the following words mean?

- Jacob –
- Israel –
- Bethel –

2. Jacob and Esau were twin brothers, and _____ was born first.

3. How did Jacob receive Esau's blessing?

4. How did Jacob receive Esau's birthright?

5. Why did Jacob flee to Harran?

6. What did Jacob see in his dream at the place he called Bethel?

7. How did Jesus connect himself with Jacob's dream?

8. Jacob met _____ at the well.

9. "So Jacob served seven years to get Rachel, but they seemed like only a few _____ to him because of his _____ for her." (Gen 29:20)

10. How did Laban trick Jacob?

11. In total, Jacob served Laban for _____ years.

12. Jacob's twelve sons come from _____ different women.

13. List two ways Jacob responded when he heard that his brother was coming with four hundred men.

14. According to Hosea, Jacob wrestled with an _____.

Answers⁸⁵

Jacob lived in the land where his father had stayed, the land of Canaan.

²This is the account of Jacob's family line.

Joseph, a young man of seventeen, was tending the flocks with his brothers, the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives, and he brought their father a bad report about them.

³Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made an ornate robe for him. ⁴When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him.

⁵Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more. ⁶He said to them, "Listen to this dream I had: ⁷We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it."

⁸His brothers said to him, "Do you intend to reign over us? Will you actually rule us?" And they hated him all the more because of his dream and what he had said.

⁹Then he had another dream, and he told it to his brothers. "Listen," he said, "I had another dream, and this time the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me."

¹⁰When he told his father as well as his brothers, his father rebuked him and said, "What is this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?" ¹¹His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind.

4. From Genesis 37:1–11, how would you describe Joseph?⁸⁹

5. Read Genesis 37:12–36. Did you notice that Joseph doesn't speak in Genesis 37:12–36 when his brothers sold him into slavery? We get a glimpse of what Joseph was saying while his brothers were mistreating him a few chapters later. Write out Genesis 42:21.

6. From Genesis 37, what similarities do you see between Joseph and Jesus?⁹⁰

Lesson 28: Joseph the Prisoner (Gen 39)

Review: List two similarities between Joseph and Jesus.

1. Have you ever been falsely accused? If so, how did you respond?

2. Read Genesis 39 below^{xi} and highlight the repeated words and phrases.⁹¹

Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. Potiphar, an Egyptian who was one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him there.

²The LORD was with Joseph so that he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master. ³When his master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD gave him success in everything he did, ⁴Joseph found favor in his eyes and became his attendant. Potiphar put him in charge of his household, and he entrusted to his care everything he owned. ⁵From the time he put him in charge of his household and of all that he owned, the LORD blessed the household of the Egyptian because of Joseph. The blessing of the LORD was on everything Potiphar had, both in the house and in the field. ⁶So Potiphar left everything he had in Joseph's care; with Joseph in charge, he did not concern himself with anything except the food he ate.

Now Joseph was well-built and handsome, ⁷and after a while his master's wife took notice of Joseph and said, "Come to bed with me!"

^{xi} We skipped over Genesis 38 because it's not about Joseph. Like Genesis 19, it's another chapter that probably deserves an R rating.

⁸ But he refused. “With me in charge,” he told her, “my master does not concern himself with anything in the house; everything he owns he has entrusted to my care. ⁹ No one is greater in this house than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?” ¹⁰ And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her.

¹¹ One day he went into the house to attend to his duties, and none of the household servants was inside. ¹² She caught him by his cloak and said, “Come to bed with me!” But he left his cloak in her hand and ran out of the house.

¹³ When she saw that he had left his cloak in her hand and had run out of the house, ¹⁴ she called her household servants. “Look,” she said to them, “this Hebrew has been brought to us to make sport of us! He came in here to sleep with me, but I screamed. ¹⁵ When he heard me scream for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house.”

¹⁶ She kept his cloak beside her until his master came home. ¹⁷ Then she told him this story: “That Hebrew slave you brought us came to me to make sport of me. ¹⁸ But as soon as I screamed for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house.”

¹⁹ When his master heard the story his wife told him, saying, “This is how your slave treated me,” he burned with anger. ²⁰ Joseph’s master took him and put him in prison, the place where the king’s prisoners were confined.

But while Joseph was there in the prison, ²¹ the LORD was with him; he showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden. ²² So the warden put Joseph in charge of all those held in the prison, and he was made responsible for all that was done there. ²³ The warden paid no attention to anything under Joseph’s care, because the LORD was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did.

3. How did Joseph feel in prison? He was a regular guy who didn’t like being a prisoner. Summarize Genesis 40:14–15.

10. What do you think those years were like for Joseph?⁹⁷

Lesson 30: Joseph's Up and Down Life

Review: How much time passed between Joseph's interpretation of the cupbearer's and baker's dream and Pharaoh's dream?

1. Make a line graph and label a few high points and low points in your life along with your age during those times.

2. Make a line graph and label the high points and low points in Joseph's life along with his ages when stated in Genesis. Start with Joseph at age 17 when he had his dreams in Genesis 37.⁹⁸

Lesson 31: Joseph the Provider (Gen 42–47)

Review: How old was Joseph when he rose to power in Egypt?

1. Like Esau's meeting with Jacob, Joseph will now meet his estranged brothers. Since Joseph was wounded deeply by his brothers, he weeps often in this section. Think of his years in prison, his longing for his father and his home country, the sleepless nights, and the questions he must have struggled with. "Why? What am I doing here? How could my brothers have done this to me? What about those dreams I once had?" Joseph's reunion with his brothers was deeply emotional. Read Genesis 42–46 (it's a long section, but I think it's best to read it all together). As you're reading make two lists:

a. references to Joseph weeping⁹⁹

b. how Joseph made things difficult for his brothers¹⁰⁰

2. Joseph made things difficult for his brothers to make them aware of their guilt. And Joseph's plan worked. Throughout this section, his brothers are plagued with guilt (Gen 42:21, 28; 43:18; 44:13).

Many years after Joseph's dreams of rising to power (37:5–11) and having his family bow down to him, his brothers bowed down to him (42:6; 43:26, 28; 44:14). And likewise, while Jesus was mistreated and even killed, he also rose to power, and one day every knee will bow to him (Phil 2:10).

3. Genesis 46–47 records the migration of Jacob and his family to Egypt. (Note: Joseph and his family would have been familiar with the pyramids we see today in Egypt. The ancient pyramids are dated prior to 2000 BC and the traditional date for Abraham's life is around 2000 BC.) In Genesis 47:1–12, five of Joseph's brothers and his father, Jacob, meet Pharaoh. And Pharaoh provides them with the best part of the land to settle in. After stating that he was a hundred and thirty years old, Jacob told Pharaoh, "My years have been few and difficult" (Gen 47:9). Here's a list of Jacob's hardships:

- ran away from his home and family out of fear of his brother Esau,
- worked hard for Laban for twenty years,
- cheated by Laban who changed his wages often and made him marry Leah,
- wrestled all night with a stranger at an old age,
- tricked by his sons regarding Joseph's fate causing him to mourn deeply over his loss of Joseph, and
- experienced famine forcing him to leave Canaan at an old age to settle in Egypt.

4. In total, Jacob lived in Egypt for seventeen years and died at a hundred and forty-seven (Gen 47:28). Before he died, he made Joseph promise that he would bury him in Canaan (47:28–31) in the field of Machpelah where Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, and Leah were buried (49:29–32). And Joseph carried out his father's instructions in Genesis 50. Likewise, when Joseph was dying he made the Israelites swear that they would carry his bones out of Egypt (50:24–25). What does this desire to be buried in Canaan show about the patriarchs?¹⁰¹

5. Study Lessons 27–31 on the life of Joseph. The next lesson will begin with a quiz on the life of Joseph.

Lesson 32: Quiz 3; Sovereignty and Responsibility (Gen 45:5–8)

Quiz 3 (8 pts. each)

1. Joseph's mother was _____.
2. Joseph's full brother was _____.
3. Summarize one of Joseph's dreams when he was a teenager.
4. _____ True or False. All of Joseph's brothers wanted to kill him.
5. Joseph was taken to the country of _____ by the Ishmaelites.
6. Why did Potiphar send Joseph to prison?
7. _____ True or False. Joseph predicted a good future for the cupbearer but execution for the baker.
8. Summarize one of Pharaoh's dreams.
9. Who told Pharaoh about Joseph's ability to interpret dreams?

10. What was the meaning of Pharaoh's dreams?

11. List three similarities between Joseph and Jesus.

12. How can the story of Joseph's life be an encouragement to others?

Answers¹⁰²

Sovereignty and Responsibility

1. Our reading in the previous lesson exposed us to a theological mystery. Joseph told his brothers, “do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here” (45:5). On the one hand, Joseph’s brothers did something and they were responsible for what they did—they sold their brother. God didn’t force the brothers to sell Joseph to the Midianite merchants nor did anyone else (37:28). Joseph’s brothers committed an evil act, and therefore, they were responsible for their actions and felt guilty for what they had done (42:21).

On the other hand, God is sovereign, which means that God rules over all things and does what he pleases even in human affairs. **Sovereign** = someone who possesses supreme power. So Joseph’s brothers were not the only active contributors in Joseph’s move to Egypt. While the brothers were selling Joseph to the merchants, God was sending Joseph to Egypt.

Here’s the mystery: How can God’s sovereignty and human responsibility both be true at the same time? If God is ultimately in charge, how can we be free and thus responsible for our actions? It would seem that if God is ruling then we’re not truly free. But if humans are truly free, then God is not actually ruling, we are.

2. Read Genesis 45:5–8 then write out the statement which affirms human responsibility followed by the statements which affirm divine sovereignty.¹⁰³

3. Write out Genesis 50:20.

4. Since this mystery is not fully resolved we must hold on to both truths without having a full explanation: God is sovereign *and* we are responsible. While all believers should be on the spectrum somewhere, some *emphasize* one side more than the other. (But note that they're still on the spectrum because they affirm the other side.)



Non-Christian territory exists outside the spectrum. Beyond the spectrum, on the sovereignty side, lies fatalism. **Fatalism** = the idea that our actions don't matter because ultimately someone or something else is pulling the strings, which makes us puppets. Beyond the spectrum, on the responsibility side, lies atheism. **Atheism** = the idea that our actions are the only thing that matters because there's nothing bigger than us.

5. Write out Acts 2:23 then underline the statement affirming God's sovereignty and circle the statement affirming human responsibility.

6. Even in the death of Jesus, God was sovereign *and* humans were responsible for their evil actions. Jesus was handed over by God's plan *and* crucified by wicked people. God's sovereignty entails his right to use human evil for his good purposes. However,

Because God is radiantly pure without even a hint of evil, whatever explanation we give for our trials, we must not attribute sinister motives or evil deeds to God. "God is light" and he wraps himself in light.

But what exactly is the good God's position on the evil that exists in this world? Does God stand behind evil in the same way he stands behind good? Here are five reasons why God does not stand behind evil in the same way that he stands behind good.

God and Evil

- While God is sovereign over human history, **he is also good**. In the Bible, God is repeatedly labeled with the adjective good (1 Chronicles 16:34; Psalm 25:8; 34:8), but it would be blasphemy to call God evil. Therefore, God's character is fundamentally opposed to evil.
- **Everything God originally created was good** (Genesis 1:31). Good things flowed out of God's good character. If God stands behind evil in the same way he stands behind good, he would have been making good things and evil things from the beginning.
- **There are places in the Bible where God states that he's not the cause of certain evil deeds or words**. Regarding the false prophets, the LORD says, "They speak visions from their own minds, not from the mouth of the LORD" and "I did not send these prophets, yet they have run with their message; I did not speak to them, yet they have prophesied" (Jeremiah 23:16, 21–22). In other words, "I'm not responsible for what they're saying; they didn't get their message from me."
- **God grieves over human evil** (e.g., Genesis 6:5–6; Luke 19:41–42; Ephesians 4:30). God is pleased with our good deeds (e.g., Matthew 25:31–40; Hebrews 13:16), but he's displeased with our evil deeds. Our evil wounds God.
- Throughout the Bible, **God holds people accountable for their evil deeds by responding with indignation and judgment** (e.g., Genesis 3:16–19; Isaiah 10:1–19). God shows his feelings about human evil by expressing judgment for the evil that has been committed.

So God is not evil, he didn't create evil in the beginning, he distances himself from evil, he's not happy about evil, and he judges evil. Are there verses that convey God's sovereignty over everything? Yes, but surely, the five reasons listed above demonstrate, at the very least, that God is not responsible for evil in the same way that he's responsible for good. While Christians should affirm God's sovereignty over

everything, they should also be quick to add that God is not sovereign over everything in precisely the same way.

But how is God sovereign over the evil in this world? We can say that God allows evil to exist and he uses it for his good purposes (e.g., Genesis 50:20; Acts 2:23; 4:27–28). And we should probably stop there, for now. But one day, God will crush evil forever and then we'll all know exactly where God stands in relation to evil.^{xii}

^{xii} This is a selection from my book *Seeing the Invisible God: 52 Biblical Reflections on Divine Anatomy* (BibleBridge, 2016), Reflection 41.

Lesson 33: Jacob's Blessing and Joseph's Death (Gen 49–50)

Review: Define fatalism.

1. Before Jacob died, he blessed Jacob's two sons Manasseh and Ephraim in Genesis 48. But to Joseph's distress, he gave a greater blessing to the younger son, Ephraim (Gen 48:12–19). Have you noticed the theme of the favored younger son in Genesis? In the ancient world, the firstborn was expected to receive the greatest blessing. But in Genesis, God keeps picking the underdog. List four examples in Genesis of a younger son receiving more favor than an older son.¹⁰⁴
2. What does God's tendency to choose the younger son show you about God?¹⁰⁵
3. According to Jacob's blessings in Genesis 49, which of his sons will be the ruler?¹⁰⁶
4. Read Genesis 50.

Lesson 34: Genesis Review

1. It's time to review because we covered a lot of ground in Genesis 4–50. Since one of the best ways to review is to make lists, this lesson includes a few lists.

2. Without looking through Genesis, write the chapter number corresponding with the following items in the blanks. Then check your answers in the back.

____ a. Cain kills Abel

____ b. The flood begins

____ c. God calls Abram to leave his father's house

____ d. The sign of circumcision

____ e. Sodom is destroyed

____ f. Abraham prepares to sacrifice Isaac

____ g. Jacob tricks Isaac and receives the blessing

____ h. Jacob meets Esau

____ i. Joseph dreams

____ j. Joseph becomes ruler¹⁰⁷

3. As you reflect on the book of Genesis, which characters and stories stand out to you? Why?

4. As a review of some of the main characters in Genesis, read Hebrews 11:4–22 and list the characters mentioned.¹⁰⁸

5. Of course, the primary character in Genesis is God. Here's a list of how God is presented. (I've included the references in this list if you want to reflect on them further.)

- powerful Creator (Gen 1),
- transcendent = above and beyond the world (Gen 1),
- immanent = active within the world (Gen 2),
- faithful (Gen 35:11),
- has a special connection with humans – makes them in his image (Gen 1:27),
- gives humans authority over other creatures (Gen 1:27–28),
- eats with humans (Gen 18:1–19:1),
- wrestles with a human (Gen 32:28),
- changes people's names (Gen 17:5, 15; 32:28; 35:10),
- grieves over human evil (Gen 6:6),
- just – judges humans for their wickedness (Gen 19:1–29),
- pleased by humans (e.g., Enoch, Noah),
- desires to save/bless humans (Gen 12:1–3),
- makes promises/covenants with humans (Gen 22:15–18),
- tests humans (Gen 22:1), and
- matchmaker (Gen 24).

6. The book of Genesis is filled with drama. People consistently face hardship in various forms. The Bible doesn't gloss over the difficulties people face. From its first book, the Bible highlights human hardship. Here's a partial list of the challenges people endure.

- Noah and family endured the flood

- Abraham left everything at an old age
- Sarah struggled to conceive causing Abraham and Sarah to wait twenty-five years for their promised son
- Abraham obeyed the command to sacrifice Isaac
- Rebekah struggled to conceive
- Jacob worked twenty years for Laban who mistreated him
- Jacob was tricked by Laban into marrying Leah
- Rachel struggled to conceive
- Jacob returned to Canaan to face Esau then wrestled with God
- Jacob was tricked by his sons into believing that Joseph was killed
- Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers
- Joseph was falsely accused and imprisoned for years
- Jacob and sons suffered famine in Canaan

7. You also may have noticed that many journeys are narrated in Genesis, which are included in the list of hardships. Here's a more complete list of journeys in Genesis.

- Adam and Eve are banished from the Garden
- Cain is driven from the land
- The people are scattered from Babel
- Abraham leaves Harran and goes to Canaan
- Abraham's servant goes to Harran to find a wife for Isaac
- Jacob flees to Harran
- Jacob leaves Harran and returns to Canaan with his family
- Joseph is taken to Egypt as a slave
- Joseph's brothers go to Egypt to get grain during the famine
- Jacob and his family leaves Canaan and settles in Egypt

8. Since Jesus taught that the Scriptures ultimately point to him (Lk 24:44; Jn 5:39), let's conclude with a list of places where we see Jesus in the book of Genesis:

- Creation – “all things were made through him” (Gen 1; Jn 1:1–3),
- Adam, who served as God's appointed ruler over all creation (Gen 2) – Jesus displayed his power over weather, disease, and death,
- The promised male descendant of Eve who crushed the serpent's head (Gen 3:15),
- The animal that died and was used to clothe Adam and Eve (Gen 3) – Jesus was killed and he covers us in his righteousness,
- Noah, who served as a savior by building the ark (Gen 6–7),

- The ark that saved Noah and his family (Gen 7–8) – the cross of Christ is our salvation,
 - The offspring of Abraham who became the universal blessing (Gen 12; see Gal 3),
 - Isaac, who was offered as a sacrifice by his father (Gen 22),
 - The ram that God provided for Abraham to sacrifice (Gen 22),
 - The staircase between heaven and earth in Jacob’s dream (Gen 28; see Jn 1:51),
 - Joseph’s rejection by his brothers (Gen 37) – Jesus was rejected by the Jewish people who shouted, “Crucify him,”
 - Joseph, who was falsely accused and condemned as a criminal (Gen 39) – Jesus was falsely accused and sentenced to death, and,
 - Joseph’s rise to power (Gen 41) – Jesus rose from the dead and now rules as Lord.
-

Congratulations! You have completed the 34 lessons on Genesis 4–50. I hope you have enjoyed exploring the intriguing stories in Genesis. If you would like to see what you remember, take the test in the next section.

If you have enjoyed this study, please check bible-bridge.com for more studies.

TEST 3 (GENESIS 25–50)

Define the following (3 pts. each)

1. Jacob –
2. Israel –
3. Peniel –
4. Bethel –
5. Sovereign –
6. Fatalism –
7. Atheism –

Fill in the blanks (3 pts. each)

8. Isaac was married to _____.
9. Laban was Rebekah's _____
10. Jacob and Esau were twin brothers and _____ was born first.
11. The LORD told Rebekah, "Two _____ are in your womb . . . the _____ will serve the _____ (Gen 25:23).
12. Jacob met _____ at a well.
13. "So Jacob served seven years to get Rachel, but they seemed like only a few _____ to him because of his _____ for her." (Gen 29:20)
14. In total, Jacob served Laban for _____ years.

24. Why did Jacob flee to Harran?

25. How did Laban trick Jacob?

26. List two ways Jacob responded when he heard that his brother was coming with four hundred men.

27. What was the meaning of Pharaoh's dreams?

28. List three similarities between Joseph and Jesus.

29. How can the story of Joseph's life be an encouragement to others?

Answers¹⁰⁹

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ANSWERS

1

- God asks “Where . . . ?” (3:9; 4:9)
- God asks “What have you done?” (3:13; 4:10)
- God’s judgment affects the ground (3:17; 4:12)
- God drives them from the land (3:24; 4:14)
- God shows mercy in judgment—clothes Adam and Eve (3:21) and puts a mark on Cain (4:15)

2

- Cain (3x)
- Abel (2x)
- Brought (2x)
- Look(ed) (2x)
- Offering(s) (4x)

3 Here are a few possible answers:

- We believe we owe the divine something.
- We feel grateful to something beyond ourselves and want to show our gratitude.
- We hope it will result in divine favor and blessings.

4 1.) It does not require a killing, 2.) It is a deeper level of giving because it is the giving of one’s entire life and not merely something the person possesses.

5 It seems like he was jealous of Abel because Abel’s offering was accepted.

6 A crouching animal that is ready to pounce on Cain.

7 Six

8 Defiant, obstinate

9 Abel’s blood cries out for justice, but Jesus’ blood cries out for forgiveness.

10 The LORD is extremely patient. He is listening to the complaint of a murderer who refuses to confess and even shows mercy to him.

11 God rebukes Israel by calling them Sodom and Gomorrah. Then he says he takes no pleasure in their sacrifices—they are “meaningless offerings” (v. 13). God will hide his eyes from their uplifted hands

in prayer and he will not listen to them because their “hands are full of blood” (v. 15). He then invites them to wash themselves and seek justice by defending orphans and widows.

12 Jesus calls the Pharisees “hypocrites,” meaning actors because they are focused on the minor details of the law while neglecting its major emphasis. They seek to appear good on the outside, but inside “they are full of greed and self-indulgence” (v. 25). Jesus tells them, “On the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness” (v. 28).

13 Lamech and Enoch

14 Both Lamech and Enoch are given more attention in the genealogies (4:19–24; 5:21–24).

15 Eight

16 They live in fear. Murderers live in the fear that what they have done will be done to them.

17 When we walk with others we are going in the same direction and we are relating with them.

18 Surely, they would have at least thought that Enoch’s God is powerful and there’s something more than life on this earth.

19

- Humans began to increase (v. 1).
- The sons of God were attracted to beautiful women (v. 2).
- The sons of God married any women they chose (v. 2).
- Human life was limited to 120 years (v. 3).
- The Nephilim lived during this time; they were the men of renown (v. 4).
- The sons of God and daughters of men had children (v. 4).
- Human wickedness became great (v. 5).
- Noah was pleasing to God (v. 8).

20

- The LORD seems to have been upset by the marriages of the sons of God and daughters of humans so in response he limits the human life span (vv. 2–3).
- The LORD saw how great human wickedness had become (v. 5).
- The LORD regretted that he had made human beings and his heart was deeply troubled (v. 6).
- The LORD decided to destroy human life (v. 7).
- The LORD favored Noah (v. 8).

21 Quiz 1

1. See Genesis 6:6
2. See Hebrews 11:6.
3. God puts a mark on Cain so that no one would kill him.
4. Wandering
5. Killing of one's brother
6. List of descendants
7. Romulus
8. Lamech
9. Less exposure to radiation and the rays of a supernova
10. Observe, Interpret, Apply

22

- God/gods sent the flood.
- God/god told a man to build a boat and gave him the dimensions of the boat.
- The man's relatives and living creatures were loaded onto the boat.
- The boat came to rest on a mountain.
- The man released a raven and a dove.
- The man offered a sacrifice to God/gods.

23

- Many gods vs. one God
- The gods were frightened by the flood
- The gods were in conflict—Ea vs. Enlil

24 Utnaphishtim

25 No. Jesus turned water into wine in John 2 and Paul instructs Timothy to drink wine (1 Tim 5:23). But it is a sin to get drunk (Eph 5:18).

26 Some believe so, but we really don't have enough information to be certain. We can say that the eating of plant food is definitely promoted in the first two chapters of Genesis.

27 By itself, Genesis 9:6 does not serve as sufficient support for the death penalty. It may not be telling us what to do, but simply affirming the general principle that we reap what we sow (Gal 6:7). In that sense it would be similar to Jesus' statement that "all who draw the sword will die by the sword" (Matt 26:52).

28

- blessed and commanded to increase (1:28; 9:1)
- caretakers of creatures (2:19-20; 6:19)

- three sons (4:1, 2, 25; 5:32)
- workers of the soil (2:15; 9:20)
- sinned through fruit of tree (3:6; 9:21)
- wicked son/grandson under a curse (4:11-12; 9:25)

29 God would put his law in their minds and write it on their hearts, and there would be universal knowledge of God.

30

- To show their engineering skill
- To be able to say that their building is the tallest

31 God hates human pride. Pride will lead to our destruction. We may be able to impress other humans with our great achievements but that doesn't mean God is impressed (Lk. 16:15).

32 The spread of sin and death in Genesis 3–8

- Gen 3 – Adam and Eve rebel against God and God promises death.
- Gen 4 – Cain kills Abel. Lamech kills a young man.
- Gen 5 – Human mortality is highlighted with the repeated phrase “then he died.”
- Gen 6 – The earth was corrupt in God's sight. Specifically, violence was pervasive.
- Gen 7 – The flood destroyed everything except for those in the ark.

33 God's mercy in Genesis 3–8

- Gen 3 – God clothed Adam and Eve.
- Gen 4 – God placed a mark on Cain to protect him.
- Gen 5 – Enoch didn't die.
- Gen 6–8 – God spared Noah and his family.

34 Test 1

1. A pattern of inverse repetition that places the most important item in the center.
2. A solemn promise
3. A list of descendants
4. The killing of one's brother
5. Abel
6. faith, impossible, please
7. Canaan
8. violence
9. 40

10. Shem, Ham, Japheth
11. angels
12. Cain, Abel, Seth
13. walked
14. Lamech
15. True
16. False
17. True
18. False
19. True
20. True
21. False
22. 5
23. 9
24. 6
25. 4
26. 11
27. 7
28. 9
29. The surviving brother, Cain, is clearly guilty in the Bible, while Romulus is innocent.
30. See 1 John 3:11–12.
31. See Genesis 6:6. Personal answer.
32. Any three of the following:
 - blessed and commanded to increase (1:28; 9:1)
 - caretakers of creatures (2:19-20; 6:19)
 - three sons (4:1, 2, 25; 5:32)
 - workers of the soil (2:15; 9:20)
 - sinned through fruit of tree (3:6; 9:21)
 - wicked son/grandson under a curse (4:11-12; 9:25)
33.
 - I. **Observations** – What do you see? (Make a list of concise statements that contain observational data. For example, list repeated words or phrases, key words, beginning, ending, or middle of the passage etc. This step usually takes the longest and requires the most patience.)
 - II. **Interpretation** – What do your observations mean? (Use your observations to make a point. For example, explain what is being emphasized or highlighted.)
 - III. **Application** – How can we use the ideas in the passage in our daily lives? Or how can it help our faith?
34. The text doesn't identify the mark. The mark was for Cain alone, not his descendants. There's no indication that it could be passed down.
35. **Similarities**

- God/gods sent the flood.
- God/god told a man to build a boat and gave him the dimensions of the boat.
- The man's relatives and living creatures were loaded onto the boat.
- The boat came to rest on a mountain.
- The man released a raven and a dove.
- The man offered a sacrifice to God/gods.

Differences

- Many gods vs. one God
- The gods were frightened by the flood
- The gods were in conflict—Ea vs. Enlil

35 Because God made a promise to Abraham and the rest of the Bible shows how he kept that promise. Ultimately, God's promise is fulfilled in Jesus. Jesus was a descendant of Abraham (Matt 1:1) and the Savior of the world. So the Bible is the story of God's promise and the fulfillment of that promise to Abraham.

36

- I will (5x)
- great (2x)
- your/you (7x)
- bless/blessing (5x)
- curse/curses (2x)

37

- So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, "**Cursed** are you above all livestock and all wild animals! (Gen 3:14)
- To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat from it,' "**Cursed** is the ground because of you; (Gen 3:17)
- Now you are under a **curse** and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. (Gen 4:11)
- He named him Noah and said, "He will comfort us in the labor and painful toil of our hands caused by the ground the LORD has **cursed**." (Gen 5:29)
- The LORD smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: "Never again will I **curse** the ground because of humans, (Gen 8:21)
- he said,

“Cursed be Canaan!

The lowest of slaves
will he be to his brothers.” (Gen 9:25)

38

- Communicates with Abram
- Calls Abram to do difficult things
- Promises to do great things for Abraham
- Desires to bless the whole world

39 While God chose one man, his purpose was to bless the whole world through that one man. Ultimately, the focus is on the universal blessing for everyone. (See Gen 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:13–14)

40 Thirteen years

41 Three men visited Abraham and predicted that Sarah would have a son in one year’s time. The men and Abraham then walk toward Sodom and the LORD shared his plan with Abraham—he will check on Sodom and see if it is truly as wicked as he has heard. Abraham then pleaded with the LORD to spare the city for the sake of fifty righteous people. After the LORD conceded, Abraham continued pleading until the LORD promised, “For the sake of ten, I will not destroy it” (v. 32). But the LORD couldn’t find ten righteous people, so he destroyed Sodom. Before he destroyed the city, however, the LORD rescued the righteous people who were in it—Lot and his family. In that way, God’s actions in Genesis 19 are a direct answer to Abraham’s urgent question in Genesis 18—“Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?” (v. 25). God did what was right: He judged the wicked and saved the righteous.

I think it makes the most sense to view two of the visitors as angels (see Gen 19:1) and the other as the LORD. For support see my blog post *The Identity of the Three Visitors in Genesis 18* at <http://www.bible-bridge.com/the-identity-of-the-three-visitors-in-genesis-18/>

42

- God walking in the Garden of Eden in Genesis 3.
- The smoking firepot in Genesis 15.

43

- God appeared as a man
- God had his feet washed and then rested (18:4)
- God ate (18:8)
- God talked with Abraham and Sarah

44 Because the Bible is rooted in the real world. Our world is filled with evil. So we could also ask, “How do you feel about disturbing material in the newspaper?” Bad stuff happens all the time. And instead of ignoring or painting over evil, the Bible exposes it.

45 **Intercede** = to plead on someone else’s behalf.

46

- To show us that Abraham enjoyed a special relationship with God.
- To show us that God wants an interactive relationship with people. God is going to do what is just, but he wants us to be a part of that process and one way we can do that is by praying. Think about it, if God didn’t want to engage with us, he would simply do what he wants without communicating with us.

47

- Isaiah 1:9 – The LORD left Israel with survivors so it didn’t become like Sodom.
- Isaiah 3:9 – Sodom paraded their sin.
- Isaiah 13:19 – Babylon will be overthrown like Sodom.
- Ezekiel 16:49 – Sodom’s sin was that it was arrogant and unconcerned about the poor and needy.
- Ezekiel 16:53 – God will restore the fortunes of Sodom.
- Matthew 11:23–24 – If Sodom saw the miracles Capernaum saw it would not have been overthrown.
- 2 Peter 2:4–9 – God condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes. Therefore, God knows how to rescue the righteous and hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment.
- Jude 1:7 – Sodom gave itself up to sexual immorality and perversion.

48 Ezekiel 16:53

49

- old age
- promised
- Sarah
- Abraham
- Born/bore/borne
- Son
- Isaac
- Laughter/laugh
- The LORD/God

50 The fulfillment of God’s promise.

- “as he had said” (v. 1)
- “what he had promised” (v. 1)
- “at the very time God had promised him” (v. 2)

51

- a. God would give them the land (12:7)
- b. God would give all the land that Abraham could see to his offspring forever (13:15) and God would make them as numerous as the dust of the earth (13:16)
- c. Abraham would have a son who would be his heir (15:4)
- d. They would be afflicted in a foreign land for four hundred years and then they would come out with great possessions and return to the land (15:13–14)
- e. God would give them the land from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates (15:18)

52 Sarah

53

- a. God would give Abraham a son by Sarah (17:16) and nations and kings would come from Sarah (17:16)
- b. Sarah would bear Abraham a son and his name would be Isaac (17:19) and God’s everlasting covenant would be with Isaac and his offspring (17:19)

54 Sarah would have a son in one year.

55

- “Here I am” – shows Abraham’s willingness to listen and obey
- “the two of them went on together”
- Provide – this story is ultimately about God’s provision
- Abraham
- Servants
- Son
- Sacrifice/offering
- The place/that place
- Lamb/ram (male sheep)
- Knife

56 Tested (v. 1) – only appears once, but it’s crucial to understanding the story

57

- As Isaac walked up the mountain carrying the wood to the place where he was going to be sacrificed (22:6), Jesus carried his cross to the place of his crucifixion (Jn 19:17).

- Isaac was Abraham's beloved son (Gen 22:2) and Jesus is God's beloved Son (Mk 1:11).
- Abraham was commanded to offer his one and only son, likewise God did offer up his one and only son (Jn 3:16).
- Both were innocent.
- Both were willing; there's no record of them resisting or running away.

58 Sarah death and Abraham's purchase of burial land for her. It's significance lies in the fact that Abraham now owns a piece of the promised land. Death has enabled him to receive a part of his promised inheritance.

59 In the cave of Machpelah where Sarah was buried.

60 Timeline of Abraham's life

- 75 when he left Harran (12:4)
- 86 when Ishmael was born (16:6)
- 99 when circumcision was commanded (17:1)
- 100 when Isaac was born (21:5). Sarah was 90 (17:17)
- 175 when he died (25:7)

61 Abraham, Abraham's servant, Isaac, Rebekah, Laban, Bethuel

62

- Abraham was made righteous by his faith (vv. 1–5).
- Abraham was considered righteous before he was circumcised so the work of circumcision did not make him righteous (vv. 10–12).
- Abraham believed even when his circumstances were hopeless (vv. 18–22).
- Abraham rested his faith in God's promise (vv. 20–21)
- The pattern of believing and being counted righteous applies to us as well (vv. 23–24)

*Romans 4 highlights Abraham's faith and the result of his faith as an example for all believers.

63

- The sons (or children) of Abraham are those who believe not those who keep the law (v. 7).
- The children of Abraham are blessed because God promised to bless all people through him (vv. 8–9).
- Those who are in Christ receive the blessing of Abraham (vv. 13–14).
- Christ is the ultimate offspring of Abraham (v. 16).
- God's promise to Abraham was given long before the law was given so it has nothing to do with obedience to the law (vv. 17–18).
- Those who are Christ's are Abraham's offspring and heirs to the promise (v. 29)

*Galatians 3 focuses on the identity of Abraham's children because Abraham's children are blessed.

64

- obeyed God's call to leave because God promised to give him an inheritance (v. 8)
- obeyed even though he didn't know where he was going (v. 8)
- lived as a foreigner in the land of promise (v. 9)
- looked forward to the city built by God (v. 10)
- acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth (v. 13)
- obeyed and offered up Isaac (v. 17)
- believed that God could raise Isaac from the dead (v. 19)

*Hebrews 11 highlights specific instances when Abraham expressed faith as a motivation for us to live a life of faith.

65

- Offered up Isaac on the altar (v. 21).
- So Abraham's faith was completed by his works (v. 22).
- Abraham was called God's friend (v. 23)

*James 2 shows that Abraham put his faith into action and so should we.

66 Some people think so. In fact, Martin Luther once called James's letter an "epistle of straw" because he believed James contradicted Paul's gospel of justification by faith alone. However, Luther also worked to reconcile the apparent contradiction. The apparent disagreement between the two can be reconciled when we see them addressing different audiences. For example, Paul is speaking to people who are asking the question, "How can I be accepted by God?" But James is addressing people who have the attitude, "I believe therefore I'm justified and don't need to do anything else." While one crowd honestly wants to learn how to become righteous, the other crowd wants to relax in a false sense of security. In addition, we see more convergence between James and Paul when we read Paul's letters in their entirety. In the same letter where Paul emphasizes justification by faith, he also expresses the importance of good works (Gal 5:6, 22–23; 6:9–10).

67

- heard from God (Gen. 12:1–3, 7, etc.)
- obedient (Gen. 12:4; 17:26–27; 22:9)
- worshipful (12:8; 13:4)
- protected by God (12:17; 20:3)
- wealthy (13:2; 24:34–35)
- practical peacemaker (13:8)
- generous (13:9; 14:20, 22–24)
- defender (14:13–16)

- honest (15:2–3, 8; 21:25)
- believing (15:6)
- loving father (21:11; 22:2)
- servant (18:2–8)
- interceder (18:22–33)
- fearful (12:12–13; 20:11–12)
- covenant maker (21:24, 27)
- traveler (12:4, 9; 20:1, 13)

68 Test 2

1. father of many
2. exalted father
3. he laughs
4. princess
5. to plead on behalf of another
6. an appearance of God
7. tested
8. 75
9. 100
10. abducted
11. circumcised
12. provide
13. Judaism, Christianity, Islam
14.
 - He had to make a major transition at an old age and leave everything he was familiar with (Gen 12).
 - He faced danger in traveling as shown by Sarah being abducted twice (Gen 12 & 20).
 - He faced the danger of warfare when he went out to rescue Lot (Gen 14).
 - He had marital issues because of Hagar (Gen 21).
 - He obeyed God's difficult command of circumcision (Gen 17).
 - But most of all, Abraham had to wait. He waited 25 years for his promised son to arrive.
15. See Genesis 12:2–3.
16. Because Genesis 19:1 indicates that two of the men were angels and the LORD is interwoven so tightly in the narrative that he must be the other visitor.
17. See Galatians 3:29
18.
 - As Isaac walked up the mountain carrying the wood to the place where he was going to be sacrificed (22:6), Jesus carried his cross to the place of his crucifixion (Jn. 19:17).
 - Isaac was Abraham's beloved son (Gen. 22:2) and Jesus is God's beloved Son (Mk. 1:11).

- Abraham was commanded to offer his one and only son, likewise God did offer up his one and only son (Jn. 3:16).
- Both were innocent.
- Both were willing; there's no record of them resisting or running away.

19. Personal answer

69

- prayed for his wife who was barren and God answered him
- at the age of sixty he had two sons: Esau and Jacob
- had a special relationship with Esau because he loved Esau's food

70

- settled in Gerar during the famine
- the LORD commanded him to stay in the land, promised to be with him, give him the land, and multiply him greatly

71

- Esau was red and hairy, unlike Jacob
- Esau was a skillful hunter in the open country while Jacob preferred to stay at home
- Isaac loved Esau, while Rebekah loved Jacob

72

- Opportunistic: grabbed Esau's heel (25:26), asked for Esau's birthright in exchange for stew (25:30–34).
- Momma's boy: Rebekah loved Jacob, and he was a quiet man who dwelt in tents (25:27–28), obeyed his mother (27:13–14).
- Liar: claimed to be Esau (27:18, 24), and claimed to successfully hunt (27:20).

73

- Outdoorsman: called a "skillful hunter" and a "man of the field" (25:27).
- Pursued instant gratification: sold his birthright, which would have given him a future inheritance, for stew to satisfy his immediate hunger (25:29–34).
- Obedient: obeyed his father (27:1–5).
- Regretful: cried out and wept when he heard how Jacob took his blessing (27:34, 38).
- Revengeful: planned to kill Jacob (27:41).

74 Recording such relationships doesn't mean the Bible approves of them. We must differentiate between descriptive and prescriptive content. **Descriptive** = recording what happened. **Prescriptive** = telling readers how to live. The narratives in Genesis are descriptive in content. In addition, it's important to note that Jacob only wanted to marry Rachel. He was tricked into marrying Leah and thus becoming a polygamous husband.

75 After twenty years of serving Laban, Jacob realized that his relationship with Laban had worsened so he and his family fled. The LORD encouraged Jacob, “Go back to the land of your fathers and to your relatives, and I will be with you” (31:3). Seven days after they departed, Laban caught up with them and confronted Jacob. After a tense conversation, the two made a covenant with each other, set up a pillar, and shared a meal together. The next morning Laban kissed his grandchildren and daughters and returned home.

76

- God is faithful. The promise he made to Abraham is reiterated to Abraham’s grandson.
- We should marry wisely. Jacob was forbidden from marrying a Canaanite because the people of the land, the Canaanites, were very different from Isaac and his relatives in Paddan Aram.
- We reap what we sow. The deceiver, Jacob, was deceived by Laban.
- Polygamy can create rivalries.
- Relationships are dynamic. They can improve or worsen.
- Sometimes we can be stuck in a bad situation for a while.
- Sometimes we need to run away. Jacob noticed that Laban’s attitude had turned against him, then God told him to return to his homeland.

77

- God is faithful. He reiterates the promise he made to Abraham to Abraham’s grandson.
- God communicates with his people in a variety of ways: dreams, words, situations.

78 While on the way home, Jacob sent messengers ahead to greet Esau. The messengers returned and told Jacob that Esau was on his way with four hundred men. Jacob responded by dividing his people into two groups so that at least one group could escape. He then prayed for God to save him and sent gifts ahead to pacify Esau. After Jacob sent his family across the stream, he stayed behind that night and had a mysterious wrestling match with a man. He asked the man to bless him and the man did so, changing his name from Jacob to **Israel** = he struggles with God. Jacob called that place **Peniel** = face of God because he said he saw God face to face and yet his life was spared.

When he saw Esau approaching with the four hundred men, Jacob bowed down to the ground seven times. Esau ran to greet him and embraced him. “And they wept” (33:4). Jacob said that finding favor with Esau was like seeing the face of God. Jacob insisted that Esau take some of the gifts he brought. And while Esau wanted to accompany Jacob, Jacob explained that they had to move at a slower pace so they went their separate ways. Jacob bought a plot of ground in Shechem for a hundred pieces of silver.

79

- Addresses God as the God of his father and the God of his grandfather (v. 9)
- Reminds God of his promise (v. 9)
- Acknowledges that he doesn’t deserve all that God has given him (v. 10)

- Requests that God deliver him from his brother (v. 11)
- Reminds God of his promise (v. 12)

80

- Abraham's prayer for Sodom in Genesis 19
- Abraham's servant's prayer for a wife for Isaac in Genesis 24

81 We can't be certain, but maybe he wanted to pray because he thought it could be his last night.

82

- Appeared suddenly (v. 24)
- Realized that he couldn't defeat Jacob (v. 25)
- May have expressed special power when he touched Jacob's hip socket and put it out of joint (v. 25)
- Wanted to get away from Jacob at daybreak (v. 26)
- Had the ability to bless Jacob and Jacob knew it (v. 26)
- Asked for Jacob's name (v. 27)
- Changed Jacob's name to Israel (v. 28)
- Mysterious – wouldn't tell Jacob his name (v. 29)
- Blessed Jacob (v. 29)
- Connected with the face of God (v. 30)

83 an angel (v. 4)

84 "The face of God" serves to link the two stories. After Jacob received a blessing from his opponent, which included receiving his new name **Israel** = he struggles with God, he said that he had seen God face to face. And he named the place **Peniel** = the face of God. The next day when Jacob realized that Esau favored him, he said seeing Esau's face was like seeing God's face. In summary, Jacob saw God's face during his wrestling match and he associated Esau's face—specifically Esau's favor—with God's face.

But other than God's face we don't have any clear connections between the two stories. Did the wrestling match influence Jacob's meeting with Esau? The text doesn't explicitly answer that question, but it's safe to say that Jacob's blessing the previous night didn't hurt his encounter with Esau. And perhaps we can even say that Jacob's victory the previous night exempted him from a wrestling match with his brother the next day.

85 Quiz 2

1. Jacob = he deceives
Israel = he struggles with God
Bethel = house of God

2. Esau
3. He tricked his blind father, Isaac, into thinking that he was Esau, and Isaac gave him the blessing.
4. He asked Esau to sell it to him for stew and Esau complied.
5. His mother, Rebekah, told him that Esau was planning to kill him.
6. Angels ascending and descending on a staircase with the LORD above it. The LORD promised to bless Jacob with land and many descendants.
7. He said that angels would ascend and descend on him, the Son of Man.
8. Rachel
9. Days, love
10. He gave his daughter Leah to Jacob instead of Rachel
11. Twenty years (Gen 31:38)
12. Four
13. He divided his people into two groups, prayed, and prepared gifts for his brother to be sent through messengers.
14. Angel

86 We will not be going into detail on Genesis 34–36, but here is a summary of each chapter.

Genesis 34: Jacob's daughter, Dinah, is raped by a Hivite named Shechem. When Jacob's sons heard what happened to their sister they were furious. In response to Shechem's request to marry Dinah, the brothers said that the men of the land must be circumcised, and the men agreed. While recovering from their circumcisions, however, Simeon and Levi attacked them, killing every male.

Genesis 35: God told Jacob to settle in Bethel—the place where God appeared to him in the stairway dream (Gen 28). Jacob prepared his family for the journey by telling them to get rid of all their foreign gods. When they arrived, Jacob built an altar. God appeared to him again, renamed him Israel, and promised to bless him with descendants and land. After Bethel, they move on toward Ephrath (or Bethlehem). On the way, Rachel died while giving birth to Jacob's last son, Benjamin. Reuben slept with Jacob's concubine, Bilhah. Jacob returned to his father Isaac near Hebron. After the death of Isaac at the age of 180, Esau and Jacob buried him.

Genesis 36: Esau married Canaanite women. Since the land couldn't support both Jacob and Esau, Esau moved to the hill country of Seir. Esau is the father of the Edomites. The remainder of the chapter lists Esau's descendants.

87

- Cain and Abel (Gen 4),
- Ishmael and Isaac (Gen 21),
- Esau and Jacob (Gen 25, 27), and

88

- loved

- dream
- hated
- brothers
- bowed/bowing/bow

89 tattletale (v. 2), favored son (v. 3), proud (vv. 5–11) – granted his dreams came true but did he have to share them in the way he did?

90

- Hated by jealous brothers (for Jesus think of brothers as his extended brothers, the Jewish nation, although his immediate brothers didn't accept him either) (Gen 37:4, 11; Jn 11:47–48)
- Brothers conspired to kill both (Gen 37:18; Matt 26:4)
- Stripped of robe (Gen 37:23; Matt 27:28)
- Sold for pieces of silver (Gen 37:28; Matt 26:15)

91

- God's presence with Joseph (vv. 2, 3, 21)
- Joseph's success (vv. 2, 3, 23)
- Joseph was trusted (vv. 6, 23)
- Joseph's authority (vv. 4, 5, 6, 8, 22, 23)

92 Joseph proved to be a trustworthy servant as both a slave in Potiphar's house and a prisoner in the king's prison. Even during a time of temptation when no one was around, Joseph proved that he could be trusted.

93 He was conscious of God, and specifically, he didn't want to hurt God (v. 9). Joseph found himself in a foreign land surrounded by foreign gods, but he remembered the God of his fathers. The knowledge of God will keep us from falling into temptation.

94

- The LORD is with you even in prison.
- The LORD knows that you have been falsely accused.
- Be faithful even in prison.
- The LORD can deliver you from prison.

95 two years (Gen 41:1)

96 thirteen years

97 painful, frustrating, long

98 The following points should be identified:

- High Point: age 17 – the favored son of his father Jacob, dreams of his family bowing down to him
- Low Point: 17? – attacked by his brothers, stripped of his robe, thrown into a cistern, then sold to Midianite traders and taken to Egypt
- High Point: Successful as Potiphar’s servant and put in charge of everything Potiphar owned
- Low Point: Falsely accused by Potiphar’s wife then imprisoned
- High Point: Put in charge in the prison
- High Point: Successfully interpreted the dreams of the cupbearer and baker
- Low Point: Forgotten in prison for two years—the cupbearer forgot about Joseph
- High Point: Successfully interpreted Pharaoh’s dream
- Highest Point: age 30 – Pharaoh made him second-in-command of the whole land of Egypt. He was given Pharaoh’s ring, dressed in robes, and given a gold chain.

99 Gen 42:24; 43:30; 45:2, 14–15; 46:29.

100

- Falsely accused them of being spies (42:9, 12, 14)
- Put them in prison for three days (42:17)
- Demanded that the youngest brother, Benjamin, be brought to him (42:20)
- Secretly returned their money to them (42:25–28)
- Secretly put his silver cup in Benjamin’s sack and then falsely accused his brothers of stealing it (44:1–5)
- Demanded that Benjamin stay with him (44:17)

101 They wanted to permanently identify with the land God promised to give them. They were focused on God’s promises.

102 Quiz 3

1. Rachel
2. Benjamin
3. See Gen 37:6–7; 37:9

4. False. Reuben and Judah didn't want to kill Joseph.
5. Egypt
6. He thought Joseph tried to rape his wife.
7. True
8. See Gen 41:1–7
9. The cupbearer
10. "Seven years of great abundance are coming . . . but seven years of famine will follow them." (Gen 41:29–30).
11.
 - Hated by jealous brothers (for Jesus think of brothers as his extended brothers, the Jewish nation, although his immediate brothers didn't accept him either) (Gen 37:4, 11; Jn 11:47–48)
 - Brothers conspired to kill both (Gen 37:18; Matt 26:4)
 - Stripped of robe (Gen 37:23; Matt 27:28)
 - Sold for pieces of silver (Gen 37:28; Matt 26:15)
 - Rose to power (Gen 41; Phil 2)
12. Personal answer

103

Human Responsibility: "do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here" (45:5)

Divine Sovereignty: "God sent me ahead of you" (45:5)

"God sent me ahead of you to . . . save your lives" (45:7)

"it was not you who sent me here, but God" (45:8)

104

- God accepts Abel's offering, not Cain's.
- God's promise to Abraham goes through Isaac, not Ishmael.
- Jacob receives the birthright and blessing of Esau.
- Joseph is favored above his brothers.
- Ephraim receives a greater blessing than Manasseh.

105 God is not bound by human culture. God often chooses things that are lowly and despised to show that it's his power and choice that makes the difference. (See 1 Cor 1:18–29.) In addition, this fits with the countercultural message of Genesis as a whole. The sun and moon were were worshiped in the ancient world, but Genesis 1 doesn't even name them. And other creation stories narrate the birth of the gods and include episodes of divine violence, neither of which can be found in Genesis.

106 Judah (49:8, 10). Jesus' lineage goes through Judah (Matt 1:1–3). And he's called "the Lion of the tribe of Judah" (Rev 5:5), so ultimately the rulership that is prophesied of Judah is fulfilled in Jesus.

107

- 4 a. Cain kills Abel
- 7 b. The flood begins
- 12 c. God calls Abram to leave his father's house
- 17 d. The sign of circumcision
- 19 e. Sodom is destroyed
- 22 f. Abraham prepares to sacrifice Isaac
- 27 g. Jacob tricks Isaac and receives the blessing
- 33 h. Jacob meets Esau
- 37 i. Joseph dreams
- 41 j. Joseph becomes ruler

108 Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sarah, Esau, Joseph, Joseph's sons

109 Test 3

1. he deceives
2. he struggles with God
3. face of God
4. house of God
5. supreme ruler
6. our actions don't really matter because someone/something else is pulling the strings making us puppets
7. our actions are the only thing that matter because there is nothing greater than us
8. Rebekah
9. Brother
10. Esau
11. Nations, older, younger
12. Rachel
13. Days, love
14. Twenty
15. Four
16. Angel
17. Rachel
18. Benjamin
19. Egypt
20.
 - Outdoorsman: called a "skillful hunter" and a "man of the field" (25:27).
 - Pursued instant gratification: sold his birthright, which would have given him a future inheritance, for stew to satisfy his immediate hunger (25:29–34).
 - Obedient: obeyed his father (27:1–5).

- Regretful: cried out and wept when he heard how Jacob took his blessing (27:34, 38).
 - Revengeful: planned to kill Jacob (27:41).
21. He saw a stairway resting on earth and reaching to heaven with angels ascending and descending on it. God stood above the staircase, and promised to bless Jacob.
22. See Lesson 32
23. He asked Esau to sell it to him in exchange for stew and Esau did
24. Because Esau wanted to kill him for tricking his father into giving him Esau's blessing
25. He made him marry Leah instead of Rachel
26. Divided his people into two camps, prepared gifts for Esau, and prayed
27. Seven years of plenty will be followed by seven years of famine
- 28.
- Hated by jealous brothers (for Jesus think of brothers as his extended brothers, the Jewish nation, although his immediate brothers didn't accept him either) (Gen 37:4, 11; Jn 11:47–48)
 - Brothers conspired to kill both (Gen 37:18; Matt 26:4)
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- The LORD is with you even in prison.
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