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Lessons from the **Book of Genesis**

By Ken Raggio

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Genesis

Genesis is indeed the book of origins, but much more. It defines creation and the birth of the nation of Israel. This document may be the most hotly contested book on earth. Did God create the worlds? Did Noah build the ark? Did God favor Israel over Ishmael? Were Jews in bondage in Egypt? Each answer is an unequivocal 'yes'. Genesis tells it like it was. Nobody can prove otherwise. Through faith we understand the worlds were framed by the word of God.

Genesis 1:1 - "In the beginning God created the Heaven and the earth."

The First Day of Creation

In God's infinite wisdom, He knew that light is a prerequisite to life on earth. Life on earth depends upon light. Light provides energy, warmth, sight, growth and much more. Einstein figured that light is the primary constant in the universe, so time itself is based upon the speed of light. No wonder, then, that God created light on the first day. Will not this brilliant God of order also tend to your greatest needs first, too?

Genesis 1:3 - "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light."

The Second Day of Creation

God created a 50-mile-high environment to support all His planned creatures. This "firmament," with water above and water below, is the magnificent atmosphere enveloping our globe. Without the nitrogen, oxygen, argon, hydrogen, helium, carbon dioxide, ozone and all the other elements in the earth's sky, life as we know it could not exist. No other planet in the universe has an environment so lavish and luxurious as ours. That's not an accident. God wonderfully planned our support and survival.

Genesis 1:8 - "And God called the firmament Heaven."

The Third Day of Creation

God called land out of water. Water is one of the greatest secrets to life on this planet. This biosphere of land, water and air is miraculously regulated by perpetual photosynthesis, respiration, and bacterial regeneration. It supports the life-cycles of everything living. God scattered dry seed everywhere, then raised up a mist to water it and begin endless germination cycles. Great God!

Genesis 1:11 - "...God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself."

Exponential Potential

If I give you one kernel of corn, can you plant every kernel that may ever grow from it? One kernel produces one plant, but one plant produces many ears of corn with thousands of kernels. Here is infinite exponential potential - a world full of corn! Your godly, obedient act of faith has infinite future potential. Commit that act today!

Genesis 1:12 - "And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good."

The Fourth Day of Creation

The light God made on the first day was supernatural, not emanating from a natural source. Without it, the universe was totally dark. The sun, moon, and stars were not created until this fourth day. 24-hour days only began AFTER the fourth day when 100 billion galaxies with about 100 billion stars apiece were created. The first four days might have spanned aeons.

Genesis 1:16 - "...God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also."

The Eye of God

The Hubble telescope photographed a Nebula called the "Eye of God". It looks like a beautiful blue eye surrounded by great luminescence. Actually, it is a gaseous tunnel almost a trillion miles deep. Another photo captures one entire spiraling galaxy sitting angular to another spiraling galaxy just behind it - all within a pin-hole view of space. I will live my life any way the Bible requires for the chance to see the One who created that. I've nothing to lose and everything to gain.

Genesis 1:16 - "...he made the stars also."

The Fifth Day of Creation

Yesterday was the last timeless Wednesday. The brand new solar system gives earth its first 24-hour day. Thursday evening, God creates every fish, bird, and water mammal. Overnight, the entire earth begins seeing, hearing, tasting, touching and smelling. Totally, inexplicably awesome!

Genesis 1:20,22 - "...God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven ...Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth."

The Sixth Day of Creation

The second 24-hours. What a day! Jillions of land animals boil up from the ground in species, scattering everywhere. But God's Grande Finale that Friday was a single man, in God's image! Adam, the only truly self-aware creature on earth, saw, because He sees; heard, because He hears; thought, because He thinks; knew, because He knows. First son; first friend of God!

Genesis 1:27,28 - "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."

Alternative Medicine

The old-timers were probably right. Drugs and witchcraft are first-cousins. Nobody can know for sure just what can happen when molecules are manufactured in a laboratory. Harmful side-effects and reactions often result from pharmaceutical drugs. Illicit drugs regularly kill, addict, or sicken. Natural herbs contain God-made molecules that mankind has been accustomed to since the beginning of time. That is God's natural medicine cabinet.

Genesis 1:30: "I have given every green herb for meat." Ezekiel 47:12: "...the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine."

The Seventh Day of Creation

A light-year is 5.8 trillion miles. Scientists estimate the universe is 28 billion light-years wide, containing 100 billion galaxies, each one containing 100 billion stars. Meanwhile, one human has almost 100 trillion living cells working in perfect synchronization. God invented, created and meticulously oversees every speck. He sanctified a day of rest to view, contemplate and enjoy it all.

Genesis 2:2 - "...on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made."

Adam

A human corpse decomposes into elements just like ordinary dirt. Adam was not a clay sculpture. God used dust. Maybe he transformed dust particles into stem cells, then constituted an embryo, and in a matter of moments quickly advanced it through infancy, adolescence, puberty and adulthood! From mere dirt to sophisticated and complex skeletal, muscular, nervous, cardiovascular, digestive and respiratory systems, we are fearfully and wonderfully made!

Genesis 2:7 - "...the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

The Creation of Man

1,400 years before Christ, Moses declared that God formed man from dust. Muslims believe that 2,000 years later, the angel Gabriel told Mohammed to recite that Allah created man out of "a mere clot of congealed blood," (Qur'an 96:2 Yusufali translation). So, is Moses a liar or is Mohammed? Judaism and Christianity say Moses was right. So do I.

Genesis 2:7 - "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

The Garden of Eden

Adam was created before the garden of Eden was planted. God put Adam in it afterward. Ezekiel 28:13 depicts Lucifer in the garden, too - before he sinned! Satan did not arrive from a failed pre-Adamite society of evil angels. He came sinless. All the sins of men and angels began in the garden. Utopias do not prevent sin. Your health, success and prosperity could be your greatest temptation. Beware!

Genesis 2:8 - "...the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed."

Dominion

God brought the animals to Adam for naming. He gave mankind dominion over the earth and all living creatures. God committed the earth to benefit and sustain man. Man has divine authority and prerogative to use earth for his benefit, including domestication and cultivation. "Mother Earth" politics elevates animal rights and environmental issues above human rights, and gives "mother" nature illicit dominion over Father God. Controlling the balance of nature, including global climate, is FAR over our heads. Only God can comprehend and control sustainability.

Genesis 1:26 - "...let them have dominion ...over all the earth."

Adam's Rib

God put Adam to sleep and performed surgery. He removed one of Adam's ribs and made a woman from it. From the bone marrow came Adam's DNA, making her the first clone - a female version of Adam. An identical twin.

Same eyes, same hair, same size. "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them," Genesis 1:27. Two people. One image.

Genesis 2:22 - "And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman."

Tree of Knowledge

God did not want Adam and Eve knowing evil in any way. He forbade him to partake of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God knows that bad lessons cannot be unlearned and evil knowledge is never an asset, but a liability. Whatever you learned from your mistakes would have been much better unlearned. Shun the very appearance of evil.

Genesis 2:17 - "...of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

Eve

She must have been beautiful. I can't imagine God creating less. From Adam's rib came his helpmate. First woman (man with womb). First wife. First mother. Satan deceived her. She transgressed, then handed a portion of the forbidden fruit to Adam. For that, God cursed womankind with pain in childbirth. Graciously, however, seed of the woman would one day conquer the foul Tempter: God's son, "...made of a woman."

Genesis 3:6 - "...she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat."

Obedience

In the Garden of Eden, God pronounced a blessing on Adam and Eve, coupled with commands to fill the earth and rule over it. Before Eve was created, however, God spoke singularly to Adam and commanded him not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Therefore, the first virtue God required man to practice was obedience. Some things never change. Jesus said, "if you love me, keep my commandments." God still requires obedience.

Genesis 3:11 - "Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?"

The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil

Adam and Eve really missed the point. The tree of life was standing near the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Presumably if they had eaten of the tree of life first, they would have lived forever. God did not want them to taste of the knowledge of evil. They chose evil over life.

Genesis 2:17 - "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

The Forbidden Fruit

People commonly call it an apple, but nobody knows what the forbidden fruit was. It doesn't matter. It might have been anything. Tragically, people always think they will be better off when they get it, but that is never the case. Lucifer tells all kinds of lies to tempt people with anything he can find, but obedience to God is always more rewarding.

Genesis 3:5 "And God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

The Serpent

This is not your ordinary snake. He talks. He is subtle. He has a hidden, sinister, diabolical agenda. Lucifer violated that mindless creature. How was the first woman on earth supposed to know that snakes do not talk? More directly, how can you or I know when Satan enters into someone to deceive us? Lies. Lucifer's trademark is lies. "Hath God said...?" "Ye shall not surely die." There's your sign. Satan is ruthless and plays by nobody's rules.

Genesis 3:1 - "...the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field."

One Of Us

God wanted Adam to always be pure, untainted, and innocent. God knew that was the best life. He warned Adam not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But Lucifer taunted them, saying, "Ye shall be as gods!" Adam and Eve both yielded. Till then, only God and Satan understood the sickening awfulness of sin. Nothing good comes out of it. Nothing is better than innocence. Flee temptation!

Genesis 3:22 - "And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil."

Satan's Doom

The very first Bible prophecy was two-fold and awesome. Messiah would come and Satan would be doomed! God told the serpent, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel," (Genesis 3:14-15). John clearly said the serpent was the Devil (Satan) in Revelation 12:9.

Revelation 20:10 - "...the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, ...and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."

Thorns and Death

For Adam's sin, God cursed the ground to bring forth thorns and thistles. But there was more. Adam was sentenced to die and return to the dust from which he was created. Before he sinned, Adam might have lived forever. Now, life is hard, then you die. The great hope is beyond the grave. Are you ready?

Genesis 3:19 - "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

Tree of Life

Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, so God cast them out of the garden. In the heavenly paradise of God, the tree of life bears twelve fruits continually for the healing of the nations who keep His commandments and enter the gates of that city.

Genesis 3:24 - "So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."

Cherub at the Gate

Apart from Lucifer, the first angels in the Bible were the Cherubims with the flaming sword that guarded the gate to Eden. Angels are said to be ministering spirits for those who shall be the heirs of salvation. Those cherubs were preserving eternal life for those who will properly have it; for you and me.

Genesis 3:24 - "So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."

The Risks of Wrath

Anyone might have congratulated Cain for the beautiful offering of the fruit of his harvest that he presented to the Lord that day. But who could predict that God would ignore it and select instead the sacrificial lamb presented by Cain's brother, Abel. God arrested Cain for getting angry, and admonished him to try again. But anger got the best of Cain, and he killed his brother. God cursed him. Can you control your anger? If not, sin lies at the door.

Genesis 4:6 - "And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth?"

Cain and Abel

Firstborn human on earth was a murderer. How could it be? Cain gave a freewill offering to God; select produce from his crops. His brother, Abel, followed suit, sacrificing an animal from his flock. God loved Abel's blood sacrifice, but not Cain's produce. Cain was furious. God said, "if you do well, you will be accepted." If not, sin lies at the door. Cain paid no attention to God's warning admonition. People get crazy when they ignore God.

Genesis 4:8 - "...Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him."

A Murderer's Prayer

Cain killed his brother, Abel, in cold blood. For his murderous act, God pronounced lifetime curses on him. Cain felt overwhelmed, and feared that

men would want to slay him in recompense. He pleaded with God, so God put a mark on him and forbade anyone to harm him. God would have been well-served to destroy Cain for his murder, but instead chose to give him another chance at life. God will have mercy on you, too.

Genesis 4:13 - "Cain said unto the LORD, My punishment is greater than I can bear."

When Men Began To Pray

Adam and Eve lost their second son, Abel, when Cain murdered him. God gave them another son, Seth. This is only the second generation of mankind, and here is where the Bible says men began to pray. Cain, the first murderer, uttered the first recorded prayer, "My punishment is greater than I can bear." God showed mercy. Take heart. Anybody can pray.

Genesis 4:21 - "...to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the LORD."

Seth

Adam and Eve had two sons: Cain and Abel. The bad one killed the good one. Nothing is said about Adam and Eve's grief. But God was good to give them another child to make up for the loss of Abel. God is sensitive to our losses. He may not always provide an identical replacement, but He will always compensate with some act of mercy.

Genesis 4:25 - "Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth: For God, said she, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew."

Enoch

The seventh man from Adam, Enoch, walked with God for three hundred years. He prophesied that the Lord would come with ten thousands of his saints to execute judgment and convince all the ungodly of their sins. Long before Noah's flood, Enoch saw Armageddon coming. Then "he was not, for God took him." Before he was translated, he had this testimony, that "he pleased God." Pleasing God is not rocket science. If Enoch could walk with God, so can we.

Genesis 5:24 - "...Enoch walked with God: and he was not, for God took him."

Enoch's Prophecy

Enoch was the fellow who walked with God, and God suddenly took him without ever having to taste of death. Enoch was only seven generations from Adam, but he saw the final battle of Armageddon coming. What a fantastic revelation to have been received over 5,000 years ago! In the spirit, Enoch foresaw Jesus conquering the world!

Jude 1:14-15 - "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them

of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed."

Methuselah

Methuselah lived longer than anyone else in the Bible. His name meant, "when he dies," suggesting that God may have waited on him for the flood to begin, because the calculations indicate he died the same year as Noah's flood. After the flood, men's lifespans were shortened. Genesis 6:3 says, "And the Lord said, 'My spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.'"

Genesis 5:27 - "And all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred sixty and nine years: and he died."

Wicked Hearts

Who can guess the population of the earth in Noah's day? Hundreds of thousands? Millions? But God could only find one righteous man - Noah. What does that say about the rest of us? Our hearts are predisposed to evil. We are desperately wicked by nature. The "inherent goodness" of man is a delusion. Without God's word to guide and His grace to forgive, we are hopeless.

Genesis 6:5 - "And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

The Flood Foretold

The Bible does not say how long Noah spent building the ark. He was at least 500 before the commandment came and 600 when he entered the ark. Notwithstanding, anyone can guess that Noah needed many years to build an 800-foot wooden ship. Not coincidentally, the floods came as soon as he finished building. Noah gambled his life on God's word and won! Likewise, we should heed prophetic warnings for our time!

Genesis 6:13 - "God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; ...I will destroy them with the earth."

Noah

All the premises in this story are profound. The whole world was evil. God was grieved and angry. He swore to destroy them all. Noah was an isolated righteous man. God had mercy on Noah and made a plan for his salvation. God saved Noah's family along with some of each species of animals. The flood cleansed the earth. God replenished the earth through Noah. Jesus will also cleanse the earth when He comes.

Matthew 24:37 - "But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

Noah's Ark

Noah's Ark is among the most controversial of all ancient stories. Today, top-

secret government dossiers and political power-mongers deprive the public of evidence that almost certainly exists on Mt. Ararat. Noah's Ark landed there. Satellite photos show suspicious objects. Expeditions claim to have seen it. Why is it forbidden to visit? Who built it? Why did he build it? Who planned and designed it? How did it get on the mountain? It was God's doing!

Genesis 7:16 - "they went in... as God had commanded him: and the LORD shut him in."

The Rainbow

After the great flood, God made a covenant with Noah and all his descendants forever that He would never again destroy the world by a flood. He gave the rainbow as a token and a reminder for perpetual generations. There may be local floods, but never a massive flood as in Noah's day. It won't be water, but fire next time.

Genesis 9:15 - "And I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh."

Replenish The Earth

God told Noah's sons to replenish the earth. Shem's descendants soon migrated to what is now known as Iran, Syria, Iraq and Turkey - and became the Middle Eastern nations. Ham's descendants are generally believed to have migrated to Africa. Japheth's descendants are principally European Caucasians; For example, Magog is in Southern Russia. Meshech and Tubal were founded in the region of modern Georgia. Ultimately, all nations descend from these three sons of Noah.

Genesis 9:1 - "God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth."

Shem

First son of Noah, Shem is a very significant character. Shem and Japheth intervened to save their father's modesty when Ham discovered him drunk. Noah blessed Shem and Japheth for that. Ham's descendants, the Canaanites, were cursed to serve the descendants of both Shem and Japheth. That is why Abraham was given the land of Canaan. Abraham descended from Eber (source name of "Hebrew") who descended from Shem (source name of "Semite"). Jesus Christ descended from Shem.

Genesis 9:26 - "Blessed be the LORD God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant."

Canaan

The significance of the land of Canaan dates back to Noah. Ham discovered Noah drunk, then told his brothers. Noah blessed Shem and Japheth for protecting his modesty, but cursed Ham and his son Canaan. Canaan would become Shem's servant. As Shem's descendant, Abraham would be Canaan's master. That is why God gave the land of Canaan to Abraham. It included Sidon, Jerusalem, Gaza, Sodom, Galilee, Damascus and much

more.

Genesis 17:8 - "I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, ...all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession."

Arphaxad

Born two years after Noah's flood, Arphaxad was the father of Ura and Kesed who founded the ancient city of Ur of the Chaldees (according to an ancient extra-biblical source found among the Dead Sea Scrolls). In 1927, British archaeologist Leonard Woolley discovered the ancient ruins of Ur between Basra and Nasiriyah, Iraq, near Kuwait. Abraham came from there. Discoveries included vast riches of Sumerian artifacts, and ruins from the days of Belshazzar and Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon.

Genesis 11:10 - "Shem was an hundred years old, and begat Arphaxad two years after the flood."

Eber the Hebrew

The world knows the Jews as Hebrews. The Hebrew language is the only spoken language ever to return from extinction (in the 19th century), after being eradicated during the diaspora (dispersion) of Israel. Hebrew continued to be a major written language since antiquity, largely because of the Old Testament. Today, it is the official language of the State of Israel. The word "Hebrew" derives from Eber, great-grandson of Shem, (Noah's son), and grandfather of Abraham. Jesus spoke from heaven to Saul in the Hebrew tongue.

Genesis 14:13 - "...Abram the Hebrew."

Peleg - the earth divided

Here is the lineage: Noah, Shem, Arphaxad, Salah, Eber, Peleg. Little is known of Peleg except that in his days the earth was divided. Some say that the continents of earth moved to their present positions then, but that is unfounded speculation. Peleg's birth was near the days of Nimrod and the Tower of Babel. That is where the earth was really divided. God divided their languages.

1 Chronicles 1:19 - "...unto Eber were born two sons: the name of the one was Peleg; because in his days the earth was divided."

Nimrod

Nimrod was called "a mighty one in the earth," and "the mighty hunter before the LORD." His was the first kingdom mentioned in the Bible. It began with the Tower at Babel, then Erech, Accad, Calneh in the land of Shinar. Many outrageous myths exist about Nimrod, but nearly all references to him speak of rebellion. It is fair to say that Nimrod was one of the first to conduct military conquests and to be known as a tyrant dictator.

1 Chronicles 1:10 - "And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be mighty upon the earth."

The Fall of Babel

Nimrod spearheaded the project at the tower of Babel. Their purposes were ambitious: reach heaven, make a name for themselves, prevent being scattered abroad. Sounds like the devil's dream, too. But all the purposes of men will be disappointed. All man-made kingdoms will fall to the Kingdom of Jesus Christ at Armageddon.

Genesis 11:4 - "And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth."

Confusion of Tongues

One of the greatest ironies of all God's dealings with man is the contrast between the tower of Babel and the day of Pentecost. At Babel, God confused their tongues and scattered the people so they could not continue to work together. But on the day of Pentecost, God caused 120 believers to speak in unknown tongues to empower and unify them. What is confusion to man is crystal clear to God.

Genesis 11:9 - "Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth."

Asshur

Asshur was a person, a city (later called Nineveh), and the ancient Assyrian empire. Its founders came from Babel and Nimrod, who grievously turned their backs on the God of their forefather, Noah. They worshipped the goddess Ishtar. Assyria eventually became a vicious foe of Israel for centuries. Mosul, Iraq, is now the center of that region, sandwiched between Damascus, Syria and Tehran, Iran. These modern Assyrians are prophetically doomed. In Isaiah 14:25, God swore to destroy the Assyrian on His holy mount at Armageddon.

Genesis 10:11 - "Out of that land went forth Asshur, and builded Nineveh."

Ur of the Chaldees

Not all scholars agree, but the prevailing consensus is that Ur was in southern Mesopotamia - Iraq. Skeptics argue that the story of the Garden of Eden and Noah's Flood evolved from ancient Sumerian mythology of that region. Those bizarre myths were concocted after the flood by Noah's godless descendants. Their polytheistic pagan beliefs greatly offended God. That is why He called monotheistic Abram out and blessed him.

Genesis 15:7 - "I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it."

God of Nahor

We have heard the phrase, "The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," but how about the "God of Nahor"? Nahor was Abraham's grandfather. Nahor was 99 years old when Abraham was born, and died when Abraham was 49.

Nahor believed in the one true God, so certainly must have influenced Abraham's faith and calling. Eliezer found Rebekah for Isaac in Nahor's hometown. This scarcely-known grandfather surely had far greater impact than we have realized. Never underestimate your impact on others!

Genesis 31:53 - "The God of Abraham, and the God of Nahor..."

Terah

Abraham's father took his family from Ur of the Chaldees to Haran, Assyria (now in Turkey) - at the crossroads between Damascus, Nineveh and Carchemish, a prosperous community at that time. People there worshiped the moon god - Sin. God told Abraham to get out of there. Good advice.

Genesis 11:31 - "And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, ...and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there."

Abraham

Abraham was an Iraqi. He migrated to Syria. God called him to Israel. At least that is how it would look on today's map. God called Abraham to raise up a nation that would glorify Jehovah. He might have done it in Iraq or in Syria, but didn't. God planted Jews in Israel. Abraham would roll over in his grave if he knew all the hatred and warmongering among his grandchildren.

Genesis 12:1 - "...the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, ...unto a land that I will shew thee."

A Great Nation

Abraham and Sara were in their seventies and still childless when God promised that Abraham would become a great nation. Four centuries later, over a million of his descendants marched out of bondage in Egypt and made their way to the very land God promised Abraham. Within another 120 years, Kings David and Solomon would preside over one of the most glorious kingdoms in the history of man.

Genesis 12:2 - "And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing."

Name Changes

God changed Abram (exalted father) to Abraham (father of many nations). He changed Sarai (princess) to Sarah (princess of all). God changed Jacob (supplanter) to Israel (Prince with God). God caused the names of the twelve tribes to be engraved in precious stones on the high priests garment. Simon (reed) became Peter (rock). Saul (prayed for) to Paul (humble). In heaven, God gives His saints a new name written in a white stone. There the wicked will be forgotten because their names will be blotted out.

Genesis 12:2 - "...and I will bless thee, and make thy name great."

Abraham's Blessing

Over 4,000 years ago, God called Abram from Ur of the Chaldees (now in southern Iraq). For forsaking both homeland and family roots, God promised to make a great nation in which He would demonstrate divine blessing. The blessing trailed through Isaac and Jacob (Israel). Today, everyone who harms Israel, including the US, will be cursed for it. If you want God's blessing, bless Israel.

Genesis 12:3 - "And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

The Promised Land

God instructed Abraham to "Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee." We now call it the "Promised Land." Although many kings, nations, armies and terrorists would steal this land away from Israel, God is the original deed-holder, and every square inch will return to Him when He returns. Those who stole it from Israel will be destroyed.

Genesis 12:7 - "And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land."

Canaan Land

Abraham lived almost 2000 years before Christ. The land was Canaan. Many various tribes dwelled there, but God gave it to Abraham. The earth is the Lord's. He can give it to anyone He wants. Although 4000 years later, God will soon take the entire land by force.

Genesis 13:14-15 - "And the LORD said unto Abram, ...Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever."

What Will You Give Me?

Sometimes a believer knows in his heart that God will provide, but cannot imagine how that provision will come. Abraham boldly put the question to God, and God answered him very precisely. We should always have peace in our hearts, whether or not God reveals His future plan for our lives, but it is not necessarily wrong to ask God to reveal it to us. Ask!

Genesis 15:2 - "And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?"

A Son For Abraham

Abraham and Sara were old and barren, but God can work with anything. He resurrected many barren wombs in Bible days, and still does. In choosing Abraham, God was fulfilling a commitment made to the devil in the garden - a seed of woman would bruise Satan. God chose Abraham to be progenitor of that righteous seed. God's high calling overcomes all obstacles.

Genesis 15:4 - "...the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir."

Abraham's Posterity

God told Abraham that his seed would be as countless as the stars. Without doubt, there have been millions of Jews born throughout the centuries since that prophecy. But wait! All born-again believers in Jesus Christ; "...they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham," Galatians 3:7. That adds many millions more! God keeps His promises.

Genesis 15:5 - "And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be."

God's Covenant With Abraham

Noah's descendants turned their hearts to other gods who were no gods. God Almighty called Abram away from them to worship and serve one true God. For his obedience, God promised Abraham an impressive earthly inheritance - a vast homeland for his posterity. Modern enemies oppose it, but God will make it so when Jesus Christ returns.

Genesis 15:18 - "In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates."

Euphrates River

The Euphrates River flowed through the Garden of Eden. Abraham traversed it from Ur to Haran, Assyria. God promised Abraham's seed would possess everything from the Nile River to the Euphrates, including Lebanon, Syria and Iraq. First, world war must break out along the Euphrates - the Sixth Trumpet of Revelation. 1/3 of mankind will die. Finally, kings of the East will cross a dry Euphrates to face Jesus at Armageddon.

Deuteronomy 11:24 - "...from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the uttermost sea shall your coast be."

Promised Borders

The land promised to Abraham extends from the Egyptian Nile and Mediterranean Sea to the Euphrates River. The Euphrates flows through Turkey, Syria and Iraq, merging with the Tigris down the Iranian border. Today, Ishmaelites are fighting viciously for it, but God promised it to Isaac (Genesis 26:3), and Israel (Genesis 28:13). This Biblical clash of civilizations is apocalyptic. Jesus and His immortals will slaughter Israel's enemies in "shock and awe" at Armageddon.

Genesis 15:18 - "...the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land."

Ishmael

This story is enormously important today. One-fourth the world's population (Muslims) believe God's Abrahamic covenant was through Ishmael, not Isaac. But Ishmael was a surrogate child. His mother despised Sarai. He mocked Sarai. They both had bad attitudes. That is why they were cast away. God TOLD Abraham to put them away. God said Ishmael's descendants would be many, wild, and against every man. Abraham circumcised Ishmael at age 13, but today, the Qur'an does not teach circumcision.

Genesis 17:21 - "But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee."

Prophecies to the Ishmaelites

Sara made a huge mistake when she gave Hagar to Abraham for a surrogate wife. God fully intended to give Sara a child, but not by Hagar. Hagar and her child had to leave. The angel of the Lord named him Ishmael, and promised he would become an innumerable multitude. Today, the Ishmaelites comprise most of the Arab world, predominately Muslim.

Genesis 16:12 - "And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren."

Father of Many Kings

Abram means "Exalted Father." God changed his name to Abraham, "Father of Multitudes." Four kings, Saul, Ishbosheth, David, and Solomon ruled a united monarchy. Nineteen kings ruled Israel, twenty kings ruled the Judah. When Jesus rules as King of Kings from Jerusalem, multitudes of saints will rule the world as kings under Him - sons of Abraham!

Genesis 17:5,6 - "...thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee."

Shechem

The first Canaanite city Abram visited was Shechem (Sichem) - now known as Nablus. Two mountains there, Gerizim and Ebal are the mounts of blessing and cursing where Joshua read the Pentateuch out loud to the Israelites. Today, it is the headquarters of several Palestinian and Muslim terrorist organizations. God promised it to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Genesis 12:6,7 - "Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, ...and the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him."

Lot

God instructed Abraham to get "out of thy country, and from thy kindred." Why did his nephew, Lot, go with him? Lot's father, Haran, died in Ur. Perhaps Abraham felt responsible for him. But Lot's herdsmen strove with

Abraham's. Abraham eventually had to separate. Their collective herds were too large for the land. Abraham had to go to war to protect Lot when Sodom was attacked. Then Lot's wife was destroyed, and his daughters committed incest. Maybe Abraham should never have taken Lot with him.

Genesis 12:4 - "So Abram departed, ...and Lot went with him."

Abraham's Prayer

God called Abram to forsake all and follow Him. At Bethel, God made great promises that would eventually bring enormous blessings. Meanwhile, a famine drove Abraham down to Egypt temporarily. When he returned to Canaan, he sought out the place where God met him in the beginning. There, he called on the Lord, attempting to restore his original contact with God. Smart move! Always go back to God.

Genesis 13:4 - "Unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the LORD."

Hebron

Hebron is 18 miles south of Jerusalem, second-most Jewish city on earth. The king of Hebron launched an offensive against Joshua, but lost. Joshua gave Hebron to Caleb. Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob and Leah are buried there. David ruled there. Today, 166,000 Palestinians and 700 Jews live there. That Israel is giving it away is outrageous! Jesus will recapture it at Armageddon.

Genesis 13:17,18 - "...walk through the land, ...for I will give it unto thee. Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron."

Pitching Toward Sodom

There is a lot to be said for how you pitch your tent. Our predispositions forecast our destiny. Our attitudes presage our behavior. If we have an eye for the world, we will eventually follow it. If Abraham had kept his mind on his past, he might have gone back to Ur of the Chaldees. Lot was already in trouble by the time he pitched his tent toward Sodom. Be careful which way you face. Shun the very appearance of evil.

Genesis 13:12 - "...and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom."

First War

Lot pitched his tents toward Sodom. It was well-watered like the Garden of Eden, in the green plains of the Jordan River (Genesis 13:10-11). The local cities were under tribute twelve years to Persians (modern Iran) and Chaldeans (modern Iraq). The cities revolted against tribute, but the revolt failed. Sodom was ransacked. Lot was carried away captive. Abraham, with 318 warriors from his household, chased them to near Damascus.

Genesis 14:16 - "And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people."

Melchizedek

Abraham warred against (Iraq) and (Iran) to avenge their siege on Lot and the city of Sodom. He recovered people and possessions. Melchizedek brought bread, wine and blessings for Abraham, who gave him tithes of everything recovered. This Melchizedek, "king of Salem, priest of the most high God," was not Christ, but a type. Both were king and priest of Jeru-salem. Melchizedek's offering of bread and wine portended Jesus' offering body and blood at Calvary.

Psalms 110:4 - "The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek."

Shield and Reward

After Abraham heroically retrieved the hostages and spoils from the war against Sodom, Melchizedek blessed him. More significantly, the Lord appeared to Abraham in a vision and gave him priceless assurances. God promised to be his shield. Divine protection! What an amazing guarantee. Better than angelic guardians; God Himself would deflect the attacks against Abraham! No wonder his posterity (both Israel and the Church) cannot be annihilated, no matter how savage their enemies. And the reward? God Himself became his friend. Incomparable!

Genesis 15:1 - "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward."

Don't Stop Praying Too Soon

God was going to destroy the evil cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham began to make intercessory prayer for his relatives there. He asked God to save the city if He could find fifty righteous men. Then forty-five, forty, thirty, twenty. Finally, ten. Since there were not ten righteous men in Sodom, Abraham stopped praying. Abraham might have yet saved the city if he hadn't stopped praying.

Genesis 18:4 NAS - "...wilt thou not sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of fifty righteous that are in it?"

Lot's Wife

When God delivered Lot and his family from the destruction of Sodom, the angel instructed them not to look back. Tragically, Lot's wife looked back, and "she became a pillar of salt." Our generation would almost certainly fail that test. When God says, "Come out," He says, "touch not the unclean thing." God does not like to see us yearning for the things He delivered us from. Jesus said those who look back are not fit for the Kingdom. Be warned.

Genesis 19:17 - "Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, ...lest thou be consumed."

Lot's Daughters

Sodom was destroyed and God told Lot to go to Zoar. But Lot disobeyed. He and his daughters went into a mountain cave. His daughters complained of their isolation. They made their father drunk and both bore children by him. The older daughter bore Moab. The younger bore Benammi - father of the Ammonites. This pathetic incestuous scenario came about because of Lot's fears. Disobedience always comes at a high price.

Genesis 19:30 - "Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him; for he feared to dwell in Zoar."

Egyptian Bondage Prophesied

Believer, learn the way God operates! From the first, God warned Abraham that his descendants would suffer. We should not count it strange concerning the fiery trials of our lives. God ALWAYS puts His people to the test.

Genesis 15:13 - "And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance."

Horror of Great Darkness

Abraham spread a sacrificial offering before the Lord - a goat, lamb, turtledove and pigeon. At sundown, deep sleep and a horror of great darkness fell on him. God revealed a great plan foretelling Egyptian bondage and the birth of a nation.

Genesis 15:13,14 - "Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance."

Father of Many Nations

God told Abraham that he would be the father of many nations. Through his natural son, Isaac, came the nation of Israel, which later divided into the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. From his surrogate child, Ishmael, it is difficult to say exactly how many nations descended, since Ishmaelites comprise a large segment of the Arab world among the nations of the Middle East. Thirdly, the Gentile church is a holy nation, descended from the faith of Abraham.

Genesis 17:4 - "...and thou shalt be a father of many nations."

Circumcision

In Genesis 17:11, God told Abraham, "...ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you." For all the centuries to follow, Jewish males were circumcised in the foreskin of their flesh to confirm their covenant relationship with God. The ultimate purpose of the circumcision was to validate that Messiah was descended from Abraham. After Jesus Christ, circumcision became unnecessary.

Romans 15:8 - "Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the

circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers."

Sarai

The story of Sarai vastly outweighs the story of Hagar, as the story of Isaac outweighs the story of Ishmael. This Biblical story is diabolically perverted by the Koran. All God's promises and dealings with Abraham hinged upon his having a child by Sarai, not Hagar! God's covenant with Abraham would descend through his proper child, Isaac, not the surrogate, Ishmael.

Genesis 17:16 - "And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her."

Hagar

Since God had not given her children, Sarai offered her Egyptian maid to Abraham as a surrogate mother. Hagar despised Sarai after birthing Ishmael. Abraham instructed Sarai to handle Hagar. Sarai dealt harshly with Hagar, and she ran away. God made her return and submit. She stayed thirteen years, until Sarai bore Isaac. The day Sarai weaned Isaac, Ishmael mocked her. After Hagar's despite and Ishmael's mocking, Sarai demanded they be cast out.

Genesis 21:12 - "God said... all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called."

The Time of Life

Sarah was ninety years old when the LORD told Abraham she would conceive. They both laughed. But God had the last laugh. He ordered them to call the baby Isaac - "laughter." God works on a schedule, but we do not always know His schedule unless He chooses to tell us what it is. If God says, "nine months from now," get ready!

Genesis 18:13-15 - "Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son."

Isaac

Isaac inherited Abraham's divine covenant blessings. His mother was barren until the age of 90. God used that to prove the power of the covenant. Isaac's life appears to be relatively non-eventful when compared to many other great characters in the Bible. But his significance cannot be overstated. Dismissing Ishmael, God called Isaac Abraham's "only son."

Genesis 26:3 - "I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I swore unto Abraham thy father."

Thine Only Son Isaac

For twenty-five years Abraham waited on the prophecy to be fulfilled. Finally, at the age of 100, Isaac was born. The episode with Hagar and Ishmael were completely impertinent to the prophecy. God wrote them out of the story line. Abraham's posterity and blessing would only be in Isaac. Today, Ishmael's descendants are fighting viciously for Isaac's inheritance. Only God can and will see to its fulfillment.

Genesis 22:2 - "And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah."

Himself A Lamb

When Abraham took Isaac to Mount Moriah to make sacrifice, Isaac wanted to know where the sacrifice was. "God will provide himself a lamb," his father told him. Surely enough, the angel intervened before Abraham could slay Isaac, and a lamb appeared nearby as a substitute. This was powerfully prophetic of Jesus Christ. At the river Jordan, many centuries later, John the Baptist saw Jesus and exclaimed, "Behold, the Lamb of God!"

Genesis 22:8 - "And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together."

Jehovah Jireh

"The Lord - Provider" is the name God revealed to Abraham on Mount Moriah. Testing his loyalty, God instructed Abraham to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, on an altar. When God saw Abraham's obedience, His angel halted the sacrifice AND provided a ram caught in a bush to sacrifice in Isaac's place. The lamb foreshadowed God again providing salvation for His saints when Jesus returns to Mount Moriah.

Genesis 22:14 - "Abraham called the name of that place Jehovahjireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen."

God's Covenant With Isaac

Mohammed deceptively convinced the Arab world that Ishmael was heir to God's covenant with Abraham. But Ishmael was surrogate-born. Isaac was legitimately born of Abraham's proper wife. God explicitly established the everlasting covenant with Isaac and his descendants. Moses put it in writing 3,400 years ago, 2,000 years before Mohammed.

Genesis 17:19,21 - "And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him."

Hagar the Egyptian

Some people argue that Arabs are not Ishmael's true descendants because Hagar was a black Egyptian, given to Abraham by Pharaoh. That argument won't stand, since his father was the first Jew. But Mohammed corrupted the story of Ishmael, claiming he and Abraham built the Kaaba, in Mecca. The whole proposition is preposterous. For centuries, it was a pagan temple of idols. Abraham sent Hagar and Ishmael AWAY to Paran, a wilderness site (where Moses and Israel later camped) - NOT to Mecca.

Genesis 16:1 - "...she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar."

Hagar's Exile

Islam diabolically contradicts many Biblical truths concretely established for 2000 years before Mohammed was born. The Bible says Ishmael still lived with Abraham and Sarah at thirteen. The Koran says angel Gabriel took Hagar and suckling baby Ishmael on a flying horse (Al-Buraq) to a well named ZamZam at Mecca, Saudi Arabia where they say Abraham built the Kaaba (house of Allah) around a meteorite stone, on a foundation built by Adam and Eve. Never happened!

Genesis 17:25 - "Ishmael his son was thirteen years old, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin."

Ishmael's Circumcision

Even though Abraham circumcised Ishmael when the boy was thirteen years old, Ishmael's descendants do not practice circumcision as a matter of their religious faith today. The Koran, which purports to be the religion of the Ishmaelites, does not teach circumcision. Only a small portion of Muslims practice circumcision. This is one of the best evidences they are not the true heirs of Abraham. Messiah had to be circumcised to inherit the covenant.

Genesis 17:11 - "...ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you."

Angels On Assignment

Three angels appearing as men visited Abraham. One had messages from the Lord confirming Sarah's pregnancy with Isaac. The other two were sent to judge sinful Sodom. God was blessing His favored, and cursing His despised. God will visit those who willingly sacrifice their lives to do His purpose and plan.

Genesis 18:2 - "...three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground. v. 17 And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?"

Dinner with God

Abraham was no dummy. When angels showed up at his door, he knew something divine was going on. He instantly put extreme hospitality into motion. An old gospel song asked, "If Jesus came to your house..." what would you do? Not many people nowadays would even recognize Him if He came in the flesh. What did YOU do the last time He visited you?

Genesis 18:8 - "And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat."

For I Know Him

God knew Abraham's heart. That is a big reason why He chose him. God knew that if He blessed Abraham, He could count on him to command his children in the ways of the Lord. Every godly parent should possess this trait. It is the prerequisite to future blessings.

Genesis 18:19 - "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him."

The Destruction of Sodom

The Contemporary English Bible renders Genesis 19:4-5 thus: "Before Lot and his guests could go to bed, every man in Sodom, young and old, came and stood outside his house and started shouting, "Where are your visitors? Send them out, so we can have sex with them!" God already knew their wicked hearts. That is why the angels came - to destroy it!

Genesis 19:13 - "For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD; and the LORD hath sent us to destroy it."

Beersheba

Beersheba is a significant town in south-central Israel - in the Negev desert. It was an important landmark for Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. Abraham and Isaac dug water wells there, and made peace treaties with Abimelech of nearby Gerar. Hagar and Ishmael lived in the wilderness near Beersheba. Jacob left there to go to Joseph in Egypt. Today it is a great city of 185,000 people, mostly Jews. "From Dan to Beersheba" meant "all Israel, from north to south."

Genesis 21:33 - "...Abraham planted a grove in Beersheba, and called there on the name of the LORD."

Abimelech's Dream

God often speaks prophetically to people in dreams and visions. When Abimelech, King of Gerar, took Sarah from Abraham's household, he was not informed that she was Abraham's wife. But God set the record straight. Every woman in his household was barren as long as Sarah was there. When Abimelech obeyed the dream, the curse was lifted.

Genesis 20:3 - "But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold, thou art but a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she is a man's wife."

Abimelech of Gerar

Abimelech took Sarah from Abraham. God shut the wombs of the women in his household. Then God told Abimelech he was a dead man if he touched Sarah - she was a man's wife. Abimelech asked Abraham why he said she was his sister. "I thought they would slay me for my wife's sake." Abimelech returned Sarah unharmed, gave Abraham sheep, oxen, menservants,

womenservants and a thousand pieces of silver, then said, "my land is before thee, dwell where it pleaseth thee." Divine intervention!

Genesis 20:7 - "...restore the man his wife; for he is a prophet."

Pray To Remove A Curse

King Abimelech took Sarah into his household, not knowing she was Abraham's wife. God caused all the women in his household to become barren, and warned him that he was a dead man if he touched Sarah. God ordered the king to have Abraham pray for him to cure the offense. God really does move to protect his chosen people. Even so, he directs us to pray for divine intervention. When Abraham prayed, the women's barrenness was cured.

Genesis 20:7 - "...and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live."

Possessing the Enemies' Gates

One promise God gave Abraham was that his descendants would possess their enemies' gates. That pretty much solves the problems of enemies. He said He would curse those who cursed His people. It is best not to fight against God's people because that is a sure guarantee you will be conquered.

Genesis 22:17 - "That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies."

Cave of Machpelah

Sarah died in Hebron about 3700 years ago. There Abraham bought the field and cave of Machpelah from the sons of Heth to bury her. Today, the cave sits under a 2000-year-old building. Around 700 years ago, Muslims turned the place into a Mosque. Israel retook the property in 1967, but Moslems still manage it. It also contains the graves of Abraham, Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob and Leah.

Genesis 23:19-20 - "Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre: the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan."

A Bride for Isaac

Abraham sent his servant to Mesopotamia to find a wife for Isaac. Eliezer wondered what to do if he could not find one, but Abraham prophesied his success. God's angel delivered. Rebekah came eagerly.

Genesis 24:7 - "The LORD God of heaven, which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence."

Eliezer's Prayer

Abraham's servant was charged with finding a wife for Isaac, and worried

what the consequences would be if he could not find her. He asked God to prosper his mission, even specifying the terms. Amazingly, God did exactly as he asked. At the well, the perfect girl was waiting.

Genesis 24:42-44 - "And I came this day unto the well, and said, O LORD God of my master Abraham, if now thou do prosper my way which I go: ...let the same be the woman whom the LORD hath appointed out for my master's son."

Eliezer

Abraham sent his eldest servant (presumably his steward, Eliezer) to find a wife for Isaac in the homeland of his grandfather, Nahor, in Mesopotamia. At one time, Eliezer had been the heir to Abraham's wealth, but after Isaac was born, that changed. Nevertheless, Eliezer was privileged to see God working miraculously for his master. I am thinking of the prodigal son who said, "How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare." Any place in God's service is good.

Genesis 15:2 - "...the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus."

Two Nations - Twins!

A major prophecy seemed in jeopardy of failing. Isaac's wife, Rebekah, was barren! Suddenly, God provided - twins! Even before they were born, God foretold their future. The elder would serve the younger. Hundreds of years later, under King David, Esau's Edomites were conquered by Jacob's Israel (2 Samuel 8:14).

Genesis 25:23 - "...the LORD said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger."

Sell Me Thy Birthright

Maybe this doesn't look like a prophecy, but think about it. Esau sold his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of beans. Obviously, Esau did not comprehend the true value of a birthright. We are talking about divine posterity - something only Almighty God can assure. Let Esau's descendants rage! Jacob owns the blessing outright. A deal is a deal. Isaac laid his hand on Jacob and transferred it to him irrevocably.

Genesis 25:33 - "And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob."

Heel-grabber

The birth of Isaac's twins was ominous. Jacob, came from the womb grabbing the heel of the firstborn, Esau. Jacob's name means 'supplanter; one who usurps or takes the place of another.' In time, Jacob did supplant Esau, buying his birthright for a bowl of beans, then tricking his father to lay hands on him for the family blessing. His strong desire for the birthright, which included God's covenants with Abraham and Isaac, impressed God, despite his unscrupulous methods.

Romans 9:13 - "As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."

A Bowl Of Beans

Look at the modern State of Israel. Then contemplate its 3600-year history. Scores of large cities. Scores of great kings. Millions of people. The overall impact of Israel on the world stage is inestimable. Great scientists, inventors, financiers, artists, musicians, politicians, etc. Jews have played a major role in nearly every nation on earth. And Esau gave it all up for a bowl of beans.

Genesis 25:34 - "Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright."

Go Not Down To Egypt

Everybody knows about God's promises to Abraham to bless and multiply his seed and inherit the promised land. But God made important prerequisites to those prophecies. Abraham must obey His commandments, statutes and laws, AND he must NOT go down to Egypt. He must trust God during famine in the land. Likewise, we must obey God and be in His chosen place before we can claim His promises.

Genesis 26:2 - "...the LORD appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of."

God Speaks to Isaac

Technically, God's promise would never have to be repeated to be valid. God keeps His word. But God chose to deliver the Abrahamic covenant first-hand and personally to Isaac. God has no grandchildren. He is Father to every generation, including yours and mine. His word speaks freshly to us today.

Genesis 26:24 - "And the LORD appeared unto him the same night, and said, I am the God of Abraham thy father: fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham's sake."

Blessing Time

Isaac was old and blind, and his days were numbered. He called Esau to prepare a special meal, after which he would give his eldest son the family blessing. But Esau had already despised the birthright, sold it to Jacob, and married a Hittite woman. Rebekah and Jacob carefully intercepted the blessing. They "pulled out all the stops" for Jacob. If you want the blessing, fight for it.

Genesis 27:4 - "And make me savoury meat, such as I love, and bring it to me, that I may eat; that my soul may bless thee before I die."

Rebekah's Intercession

Isaac and Rebekah were grieved by Esau's marriage to a Hittite woman. Rebekah determined that the family inheritance should pass to Jacob. She

plotted in Jacob's behalf to get the blessing from dying Isaac. It was a risky venture. What if Isaac discovered he was being deceived? She felt it was worth the risk, and was willing to take the blame if it failed. We need more mothers who will fight for righteousness. God loved it.

Genesis 27:13 - "...his mother said unto him, Upon me be thy curse, my son: only obey my voice."

Venison for a Prayer

Rebekah and Jacob committed a fraudulent deception against Isaac. She cooked goat meat to taste like Esau's venison. They put goat skins on Jacob's arms to simulate hairy Esau. Jacob blatantly lied to his blind father: "I am Esau..." Jacob wanted Isaac to pronounce the blessing on him. Esau despised it. How far will you go to secure the blessing of God? Isaac's prayer of blessing was the coveted prize.

Genesis 27:28 - "Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine."

Fleeing Esau

Esau threatened to kill Jacob for stealing the family blessing. Rebekah had pushed Jacob into the situation, then she had to urge Jacob to flee. Sometimes situations seem to deteriorate before they get better. Nevertheless, Jacob's flight took him to Laban, where he met and married his wives and he became the father of the "twelve tribes of Israel." It is not uncommon in the will of God for things to get worse before they get better.

Genesis 27:43 - "Now therefore, my son, obey my voice; and arise, flee thou to Laban my brother to Haran."

Father's Prayer

As Isaac sent Jacob away, he blessed him with a prayer over him. Jacob was headed to Haran to find his mother's brother, Laban. His first encounter was while he was yet afar off. He met Rachel in a field, as she was tending sheep. It was love at first sight. God had everything arranged for Jacob before he ever left home. Even so, our prayers of faith are preparing the way for those we love. Have faith in God.

Genesis 28:3 - "And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee."

Jacob's Inheritance

Here is a written record, authored by Moses, from over 3,000 years ago, that Isaac passed Abraham's blessing to Jacob, including the deed to the promised land. Islam hotly contests this claim, but it is at least 2,000 years older than Islam. Mohammed's counter-claims are illegitimate. God will confirm Israel's claim to the land originally given to Abraham.

Genesis 28:4 - "And give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham."

God Visits Jacob

The Lord appeared to Jacob in a dream. The covenant with Abraham suddenly became the covenant with Jacob. Even if Abraham had never lived, Jacob now has a promise from God. In his lifetime, Jacob will see his descendants migrate to Egypt, but there is a promise they will be back to the land of the covenant.

Genesis 28:13 - "And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed."

Jacob's Vow

After the Lord appeared to Jacob at Bethel, making covenant, Jacob reciprocated with a vow of his own. Jacob lived his life devoted to the God of his fathers. 3500 years later, a great nation still witnesses to that relationship.

Genesis 28:20,21 - "And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God."

I Will Not Leave Thee

When God spoke to Jacob in the dream at Bethel, he prophesied of Israel being scattered to the North, South, East and West. Then He said, "I will bring thee again into this land." That was a prophecy for 3,700 years later, fulfilled in 1948 when the modern State of Israel was born. The United Nations, with Resolution 181, fulfilled a divine mandate, opening the door for God's people to return to their homeland.

Genesis 28:15 - "...I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of."

Bethel

Abraham's first stop in Canaan land was a place called Luz (looz), ten miles north of Jerusalem. Jacob saw the ladder into heaven there. Later, Jacob wrestled the angel there, who renamed him Israel. He renamed the place Bethel, which means "house of God" (beth=house, el=God). Samuel confirmed Saul as Israel's first king there. King Jeroboam worshipped a golden calf there, an unnamed prophet condemned his altar there, and centuries later, Josiah destroyed the altar and the bones of Jeroboam's false prophets there.

Genesis 28:19 - "And he called the name of that place Bethel."

Laban

Jacob's encounter with Laban was a prophetic fulfillment. Although Jacob was forced to flee as a fugitive from Esau's jealous rage, God was working

for his good. We must not panic when God forces us out of a comfortable situation into a foreign environment. It just might be our divine destiny. Jacob found his wives, and the twelve tribes were born.

Genesis 29:13 - "And it came to pass, when Laban heard the tidings of Jacob his sister's son, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him, and kissed him, and brought him to his house."

The Deceiver is Deceived

Jacob offered to serve Laban seven years for Rachel's hand in marriage. Seven years later, the old man pulled a fast one on Jacob. He woke up after the honeymoon to find the older daughter, Leah, instead of his desired Rachel. The beguiler was beguiled. Years later, Laban continued the deceit, and Jacob had to leave. What goes around, comes around. If you want truth, deal truthfully.

Genesis 29:25 - "...he said to Laban, What is this thou hast done unto me? did not I serve with thee for Rachel? wherefore then hast thou beguiled me?"

Rachel's Distress

Laban made Jacob marry his oldest daughter, Leah, before he could take Rachel, the younger. Leah had four sons, but Rachel was barren. She verbalized her despair to God in prayer. After some time, she gave her handmaiden to Jacob, who then bore Dan. Dan, meaning "judge," became a tribe known for its judges, including Samson. Their homeland was the northern-most territory of Israel, above Galilee, against Lebanon.

Genesis 30:6 - "Rachel said, God hath judged me, and hath also heard my voice, and hath given me a son: therefore called she his name Dan."

Little Is Much

Jacob was far from home, fugitive from an angry brother, yet God was with him. His flocks multiplied miraculously. Sometimes our circumstances are mixed - hardship or tragedy on one hand; blessing on the other. Quit your pessimism. If God be for us, who can be against us? What is in thy hand? God will bless and multiply it! Little is much when God is in it.

Genesis 30:30 - "...it was little which thou hadst before I came, and it is now increased unto a multitude; and the LORD hath blessed thee since my coming."

Receiving Instructions

Prayer is a two-way street. We pray today. God may speak tomorrow. After Jacob spent twenty years in Laban's household, things went sour. Laban became adversarial. God spoke to Jacob and instructed him to leave. It was a defining moment of Jacob's life. If we want to receive instructions of that kind, we need a heart that desires to hear His voice. We need God's point of view.

Genesis 31:3 - "And the LORD said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee."

God Has Been With Me

Jacob had many problems with Laban. After serving seven years to marry Rachel, Laban gave him Leah instead, and made him serve seven more for Rachel. Then Jacob negotiated to take the "ring-straked and spotted" livestock, and leave the rest to Laban. Laban was enraged when the herds multiplied in Jacob's favor. But trouble makers in our lives can't win when God is with us.

Genesis 31:5 - "...I see your father's countenance, that it is not toward me as before; but the God of my father hath been with me."

Here Am I

Laban was making life difficult for Jacob, so Jacob had to make a deal with him to allow him to have all the "ring-straked and spotted" livestock. As soon as the deal was made, God intervened. Nearly all the cattle began to be "ring-straked and spotted." This was no accident. God clearly spoke with Jacob about the matter, and Jacob affirmed that he and God had discussed it. Conversations with God are profitable.

Genesis 31:11 - "And the angel of God spake unto me in a dream, saying, Jacob: And I said, Here am I."

Manifest Destiny

When Jacob began to leave Laban, after twenty years of service, Laban would have forbid it, and would have kept everything, including his daughters. But when God pronounces certain destiny over a life, such as Jacob's, nothing and nobody can stop it. Blessing and cursing are sovereign irresistible powers of God.

Genesis 31:42 - "Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely thou hadst sent me away now empty. God hath seen mine affliction and the labour of my hands, and rebuked thee yesternight."

Jacob's Prayer

Jacob was plainly terrified of seeing Esau again. Twenty years earlier, Esau threatened to kill him. Jacob humbled himself and earnestly prayed to God, reminding Him of His promises to return him home safely. He begged God to help him. That night, Jacob met and wrestled with the angel that renamed him "Israel." Everything worked out excellently with Esau after that.

Genesis 32:11 - "Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children."

Jacob's Name Change

One of the most notable events in human history is Jacob's name change. Dreading confrontation with Esau after twenty years of exile, Jacob prayed

desperately for God's help. That night, an angel wrestled fiercely with Jacob, permanently injuring his thigh joint. Jacob said, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." Today's headlines contain the name spoken by the angel - ISRAEL.

Genesis 32:28 - "And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed."

Lead on Softly

By the grace of God, Jacob and Esau reconciled beautifully. Jacob gave him generous gifts, and they blessed each other before parting ways. Jacob's anxiety was relieved. Peacefulness settled over him. From there on, he could relax and head for the promised land. They could travel at a leisure pace for the cattle and children. God diffused the crisis. When we finally see God's hand working, we can relax and travel on.

Genesis 33:14 - "I will lead on softly, according as the cattle that goeth before me and the children be able to endure."

Jacob Buys Land at Shechem

God promised Shechem to Abraham and his descendants. Years later, Jacob bought land there for his family. Shechem became a highly significant city throughout Bible days. Joseph visited his brethren there before being sold to slavery. Later, he was buried there. Many Bible stories occurred there, but Palestinians now control it (modern Nablus). Jesus will certainly reclaim it soon at Armageddon.

Genesis 33:19 - "And he bought a parcel of a field, where he had spread his tent, at the hand of the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for an hundred pieces of money."

Jacob Takes Ownership

Laban and Esau were behind now, so Jacob could take his family and flocks home to the promised land. He stopped for a while at Succoth, east of Jordan, and built shelters for cattle. But shortly, he purchased land from Shechem and for the first time, owned part of the promised land. Shechem is nestled between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim - where Joshua pronounced blessing and cursing. Sooner or later, God's promises always come to pass.

Genesis 33:20 - "And he erected there an altar, and called it Elelohe-Israel (God - the God of Israel)."

You Made Me Stink

Jacob settled family and flocks on promised land in Shechem. But daughter Dinah was raped by the son of the king of Shechem. Jacob's sons mindlessly murdered and plundered the entire city. Over-reacting to tragedy doubles the loss.

Genesis 34:30 - 'And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites

and the Perizzites: and I being few in number, they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house."

Clean Up Your Act

Calamity struck Jacob at Shechem. His daughter was raped by the king's son. His sons murderously retaliated against the Shechemites. They had to flee the region. God called Jacob back to Bethel for spiritual revival.

Genesis 35:2-5 - "Jacob said unto his household..., Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments: ...And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears; ...and the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them."

Altar and Offerings at Bethel

After being displaced from Shechem, Jacob returned the "the house of God," Bethel. He built an altar and made offerings to the Lord. Shortly thereafter, his precious wife, Rachel, died giving birth to Benjamin, and soon his father, Isaac, died. Our inevitable tragedies are much easier to bear when we have already been to the altar beforehand. Why not consecrate today?

Genesis 35:14 - "And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he talked with him, even a pillar of stone: and he poured a drink offering thereon, and he poured oil thereon."

Jacob's Deed

God's covenant with Abraham passed to Isaac, then Jacob and his seed. Numerous accounts in the book of Genesis reiterate this fact. This has to be one of the oldest real estate deeds on earth.

Genesis 35:11-12 - "And God said unto him, I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins; And the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land."

Leah and Rachel

Marriage laws did not exist prior to Moses' trip to Sinai. Polygamy was commonplace. Jacob married Leah and Rachel. Rachel was initially barren, so she gave her handmaiden, Bilhah to Jacob as a surrogate. Later, Leah "left off bearing," so gave Zilpah, her handmaiden to Jacob. The four wives bore twelve sons to Jacob - the twelve tribes of Israel.

Genesis 35:23-26 - "The sons of Leah; Reuben, ...Simeon, ...Levi, ...Judah, ...Issachar, and Zebulun: The sons of Rachel; Joseph, and Benjamin: And the sons of Bilhah, ...Dan, and Naphtali: And the sons of Zilpah, ...Gad, and Asher."

Esau is Edom

God knew in advance that Esau was not going to work out. Esau went to

strange nations to find wives. He settled east of Jordan, in the region of Mount Seir. His descendants became known as Edom - the Edomites. When Moses came through with the children of Israel, the Edomites would not let them through. Esau's grandchildren, the Amalekites, were first to declare war on the children of Israel. Many of Esau's descendants became enemies of Israel.

Genesis 36:9 - "And these are the generations of Esau the father of the Edomites in mount Seir."

Joseph

Jacob's favorite son was Rachel's firstborn - Joseph. His brothers were jealous and hostile toward him because of his father's favor. At seventeen years old, Joseph dreamed two dreams that would eventually catapult him into world recognition for all time. Think of it! A divinely-ordered, profoundly significant destiny was inaugurated in a seventeen year-old boy. It all began with his father's love. We should take extreme care to pronounce blessings on those we love!

Genesis 37:5 - "And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more."

Coat of Many Colors

Men often resent those who receive special favor. Joseph's brothers hated his father's favor. Korah hated Moses' favor. Saul hated David's favor. Along with God's favor comes a heavy burden of the reproach of men. People commit grievous acts against those who have favor. Lucifer killed Jesus on that premise. That is why true saints have to suffer: "Hated for my name's sake."

Genesis 37:3 - "Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours."

"I Pray You..."

The ancient people often used the phrase, "I pray you..." or "I pray thee..." to solicit the kind consideration of their requests of others. It was as if they were either afraid of the other person or were, in effect, begging for merciful consideration. Unfortunately, making a prayerful request of ordinary men does not always elicit a favorable response. Joseph must have hoped his family would rejoice with him, but they did not. Make your prayers to God instead.

Genesis 37:6 - "And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed."

Deception

If Reuben had not argued in his defense, his brethren would have killed Joseph in rabid jealousy. Instead, they held him captive in a dry well before selling him into slavery. To cover their sins, they deceived Jacob to believe his son had been killed by a wild animal. If you stand for God, your enemies may use outrageous, diabolical tactics to destroy you. They may deceive

others, but they cannot fool God. God judges righteously.

Genesis 37:31 - "And they took Joseph's coat, and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood."

Judah

Judah, fourth son of Jacob, opposed his brothers' scheme to kill Joseph. He suggested that they could sell him as a slave. Throughout history, Jewish rabbis have argued that Judah should have saved Joseph from his brethren and returned him to his father, Jacob. Instead, Judah is blamed for Joseph's plight. Many think the death of Judah's wife and two sons was divine retribution for Judah's behavior.

Genesis 37:26,27 - "And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood? Come, and let us sell him..."

Onan

Judah had three sons by a daughter of Shuah: Er, Onan and Shelah. Er married Tamar, God slew him for being a wicked man. Tradition demanded that his brother take the widow and give her children for his brother's posterity. Onan laid with Tamar, but would not give her a child. God slew him for that.

Genesis 38:9 - "And Onan knew that the seed should not be his; and it came to pass, when he went in unto his brother's wife, that he spilled it on the ground, lest that he should give seed to his brother."

Tamar

Poor Tamar! Married Er. He died. Judah gave her Onan. He died, too! Judah promised his third son, Shelah. She waited, childless, for years. Judah never delivered. Tamar tricked Judah into lying with her by posing as a wayside harlot. Later, his servants reported that Tamar was pregnant from whoredom. Judah ordered her to be burned, until she revealed that HE was the father of her twins - Pharez and Zarah! Pharez became grandfather to Boaz, David, and Messiah.

Genesis 38:26 - "Judah...said, She hath been more righteous than I; because that I gave her not to Shelah my son."

Sweet Adversity

When a man is fulfilling his prophetic destiny, even the bad times are good. Although Joseph's brethren hated him and sold him to slave-traders, God's purpose could not be averted. "For we know that ALL things work together for the good..." Like Daniel in Babylon, God never loses track of a faithful man, even in the most evil places. The blessing follows.

Genesis 39:4 - "And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand."

Can't Keep A Good Man Down

They threw Joseph in a pit to die, but God pulled him out. Potiphar bought him for a common slave, but God exalted him. Potiphar's wife falsely charged him with attempted rape and sent him to prison, but God raised him from prison to Egypt's throne. When prophetic purpose is working, nothing can stand in its way. Hell cannot prevail when God has already defined your future.

Genesis 39:21 - "But the LORD was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison."

The Butler and the Baker

It is so impossible for us to know ahead of time how wonderfully God is working in our lives. Joseph, in prison after being falsely accused of attempted rape, met two of Pharaoh's servants. Joseph would interpret a dream for each. One would live and one would die. But most importantly, God would use that occasion to exalt Joseph to the throne of Egypt.

Genesis 40:1 - "And it came to pass after these things, that the butler of the king of Egypt and his baker had offended their lord the king of Egypt."

Prayer Not Needed?

It seems conspicuous that many significant Bible stories make no direct mention of a component of prayer. For example, there are no specific references to particular prayers in the story of Joseph. That does not mean that Joseph did not pray or need to pray, just that God works sovereignly from His throne and is not hostage to our prayers or our prayerlessness. Anyone who prays and seeks God's will daily will see God lead on, as Joseph did.

Genesis 41:14 - "Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon."

Joseph's Gift

From his childhood, God spoke to Joseph in dreams and supernatural revelations. God revealed that he would be exalted above his own family. Years later, God interpreted the dreams of Pharaoh's butler and baker to Joseph, and eventually, the dreams of Pharaoh himself. Joseph denied that it was a human ability. Joseph's insights came from his personal and intimate communion with God. We, too, may discover amazing insights in prayerful, contemplative times with Him.

Genesis 41:16 - "And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace."

Pharaoh's Dreams

God showed Joseph the meaning of Pharaoh's dreams. Seven lean cows devoured seven fat cows. Seven withered ears of corn devoured seven full ears of corn. It meant that Egypt would have seven years of bounty followed by seven years of famine. God showed Pharaoh and Joseph things to come,

and God would use Joseph to save multitudes in those days, both Egyptians and children of Israel.

Genesis 41:32 - "And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass."

Pharaoh

Pharaoh was almost always antagonistic to the Hebrews. But in the story of Joseph, he was a protagonist. When a man's ways please the Lord, God causes that man's enemies to be at peace with him.

Genesis 41:39-41 - "Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art: Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou. ...I have set thee over all the land of Egypt."

Corn in Egypt

The famine in Canaan was no accident. God was orchestrating an epic story. God had warned Abraham many years earlier that his descendants would become strangers in a land that was not theirs. Now it was about to begin, but they had not a clue. Israel would be forced to Egypt to survive. But Joseph was already there with their salvation. So was God.

Genesis 42:2 - "And he said, Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt: get you down thither, and buy for us from thence; that we may live, and not die."

Dreams Remembered

When Joseph's brothers showed up on Egypt's doorsteps, it must have been an awesome sight for Joseph. A million thoughts must have crossed his mind. They did not recognize him. He could have easily avenged himself of all their past cruelties. But he only toyed with them. He knew that God was in the whole matter. By God's will, he would be their wealthy benefactor.

Genesis 42:9 - "And Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them, and said unto them, Ye are spies; to see the nakedness of the land ye are come."

Reckoning Day

Jacob's sons hated Joseph because of his dreams. The dreams said they would bow to him. They determined that it would never happen. They would kill him if necessary to prevent it. But Judah pressed them only to sell him to slavery. They thought they were done with Joseph. But God was not through with them. It was all for a purpose. It does not pay to resist God's plan for your life. Sooner or later, reckoning day will come.

Genesis 43:18 - "And the men were afraid, because they were brought into Joseph's house."

Benjamin

Joseph's dear mother, Rachel, was dead, and he had not seen his little brother, Benjamin, for more than twenty years. He yearned to see him. When the older brothers came to Egypt for corn, Joseph threatened them not to come back without Benjamin or they would be convicted as spies. Someday, Benjamin would be a very great tribe, but first, Joseph would be his savior.

Genesis 43:29-30 - "And he lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, ...he sought where to weep; and he entered into his chamber, and wept there."

Subtle Clues

If we could always see how God is working in our lives, we would never doubt Him. Joseph's brothers marveled that they had been seated at Joseph's banquet table in perfectly chronological order, oldest to the youngest. That was a subtle clue that somebody knew them intimately. They did not yet realize that their host was their long-lost brother, or that God was working magnificently in their behalf.

Genesis 43:33 - "And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth: and the men marveled one at another."

Enslaved to Save Lives

Joseph sent his brothers away with the money they paid him hidden in their grain sacks, including Joseph's silver cup in Benjamin's sack. Then his servants arrested them and charged them with theft. But Joseph dropped the charges. "I am Joseph," he weepingly confessed. Their old sins against Joseph turned out for everyone's good. Same for us. God has a glorious outcome for all our sufferings..

Genesis 45:5 - "Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life."

Goshen

Joseph knew God had put him through his trials in Egypt to preserve the posterity of Israel. "...it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt." Joseph gave them the fertile land of Goshen.

Genesis 45:10 - "And thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast."

God Pays Moving Expenses

If and when God wants you to move, He will make a way. Do not fret the details. God will provide.

Genesis 45:19-21 - "Now thou art commanded, this do ye; take you wagons out of the land of Egypt for your little ones, and for your wives, and bring your father, and come. Also regard not your stuff; for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours. And the children of Israel did so: and Joseph gave them wagons, according to the commandment of Pharaoh, and gave them provision for the way."

Fainting from Unbelief

Unbelief is a killer, and it can kill otherwise great men. Double-minded men are unstable in all their ways. Either God is everything He says He is, or He is a liar. It is up to you to get a hold on the truth of the matter. Nobody else can do it for you. Tell Jacob that Joseph is still alive. Don't doubt it. Rejoice!

Genesis 45:26 - "And told him, saying, Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt. And Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not."

Seventy Souls

Seventy souls entered Egypt - Jacob's immediate family. 430 years later, they left Egypt as a great nation. 600,000 military-aged men were accounted at Sinai, suggesting a total population of around two million who followed Moses across the Red Sea. Chances are, Israel would never have multiplied intact had they remained nomads in Canaan. God sent them to Egypt to prepare them for the Promised Land. Do you feel your circumstances do not make sense? Trust God!

Genesis 46:27 - "...all the souls of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt, were threescore and ten."

Ephraim and Manasseh

Joseph begat his children in Egypt's royal household; Manasseh, "causing to forget," and Ephraim, "double fruit." When grandfather Jacob came to Egypt and met his two new grandsons, he adopted them both. Afterward, Joseph's tribe was listed as two tribes - Ephraim and Manasseh. The priestly tribe, Levi, had no land inheritance, so there were still twelve tribes listed.

Genesis 48:5 - "And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt before I came unto thee into Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine."

Jacob Blesses Joseph and Sons

You can pronounce a blessing on others with special prayer. When Joseph presented his two sons to Jacob, the old man should have put his right hand on Manasseh the older, but instead he switched them. He gave the first blessing to the younger son, just like his own father had done.

Genesis 48:16 - "The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth."

Jacob Prophecies to Joseph

Although God forewarned Abraham that his descendants would suffer bondage for hundreds of years, He never planned for the children of Israel to stay in Egypt permanently. God raised up a holy nation in the midst of the hostile political climate of Pharaoh, greatest king in the world at that time. Here is the lesson: This world is not our home. God has a better land for all His children.

Genesis 48:21 - "And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die: but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers."

One Portion Above Thy Brethren

Bible scholars suppose that Jacob left Shechem specifically to Joseph. He is, in fact, now buried there. Jacob bought the land when first returning from Laban, but apparently the Amorites took it from him, and he had to retake it by the sword. Today, it is Nablus, a power-center for Muslim extremism in the Middle East. Jesus will retake it following Armageddon.

Genesis 48:22 - "Moreover I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow."

Jacob the Prophet

Jacob was a true prophet - a seer. He knew God's working in his own life, but he could also see what God was doing in his twelve sons. The forty-ninth chapter of Genesis records Jacob's prophetic pronouncements on each of the twelve tribes. Reuben will not excel. Simeon and Levi will divide and scatter. In Judah, sceptres, lawgivers, "Shiloh" (Messiah). Everyone received a prophetic word that day.

Genesis 49:1 - "And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days."

God Meant It Unto Good

Jacob was dead. The family took him to Hebron and buried him in the cave at Machpelah. The brothers were afraid that Joseph would now avenge himself of their former sins. They appealed to him for mercy. Joseph assured them that he knew God was working for all their good in that horrific experience. We should remember that in our trials.

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

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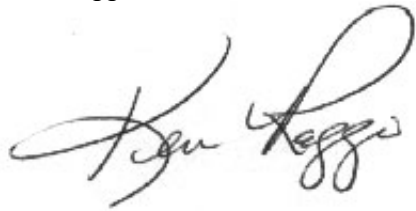


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