



The Men and Women of Genesis

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INTRODUCTION

Genesis is the book of beginnings it is the seed bed of all the themes of the Bible. It was written by Moses who was inspired and instructed by the Holy Spirit. While there may certainly have been traditions handed down by word of mouth from Adam to Noah, and after the flood from Noah to Joseph, yet the book of Genesis is not a record of human traditions, but the authoritative history of man's earliest ages as seen and understood by God the Creator. There is a careful chronology beginning with Adam. From Adam to the death of Joseph covers 2369 years. The lessons in this series are based on the lives of the men and women in the book of Genesis. Although they lived in the most remote antiquity of human history, the study of their lives and their reactions to the situations they encountered is vitally relevant. Human nature is just the same today as in the days of the patriarchs. The study of their lives as seen through the eyes of God and revealed to Moses by the gifts of knowledge and wisdom is a treasure of understanding and light. God's standards have not changed and human nature is still the same: therefore, the study of the lives of these men and women of the book of Genesis is of great practical use. May the Holy Spirit enlighten our understanding as we search the scriptures.

These lessons were written for the Emmanuel Pentecostal Sunday School by the pastor, Robert D. Kalis. This series is now complete. The titles are listed below and are available to any and all:

The Men and Women of Genesis
Lessons From Exodus
The Ten Commandments
Wilderness Examples
Possessing the Land of Promise
The Days of the Judges
Israel's Early Kings
Lessons From the Kings
The Captivity and Return

The Miracles of Jesus
The Parables of Jesus
The Personal Ministry of Jesus
According to Luke- I & II
We Beheld His Glory (John I)
Full of Grace & Truth (John II)
Holy Ghost Acts - I & II
Matthew: The King & His King-
dom-I & II

ADAM AND EVE; OUR FIRST PARENTS

Read: Genesis 1:26-31, 2:16-25, 3:1-24,
Psalm 8, Romans 5:12-21
I Corinthians 15:21-49, Hebrews 2:1-18

Memory Verse: 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)

What we should learn from this Lesson

1. Man was made in the image of God, a triune being with the spirit the dominant part.
2. God's masterwork of creation, man, was given dominion to rule and control the created things of earth.
3. Adam was created as a perfect being. He was not a cave man or brute.
4. God ordained the marriage relationship and procreative powers.
5. By this rebellion and disobedience Adam and Eve brought about the fall from the spiritual realm, and introduced death into the world.

I In the Image of God: On the sixth day of creation recorded in Genesis, God said, "Let us make man in our image after our likeness." The use of the plural pronouns "us" and "our" gives us our first clue regarding the nature of God. When taken together with many other scriptures we find that God is triune: that is, He is revealed in three distinct forms, yet He is only one. These three forms, of course, are God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. This is the pattern God used in creating man. God created a triune being having spirit, soul and body. We know from what Jesus told the woman at the well of Sychar that God is Spirit (John 4:24). That is how God created Adam: a predominantly spiritual being. The masterpiece of God's creation was set into the earth to rule and have dominion over all the rest of the creation.

Man as we know him today has lost the glory of his original creation. Perhaps the order has been reversed: instead of spirit first, then soul and body; it is first body, then soul and spirit. The glory was marred when man rebelled against God and fell from the likeness of God into the realm of the carnal where the body is predominant. The appetites of the body rule the remnants of the triune being which God created in His own likeness.

Man now bears "the image of the earthy," but the redeemed "shall also bear the image of the heavenly," once again. The denying of fleshly lusts and yielding of the body to the baptism and in-filling of the Holy Spirit prepares the believer for the day when the trumpet shall sound and we shall be changed. "When He shall appear, we shall be like Him" (1 John 3:2).

It is important for us right now to let the Spirit of the Lord rule us in body, soul and spirit. To mortify and deny the fleshly appetites of the body and to recognize and yield to the power of the Holy Spirit will prepare us for the coming of the Lord. It is important that we become spiritual before we go to heaven!

II Lost Dominion: Man was intended to have "dominion over the fish, the fowl, the cattle, all the earth, and every creeping thing." He was admonished to subdue and take dominion over all nature. It was God's purpose to allow man; as His representative, to govern and control the natural creation of animals and plants and elements in such a way that it would show forth the glory of God. So completely has man fallen from his intended place of dominion that he finds it difficult to control crab-grass or mosquitos, or irritating pollen, or locusts, or the boll-weevil. He finds it difficult to forecast the weather, let alone have dominion over it. Frosts, droughts, floods, and blights of all descriptions have humanity at their mercy. We are victims instead of masters of our natural environment. Man has lost the dominion. But one Man has opened the door for mankind to regain that dominion. The One who stilled the storm, ordered huge catches of fish, multiplied the loaves and fishes, passed through locked doors, drove out demons, and healed all manner of disease, has blazed the trail for the redeemed to follow. The whole creation is groaning under its present bondage, waiting anxiously the day when the Sons of God shall be revealed; when the renewed man takes dominion once again over a new heaven and earth wherein dwells righteousness (see Rom.8:19-22, II Pet.3:13).

III The Crowning Work of Creation: God did not create an ignorant cave man or barbarian. Adam possessed superior powers of intellect. The proof of this is to be found in the work he accomplished. Dressing and caring for the Garden of Eden, and especially in naming thousands of species of animals is a staggering job to say the least. The accomplishment of naming the many different animals proves that Adam possessed a highly developed intelligence. Even after the fall, man was able to sew, to till the ground, to hunt, to build, and develop musical instruments. The man God created was a complete man with no need for development or evolution. The sphere of evolution is to be found in the realm of fallen man's rebellious society. Because of the lost dominion man has had to band together with other men for protection and mutual help. The first simple societies have evolved into today's sophisticated and complex "civilization." But the crowning work of God's creation, man, in his original wisdom and power, needed no development or evolution. In the natural God-created world, evolution is a myth. Only in the realm of the societies of this world over which Satan is prince, does the theory of evolution operate.

IV The First Marriage: When God saw that it was not good for man to be alone He formed a woman from the rib (side) of Adam. Amongst all the animals which Adam named, none was worthy to be a companion and helper to Adam. So God formed the woman, not of the ground as Adam and all the animals were formed, but from Adam's own flesh and bones. The only quotation from Adam preserved in the New Testament is that which he spoke concerning his new wife and the relationship between them.

When the Pharisees of Jesus day questioned Him concerning acceptable grounds for divorce, Jesus quoted these words of Adam, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh" (Matt.19:5). The marriage relationship is to take priority over every other relationship. It is not that the married person is to love and regard parents less than before, but rather to love and cherish the partner more. As the ceremony advises, "Marriage is not to be entered into lightly or unadvisedly." The step once taken is to be permanent: "till death do us part." The current trend toward loose marriage bonds and easy divorce, and living together without marriage; like the permissive divorce laws of the time of Christ, is condemned by Him in the Word. Only an infidelity is acceptable cause for dissolving the husband-wife relationship.

V Eve: A Help Meet for Adam: We have the hint that Satan was at work in paradise before Eve was formed. Something happened to cause God to recognize that it was not good for man to be alone. The primary purpose of the introduction of Eve into the human society was to be a fit helper for him in his duty to oversee and rule the creation on the earth. The description of Eve is often misquoted. She was not described as a helpmate for Adam but a help meet (suitable) for him. She was to be a companion and helper in all of man's duties including the procreation of children. God has endowed women with dignity and privilege. Depraved and lustful man has attempted to degrade the role of women to that of sex objects and slaves. It is clear from the word of God, that it is a great privilege for a woman to bear children in the bonds of matrimony, for so, potentially, sons and daughters of God are brought into the world. The unmarried woman also has an honorable place in the fellowship of the kingdom of God. They may give their undivided loyalty to the service of the Lord Jesus. Though men are loathe to admit it, women have the ability to influence them. Eve used that ability to influence Adam to do evil. He was, of course, all too ready to yield. May every woman determine to use her power of influence only for good.

VI By One Man Sin Entered: God set man into a garden of paradise. All was beautiful. Every provision was made for man. Little strenuous labor was required of him. Food was abundant. All the fruitful trees of the garden were at man's disposal. Only one prohibition was given. The fruit of the "tree of knowledge of good and evil," was not to be touched or eaten. Satan, the adversary of God, sought to blight the brand new creation of God and gaining possession of the body of the serpent spoke to Eve, introducing doubt about God's word. By appealing to the desires of the body, he deceived her into disobedience to the one command God had given. Quickly she introduced the disobedience to her all too willing husband and so their innocence was lost, sin entered into the world and death by sin. If the

doctrine of original sin is hard for some to grasp, we have enough personal sin of our own that makes us guilty before God.

Since by man (Adam) came death, by man (Jesus) came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. Four thousand years after Adam's miserable failure in the garden of paradise, Jesus, in the inhospitable wilderness overcame every temptation of the wicked one. He was obedient even unto death and delivered those who through fear of death were subject to bondage (Heb.2:14-15). By the same Spirit of God which enabled Jesus to overcome the temptation in the wilderness, we too, may overcome every temptation of the adversary and be partakers of the Divine nature.

CAIN AND ABEL

Read: Genesis 4:1-26, Luke 11:45-51
 Hebrews 11:1-6 & 12:18-24,
 I John 3:1-24, Jude 3-13

Memory Verse: Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man. (Genesis 9:6)

What we should learn from this Lesson

1. *We must approach God and worship Him in the way which He has set forth in His word.*
2. *Murder and acts of violence have their source in jealousy and envy and attitudes of the heart.*
3. *If we rebel at the teaching and counsel of the Lord, we are on the threshold of disaster.*
4. *Deliberate sin or sin unrepented of separates from the Presence of the Lord.*

I A Man From the Lord: When Cain was born, Eve was sure that the promised seed which would bruise Satan's head (see Gen.3:14-16) was born. She was the first of many mothers to hope that her son would be the messiah. Since the advent of the Holy Spirit, every son and daughter has the potential to become a son of God. How important it is that godly parents bring children into the world in faith and by the will of God. It is possible for our babes to be filled with the Holy Spirit from their mother's womb, as John the Baptist was. The precious gift of a new life from the Lord is a great responsibility for the parents. There is the necessity for loving and persevering training. That teaching must have its roots in the example of godly living. The least hypocrisy will undermine the good teaching.

Cain's younger brother, Abel, became a shepherd, and Cain a farmer. Both sons had to work for sustenance as a result of their parent's sin. It is important to recognize that the result of sin often causes our loved ones to suffer. Many children suffer because of drunken parents! Think how many have been deprived of the security of a loving home and the love of a mother and father because of immorality!

Let us be sure to recognize the potential in our children and provide them with the training they need to become true sons and daughters of God. Let us live so consistently that our manner of life speaks louder than our words.

II Proper Worship: Often brothers compete with each other for supremacy. Cain was proud of the fruits of his occupation and brought an offering to the Lord consisting of the fruit of the ground which he had tilled. Abel brought a firstling of his flock. Abel's offering was in harmony with God's plan of redemption and was a fitting type of the Lamb of God which was slain from the foundation of the world. God had respect to Abel and his offering. Perhaps God manifested His approval of Abel's offering by sending fire from heaven. God evidently was trying to give light to Cain and man in general concerning what offerings were acceptable sacrifices. Cain took it as a personal affront. How many sons of Cain refuse instruction and take each attempt to teach them God's way as a personal insult. May God keep us always teachable.

Cain was very angry and his countenance fell. Did you ever see someone who has been corrected go into a sad looking depression? Here is the first recorded instance of what we appropriately call a dump. God tried to pull Cain out of his mood: "If thou doest well shalt thou not be accepted? If not...sin lieth at the door." How faithful of the Lord to warn the erring son. What remorse and sorrow would have been avoided if only Cain had turned at the loving reproof of the Lord. What do we do when we are corrected or warned?

God wanted His creatures to learn how to worship and sacrifice. The principle of God is: "Without shedding of blood is no remission of sins" (Heb.9:22). The transfer of guilt to a lamb was a temporary arrangement to make a vivid picture for the Old Testament people, of the guilt of the world transferred to the Lamb of God. Cain's offering did not fit this picture. Certainly God had no aversion to fruit of the ground. He later ordained thank offerings composed of this very fruit (see Lev.2:12 & Ex.23:19), but God wanted Cain and all the world to know that we must approach God on His terms and that our sin can only be atoned for by blood.

Abel's offering was acceptable to God because it was made in faith (Heb.11:4). It is possible that Adam and Eve had been taught the way of substitutional sacrifice by God. They saw that God had slain animals to make coverings of skins for their nakedness and may have learned from that. It is also possible that Abel learned to draw near to God and have fellowship with Him and so learned that the shedding of blood was a necessity for atonement. In any case, Abel offered his sacrifice in faith. Faith makes a difference! Jesus taught the woman at the well that God seeks worshippers who worship in spirit and in truth. Beautiful ceremony is not an acceptable substitute for sincere meaningful worship. Even Pentecostal praise when offered absentmindedly is unacceptable to God. Let us be sure that our worship is sincere and real, and that we worship in faith.

III The Root of Murder: Someone has said that the history of humanity is a record of multiplied murders beginning with the very first man ever born into this world, and continuing to the wholesale murder in the wars of the twentieth century. The roots of the first murder were in envy. Cain was envious of his brother's righteous deeds (1 John 3:12). That envy grew until it found expression in the violent blow which spilled Abel's blood upon the ground. Jesus taught that anger was the root, it finds expression in unkind words and bears the full grown fruit of acts of violence and murder. How wise of our Lord to teach

us to recognize the seedling and root it out. We dare not allow ourselves violent outbursts and name-calling lest the verbal abuse escalate into physical harm. Such beastly men who beat their wives invariably begin with harsh words which increase to physical abuse. Let us cut off all harsh speeches.

The way to overcome envy is to recognize it in its early stages. We call it jealousy and color it green. If we call on the Lord to deliver us from it in its beginnings and pray for the person we are tempted to be jealous of, we will surely win an important victory.

IV The Blood of Abel and the Blood of Christ: When God questioned Cain about Abel he responded, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Cain's response finds an answer in our Lord's parable of the good Samaritan. Not only are we indeed to be concerned with our brother, but also with our neighbor and with all those with whom we have contact. God told Cain that "the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground." The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews tells us that the blood of Jesus speaketh better things than that of Abel. The blood of Abel cried for vengeance, but the blood of Jesus cries for forgiveness and mercy!

Five bleeding wounds He bears,
Received on Calvary;
They pour effectual prayers,
They strongly plead for me.
"Forgive him, oh, forgive," they cry,
"Nor let that ransomed sinner die."

Surely Christ's blood speaketh better things than the blood of Abel.

V Punishment for Sin: When Jesus quoted the scriptures from the Old Testament He most often used the Greek Septuagint version of those scriptures. That version gives the account of God's dealing with Cain in clear terms. According to the Septuagint, God told Cain that he was now "cursed from the earth which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand. When thou tillest the earth, it shall not continue to give its strength to thee: thou shalt be groaning and trembling upon the earth. And Cain said to the Lord, my crime is too great for me to be forgiven. If thou castest me out this day from the face of the earth, and I shall be hidden from thy presence, and I shall be groaning and trembling upon the earth, then it will be that anyone who finds me shall slay me. And the Lord God said unto him, Not so, any one that slays Cain shall suffer sevenfold vengeance; and the Lord God set a mark upon Cain..." (Gen.4:11-15 Septuagint Version). God's punishment upon Cain for his violent crime was tempered with mercy. "He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities" (Ps.103:10). The King James Version indicates that Cain thought his punishment to be too severe. Such is human nature. How often the guilty complain that the punishment is too severe. The Lamb of God went to the cross without opening His mouth, accepting the punishment for our sins that we might be forgiven. Let us never forget to worship the Lord in sincerity and truth for His great redemption.

ENOCH WALKED WITH GOD

Read: Genesis 5:1-32, Hebrews 11:1-6
Jude 1-25, Colossians 1:17

Memory Verse: By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. (Hebrews 6:5)

What we should learn from this Lesson

1. *The hope of resurrection and eternal life should be very real to believers.*
2. *It is possible for men and women who perform the daily routine connected with providing for a family, to walk with God, and to please Him.*
3. *If we learn to please Jesus at all times, we will inevitably be prepared for translation and the second coming of our Lord.*
4. *The practice of the Presence of the Lord at all times is the way we, like Enoch, may walk with God.*

I Hope of Immortality: Did you ever have a bad dream where your life was in danger? Maybe Indians were after you and the end seemed near, but then miraculously you escaped! Hardly anyone pictures himself dead. The hope of immortality is strong in every human life. Probably this is because God originally intended man to live forever. The power of immortality was still strong in the Patriarchs who lived before the flood. When Enoch was born, none of his male ancestors had died. Only Abel and the victim of Lamech (see Gen. 4:23), both murder victims had died up to that time as far as we know. Enoch probably heard much from his great, great, great, great grandfather Adam, who was only 622 years old when he was born. Certainly there were no crowded cemeteries as we know today when Enoch grew up. After Enoch became a father we read that he walked with God. Many young men have been stirred when they first became fathers to live right before their offspring. This Enoch did and by the grace of God lived such a life that he was pleasing to God. It is important to keep in mind that Enoch walked with God and pleased God while he raised a family of sons and daughters. This greatest of honors, to be translated without seeing death was the reward for a husband with a family who pleased God and walked with Him. The hope of translation and immortality is deep seated in all of us. When Paul wrote to the Thessalonian church about the coming of the Lord, he spoke of the resurrection of the dead and then of "WE which are alive and remain shall be caught up." The hope of living forever was burning in the Apostle Paul as it does in us. Don't we too, usually speak and

think of the Lord's second coming with expectation that we will be alive? Enoch is the earliest example of the validity of the hope of immortality.

Jesus told Martha, the sister of Lazarus that, "whosoever believeth in me shall never die" (John 11:26). For the prepared believer there is no death, only release of the immortal spirit from the prison of the earthly body. Life goes right on. The unshackled spirit of the believer soars to be with the Lord, which is better (see Phil.1:23). Enoch and later, Elijah, had even a greater experience, their bodies and spirits being caught up into the heavenly realm. "Being only in Him is the secret of translation."

II Pleasing God: We are told in the book of Hebrews that Enoch had faith for translation. It is also revealed there that before his translation he had this testimony: "that he pleased God." Pleasing God and a growing faith go together. If we would celebrate glorious victories of faith, we too, must have this testimony: "that we please God." The very next verse in Hebrews (11:6), tells us that without faith we cannot please Him. So we know that a life of faith pleases God. If "we keep his commandments and do those things that are pleasing in his sight," we can expect to receive whatever we ask of Him (see I John 3:22). Praise to God, and giving of thanks, and support of the work of the Lord, are mentioned specifically as pleasing to the Lord (Heb.13:15-16). We are also told some of the things that displease the Lord. Lust, idolatry, fornication, presumption, and murmuring are listed as things which the Israelites did in the wilderness. "With may of them God was not well pleased" (I Cor.10:5-10). Paul wrote to the Roman believers that those who live ruled by the flesh cannot please God (Rom.8:8). Living under the control of the Holy Spirit is the antidote for this. Jesus could say that He always did those things which pleased the Father (John 8:29). This is why He could also say to the Father, "I know that thou hearest me always" (John 11:42). Let us exercise great faith and obedience to live always pleasing to the Lord.

III Walking With God: Abraham walked before God, but Enoch walked with God. Enoch lived in the Presence of God continually. He is the Father of those who practice the Presence of God. He was able to do this even while he raised a large family. He had to make a living for his household. He had to build and maintain a place for them to live. He had to teach and discipline his children. In the midst of all this commonplace activity, Enoch maintained the Presence of the Lord. Let it be an inspiration to us all to follow his example.

The epistles are filled with exhortations of how we ought to walk. It makes an interesting and practical study. We are exhorted to walk: "in newness of life," (Rom.6:4); "worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called" (Eph.4:11); "in love" (Eph.5:2); "as children of light" (Eph.5:8); "in wisdom toward them that are without" (Co.4:5); honestly and in the truth (see I Thess.4:12, & III John 4) etc. "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col.1:10).

It is imperative that we recognize that if we desire to walk in the Presence of the Lord we cannot walk in the counsel of the ungodly (Ps.1:1). We must choose to walk with others who love the Lord as we do and if that is not possible, to walk only with Him. Voluntary

association with the ungodly will corrupt our inward desires to walk with and please our Lord. We must be willing to pay the price to walk with God.

IV "Translated" Into the Kingdom: Translation begins with the inner man. There the new birth begins: This inward change makes us alive to the reality of Jesus Christ. It becomes evident outwardly that a change has taken place for old things pass away and everything becomes new. No longer are we of the world or servants of the flesh. We live to please God. Before the change we were blind and deaf toward God, but now we hear His voice and we begin, with the pure in heart, to see Him.

As we continue in His Kingdom, living to please Him, walking with Him, practising His Presence; He prepares us for His imminent return when the trumpet shall sound, the dead be raised, and we be changed! Hallelujah! Jesus said, "whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (John 11:26). Surely His promise is valid and for the believer there is no death but a glorious continuation of life. Faith unlocks the door. The sting of death is stopped. The victory of the grave is vanquished. In the light of immortality all that the world can offer should be no temptation to us. Pleasing God and walking with Him is the only thing really important in the final analysis. Let us flee then, every attraction the world has to offer. Remember, if Enoch, the husband, the father, the provider, the homeowner, could walk with God, so pleasing to Him that he was translated, we, too, with the gift of the Holy Spirit, are able to please God and walk with Him and be ready for His coming. "Help us to really practice the Presence of God and not just talk about it, but that like Enoch we may walk with God until we are not."

LESSON 4

NOAH, PREACHER OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Read: Genesis 6,7,8; Hebrews 11:1-7
 I Peter 3:18-22; II Peter 2:4-9; 3:1-7
 Matthew 24:36-42; Luke 17:26-37

Memory Verse: By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith. (Hebrews 11:7)

What we should learn from this Lesson

1. *Persistent wickedness will bring the judgment of God in every age.*
2. *We, like Noah, can be the instrument for the salvation of our families if we have real faith.*
3. *It is exceedingly important that we, like Noah, prepare for the "day of the Lord" which is coming upon the whole world.*

I Wickedness Brings Judgment: During the ten generations from Adam to Noah man turned more and more away from God. In the days of Enos, son of Seth, there was a respite when men began "to call on the name of the Lord" (see Gen.4:26). Enoch walked with God and was translated, and "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord" (Gen.6:8). These three instances together with righteous Abel, rise like islands in a sea of iniquity. Man's way departed further and further from God. Men were filled with lust (ch.6:2). Every imagination of man's thoughts was only evil continually (ch.6:5). The whole earth was corrupt before God and filled with violence (ch.6:11). It got to the place where God was sorry He had created man. The Lord decided to strive with man for 120 years and then, unless there was a real change for the better, bring judgment upon the whole earth (vs.3).

There is good reason to believe that society on earth had become quite advanced and sophisticated by this time. Since the life span of man was so long before the flood, (scientists hold that aging poisonous rays from the sun, were filtered by the moisture laden atmosphere) and since the flood occurred 1656 years after the creation of Adam, there is almost no limit to the population possibilities on the earth. Hardships and affliction prepare

man to turn to God. Leisure and prosperity induce decadence and violence. It seems likely that the men before the flood had learned to band together to lighten their work loads and probably had developed many labor saving devices. We know for sure that there were great men of renown in that age. They had their Edison and Fulton and Bell (see vs.4). Certainly it had to be a highly developed society to build such a huge craft as the ark (very nearly the size of the Queen Elizabeth II). But all of their development only took them further from God.

Finally, because Noah had found grace in the eyes of the Lord, God revealed to him that in a determined time the earth would be overflowed with a flood. Noah was warned to build an ark in order to save himself and his family and two of each of the animals which God had created. Noah preached to the world while the great ark was being built. But the wicked men and women only mocked the righteous preacher. He was, no doubt, called a prophet of doom. If they used cartoons, no doubt, Noah was the frequent butt of their jokes. But all the joking was abruptly halted by the sudden breaking up of the fountains of the deep and by the unexpected downpour from the sky. Their persistent wickedness and refusal to repent had at last brought judgment. The longsuffering of God had waited 120 years while Noah built the boat, but the judgment day of the Lord finally came.

Surely the parallel is clear. The same sins of lust and violence are prevalent in our society. Two devastating World wars, in which about 20 million died, have failed to turn men from their evil imagination. Still, mankind is preoccupied with vile uncleanness and materialism. To us God says again, "My spirit shall not always strive with man." His judgment cannot come in a flood this time because of His promise, (ch.9:11-16) but the word of the Lord has warned us that by fire the earth and its works shall be burned. God is still longsuffering, not willing that any should perish. Let us believe and heed God's warning. Turn or burn!

II By Faith Noah...Prepared: In the catalogue of the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11, we are told that: "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark..." (Heb. 11:7). Noah was a man of faith. He lived close enough to God to have communication with Him. Not only did he talk to God, but God spoke to him. He believed what God said and he obeyed the instructions given to him by the Lord. Very precise measurements were given to Noah and he followed the blueprint for the ark even as Moses later made the tabernacle according to the pattern showed him in the mount. Surely Noah had to endure continual ridicule as he built his huge craft on dry land far from any body of water. But Noah believed and feared God so that he was not deterred by the ridicule of men. That faith was his salvation. He became the heir of that righteousness which is by faith.

Since God has spoken to us by His son and warned us of the last judgment wherein the earth and its works shall be burned up, we must, like Noah, believe and obey His instructions. It is not enough to say we believe. We must show that faith by our actions. If you were warned that the building you were in would be bombed in a few minutes, no matter how earnestly you proclaimed your belief in the danger, your faith in the warning

could only be proven by your action of fleeing. We must flee from the wrath to come and enter the ark that has been prepared for us. That ark is the salvation offered to us through the finished work of Calvary.

III To the Saving of His House: Because of his faith and obedience, Noah was able to bring salvation from the flood to his own wife; to their three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth; and to the three wives of these sons. So eight persons were saved by the faith of Noah. May God grant that we, too, should be the means of salvation to our loved ones. Missionary Frank Laubach was able to accomplish a tremendous work for God through his reading program of "each one teach one." Oh! How much would be accomplished if we like Noah could bring seven loved ones to salvation: "Each one win seven" God help us! Our faith and obedience are not only important to ourselves, but the salvation of others may depend on it.

IV As it Was in the Days of Noah: In His Mount Olivet discourse, Jesus used the example of the days of Noah as a picture of the last judgment. Most of the discourse is concerned with the destruction of Jerusalem when the great buildings which the disciples had pointed out to Jesus, would be thrown down and not one stone left upon another. Jesus gave the disciples definite warning signals to watch for concerning the destruction of Jerusalem.

But when Jesus spoke of the last great judgment of the whole world He warned that there would be no signs to herald the last hour. "Of that hour knoweth no man." Just as in the days of Noah and Lot: life went on without any warning events; the people were building and planting and marrying and raising families never expecting such sudden judgment as came to pass in a moment. Even so shall it be at the last fiery end. We are to live as if at any hour that day of the Lord might arrive.

Jesus has given us two specific ways to be prepared for that day. First, we are to be cleansed from all sin. By virtue of His blood and the atonement of Calvary we may keep our garments always white. Second, we are to be occupied with doing the work of God. There is no virtue in standing on the Mount of Olives gazing into heaven. Rather, we are to keep looking to Him for His cleansing while we are about our Father's business! He is able to keep us in the midst of the burning fiery furnace or lift us above the flood of fire as He lifted the ark by the same water that judged the wicked. Let us go and get ready and be prepared for the fiery flood of judgment. He is our hiding place.

Peter warned the believers of his generation that there would be scoffers and mockers in the last time. They would ridicule the last judgment, pointing out that all things continue as they were from the beginning. But Peter's inspired warning notes that the same word of prophetic warning which foretold the flood in Noah's day has forecast the dissolution by fire of the earth and its evil works. The long delay is occasioned by the great mercy of God who desires all men to come to repentance. Just as surely as the day finally arrived when Noah and his family entered the ark and the flood of judgment engulfed the world, so the day will finally come when the heavens will pass away with a great noise and the elements melt with fervent heat, burning up the earth and its works (see I Pet. 3:6-10). But

we are to look for a renewed heaven and earth wherein dwells righteousness. We, like Noah, are to be heirs of the righteousness which is by faith. Let us so live that at that day we will "be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless" (II Pet.3:13-14).

ABRAHAM AND LOT

Read: Genesis 11:10-32, 12:1-9, 13:1-18,
14:1-24, 18:16-33, 19:1-38; II Peter 2;
Hebrews 11:8-16; Acts 7:1-7

Memory Verse: By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed, and he went out not knowing whither he went. (Hebrews 11:8)

What we should learn from this Lesson

1. *We should be quick to obey God's commands to us and trust His promises fully.*
2. *We, like Abraham, should have altars where our families may worship.*
3. *Believers are pilgrims in this world and the heavenly city is our destination and our eternal home.*
4. *Let us take warning from Lot and not get comfortable with the vile and unclean society about us.*
5. *We should be deeply impressed that the choices parents make affect their children for good or evil. We, like Abraham, should have influence on our children for good.*

I Stepping Out in Faith: Abraham was born, according to the carefully preserved chronology of Genesis, 2008 years after the creation of Adam. His life marks the beginning of fuller revelations of God to the rebellious sons of Adam. Using Abraham, the friend of God as a starting point, God chose to reveal Himself to him and his descendants in a greater way than those before him. It was God's intention to show all the nations of the world what He would do for any people who worshipped Him alone and who lived by His law. The history of Israel is the record of God's faithfulness and patience with a stiff-necked and rebellious people.

When God called Abraham to step out from his own country and relations and parents' house, he obeyed, without knowing exactly where his steps would take him. But he trusted God who was calling him out. He took his wife Sarah, and his nephew Lot and stepped out in obedience to God. He had a great and wonderful promise from God to step

out upon: "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: 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" (Gen.12:2-3).

We have a far greater knowledge of the plan of God than Abraham. It should be much easier for us to launch out on the promises of God, trusting the same faithful Lord to see us through. We are called to get out of the world with its materialism and to get out from the kinsmen of our fleshly lusts into a land of Gospel promises and eternal life.

This story has inspired many, who were called to serve God, to step out in faith trusting God. When Gladys Aylward could not find any missionary board to send her to China to fulfill her call, this story encouraged her to launch out alone. The story of God's great faithfulness to her as she went in faith is a modern example of the value of trusting God and stepping out in obedience to His word.

God's promise to be our healer is one that we may trust. He calls us to believe Him and step out on that promise. God's promise to provide for our needs is another promise that we may step out upon. R. G. LeTourneau found that as he gave to the work of the Lord, God gave him more and more. He continually increased his giving until he gave 90% of his earnings to the work of the Lord and had plenty to live on with the other 10%. God calls us to trust Him for guidance in all decisions and choices. Concerning the choice of subjects in school, the choice of friends and partners, and careers, we are not to be like the world, and make choices guided by materialism and fleshly lusts, but seek the guidance of God and trust Him wholly to bless us and make us a blessing. Is there not some step of obedience God is asking you to take?

II Building An Altar: Wherever Abraham went he built an altar and worshipped, and made sacrifices to the Lord (see Gen.12:7,8; 13:4,18; 22:9). As a result of this faithful worship God manifested Himself to Abraham again and again. God spoke to Abraham as to a friend. God responded to Abraham's worship with great promises of blessing. He was promised a son, and descendants like the sand or stars for multitude. He was promised a land for his descendants. Greatest of all was the promise of a seed through whom all nations would be blessed.

God still manifests Himself to those who worship Him in spirit and in truth. You may be sure that this faithful worship and the resultant fellowship with God had a tremendous effect on Isaac and Jacob who became heirs with Abraham of the same promises. We can expect similar results in our homes if we build the altar and worship and sacrifice to the Lord continually. God will manifest Himself to be a glorious Savior worthy of our trust and devotion, if we follow Abraham's example.

III Strangers and Pilgrims: Abraham was a Hebrew. The word Hebrew means pilgrim. He lived in a tent. He moved when God told him to move. His manner of life declared that he was a stranger and pilgrim on the earth (Heb.11:13-16). He had opportunity to return to his native city, but he chose to stay loosed from earth and to look for the heavenly city, the city with foundation, whose builder and maker is God. For this reason, God was willing to

be identified with Abraham and he prepared an eternal city for him.

Shall we not follow the example of this pilgrim and declare by our manner of life that we have no continuing city here on earth. The manner of life of many Christians declares plainly that they hope to live in this sin cursed society forever. They become too comfortable here. Living for this material world declares plainly that the world to come is unreal to us. Such living is an influence on our loved ones and others for evil. Let us remember that here have we no continuing city. Abraham was a man of the tent and the altar. Let us, too, be worshipping pilgrims!

IV Toward Sodom: Abraham is called, "the father of all them that believe": Lot should perhaps be called, the father of all who are saved by the skin of their teeth. Lot's descendants are numerous in the church today. There are hosts who are saved through the great mercy of God and the intercession of others, who bring forth no good fruit for the glory of God. Their works are burned up and their bequest to their descendants is cursed!

We are told that when Abraham obeyed God and left his kindred, Lot went with him. Why did he go along? Could it perhaps have been that his rich Uncle Abraham had no children and was already 75 years old? Did he hope to inherit all? It is only conjecture, but it is true to human nature.

When the increase in herds forced uncle and nephew to part, Lot chose first and chose the best of the land for himself. His choice had devastating consequences for himself and his family. He chose to pitch his tent toward Sodom. "But the men of Sodom, were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly"(Gen.13:13). First, it was toward Sodom, then into Sodom, and finally, part of Sodom; for we read that Lot "sat in the gate," that is, he became an official in that wicked city (see Gen.19:1,9). According to the New Testament, Lot was righteous, (if not wise) and was vexed with the filthy conversations of the wicked Sodomites (II Peter 2:7). Nevertheless, he continued to live there with no thought of the consequences to his family. Even when he and his family were taken captive with the other inhabitants of Sodom, and rescued by the heroic intervention of Abraham, Lot took no warning but continued in that filthy environment.

Abraham faithfully interceded for Lot again, when God revealed to him that Sodom was to be destroyed. The wickedness of Sodom is clear from the use of the name of the city in connection with sexual perversion. Look it up in the dictionary: Sodomy. So wicked were these moral perverts that they tried to abuse the angels sent to pull Lot out of the city. And so accustomed to sin had Lot become that he had to be forced to leave the place before it was judged. No matter how loose morals become, no matter how commonly perversion is practised and freely spoken of, let the people of God never get accustomed to the wickedness of it all. Let them call you naive or old-fashioned or prudish of Victorian, but guard carefully the purity of thought and word and practice. God hates it still and He changes not. Social customs swing like a pendulum, but God's standards do not change! We better be careful where we take our families. The first move toward Sodom had tragic results for poor Lot.

V The Legacy of Abraham and of Lot: The blessing of God came upon Abraham. Isaac inherited his goods and his faith. Jacob also followed the pilgrim life and faith and became the father of the twelve patriarchs. It was in fulfillment of the promise to Abraham that the Messiah came and through Abraham that the gospel blessed all nations. He is called the father of all them that believe.

Lot on the other hand left a horrible legacy, considering that he is called a righteous man. Two of his daughters perished in the destruction of Sodom. His wife was turned to a pillar of salt when she looked back. Made drunk, too willingly, by his own daughters, Lot became the unwilling father of their sons, Moab and Ben-ammi. Both of these sons of incest became the fathers of cursed peoples excluded from the temple worship of Israel forever.

The move toward Sodom had devastating consequences. Let us be careful of our moves and be content to be strangers and pilgrims here on earth; looking for our Lord and the city which hath foundation, whose builder and maker is God.

ABRAHAM AND SARAH

Read: Genesis 11:27-32, 12:1 - 13:4,
15, 16, 17, 18:1-16 & 19, 20:1 - 21:13;
Galatians 4:21 - 5:1; I Peter 3:1-9; Romans 4

Memory Verse: Through faith also Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. (Hebrews 11:11)

What we should learn from this Lesson

1. *Abraham's example of faith should inspire today's Christians to believe the great promises of the Gospel.*
2. *We should take warning from the story of Hagar and Ishmael that the impatience of the flesh does not accomplish the purposes and promises of God.*
3. *The Gospel of Jesus Christ makes the Jewish ceremonial laws and observances obsolete.*
4. *We may learn from the story of Abraham and Sarah, just what is pleasing to the Lord regarding the husband-wife relationship.*

I An Example of Faith: When Abram stepped out in faith from his native land and kinfolk, God promised to give the land in which Abram was sojourning to his seed (Gen.12:7). But Abram had no children at this time although he was already past the age of 75. His wife Sarai was ten years younger than Abram. After Abram rescued Lot with the king of Sodom from Chedorlaomer (see Gen.14:13-16), the Lord appeared to him in a vision and declared: "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." In response to this Abram reminded the Lord that he still had no child and heir. The Lord then assured Abram that he would become a father and that in due time his descendants would become as numerous as the stars of the heavens (Gen.15:1-5).

Abram believed the word of the Lord and his faith was counted to him for righteousness (vs.6). The faith of Abram in the promise of God in spite of the present difficulties, is set forth in the New Testament as the great example of faith for us to follow. The great promises of redemption through the atonement and imputed righteousness of Christ as our own; with the glorious promises of the baptism of the Spirit and indwelling of God Himself in our bodies, are to be believed and acted upon. The impossibilities are to be disregarded. "When He shall appear we shall be like Him," is His promise (I John 3:2), and however vague the likeness may now be, let us believe and expect that daily we shall be more and more "conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom.8:29).

II God's Way -- The Best Way: The long delay in the fulfillment of God's promise caused Sarai, Abram's wife, to get her mind working. Recognizing the deadness of her own body as far as child bearing was concerned, she figured out that if her own personal maid had a child by Abram that the child legally would be her own. The scheme apparently was not too distasteful to Abram and in due time the maid, Hagar, conceived. When Hagar realized that she would be the mother of Abram's child, she became arrogant and despised her mistress, Sarai.

Now Sarai began to realize her mistake and confessed it to Abram. He was willing to allow Sarai to get rid of both maid and the expected child. But when Hagar fled from the harsh dealing of her mistress God intervened and sent her back to endure and submit. The son was born and named Ishmael when Abram was 86 years old (Gen.16:16).

Thirteen long years later when Abram was 99 years old, and Sarai 89, the Lord once again renewed His promise, "I will multiply thee exceedingly," God said (Gen.17:2), "Thou shalt be a father of many nations" (vs.4). It was at this time that God changed Abram's name to Abraham: father of a great multitude; and Sarai's name to Sarah: princess (vss.5 & 15). The Lord promised to bless Sarah and give Abraham a son by her and make her the mother of kings and nations. Abraham protested that Ishmael could be the one to be the fulfillment of the promise, but God insisted that Sarah must bear Abraham a son call his name Isaac (vs.21). God's covenant would be established with Isaac and his descendants. Ishmael also would be a great nation because of Abraham's request. This time God announced the time, "at this set time in the next year" (vss.16-21).

Once more the promise was confirmed while Abraham was in the plain of Mamre. Three men approached Abraham and he invited them to dine with him. The messengers asked the whereabouts of Sarah. Abraham revealed that she was at hand in the tent. Once again the Lord (in the person of one of the three visitors) declared that Sarah would indeed bear a son. Sarah heard the announcement from the door of the tent and laughed, as did Abraham earlier, at the prospect of such an aged couple having a newborn child. The Lord asked Abraham why Sarah had laughed, for nothing was too hard for the Lord. She denied, saying, "I laughed not, because she was afraid," but the Lord insisted, "Nay, but thou didst laugh" (ch.18:13-15).

The promise was fulfilled in God's own way and in God's own time. Great glory to God resulted from the miraculous birth. When the child was born he was name Isaac which means laughter. The name was appropriate. The inspired text of Hebrews reveals to us that "through faith also Sarah herself received strength to conceive,...because she judged Him faithful who had promised" (Heb.11:11). "Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable" (vs.12).

God did it His way. He did not need human schemes to help him. Sarah's planning only brought heartache in the end. Even so God is able to fulfill His promises to us. Whether God gives us a call to His service or reveals His will for some area of our lives, we must not be impatient and attempt to do by fleshly power, that which God will do in His own way and at His appointed time. We must use the example of Abraham and Sarah and be

"followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises" (Heb.6:12).

III Cast Out the Bondwoman and Her Son: Hagar and her son by Abraham, Ishmael, continued to live with Abraham and Sarah. By the time Isaac was born Ishmael was at least 13 years old. When Isaac was old enough to be weaned, Abraham gave a great feast (Gen.21:8). Sarah noticed Ishmael mocking her son Isaac. Her protective instincts were aroused and she asked Abraham to cast out the bondwoman, Hagar, and her son, Ishmael. She did not want Ishmael to be heir with her son, Isaac. It hurt Abraham deeply to consider such a step, but the Lord showed him that he should grant Sarah her request. God promised to watch over Ishmael and make of him a nation in response to Abraham's prayer.

Paul wrote to the Galatians, who were being influenced to observe the old Jewish traditions, that the two women and their sons were an allegory. He explained that Hagar and Ishmael represented the natural descendants of Abraham and the law of Mt. Sinai: "the Jerusalem which now is; and is in bondage with her children." Sarah and her son of promise represent the true spiritual children of Abraham: "Jerusalem which is above is free; which is the mother of us all" (Gal.4:25-26).

Judaizers sought to bring the converted Gentiles under the bondage of an obsolete system. Circumcision, feasts, sacrifices, and washings, etc., were done away when Christ died and rose. While those deeds were representative of what Christ would accomplish, they had value. But when Jesus cried, "It is finished!" all that was done away. Now those things were to be spiritually discerned and practiced. Neither was there any reason for a Gentile to become a Jew through their old practice of circumcision and other rituals. The Gospel made believers Jews inwardly, and circumcision was in the heart. God's people are not the fleshly descendants of Abraham, but the people of faith who believe the Gospel. These are God's chosen people and any natural Jew may become one of God's chosen people by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ and accepting the finished work of Calvary as the basis for that relationship. The natural Jew has been cast out with the earthly Jerusalem.

IV Sarah's Obedience to Abraham: Peter holds up the obedient submission of Sarah to Abraham as an example for Christian women to follow. He commands that wives be in subjection to their husbands. Their manner of life should convince even unbelieving husbands of the reality of the new birth through Jesus Christ. Peter forbids women to adorn themselves excessively with fancy hairdos, jewelry, and extravagant clothing. Their adornment is to be inward: a meek and quiet spirit. This is how the holy women of olden times adorned themselves. Sarah, for instance, obeyed Abraham and called him lord as he requested even though he was her husband. Twice in the Old Testament narrative, Abraham asked Sarah to tell national rulers that she was his sister. He did this because he was afraid that they would kill him in order to have Sarah. Her beauty and wisdom and prudence and Abraham's wealth made this seem possible to him. Also it was half true, for Sarah and Abraham had the same father, but not the same mother (see Gen.20:12). At any rate she obeyed Abraham on both occasions. The deception ended in embarrassment for Abraham and probably endangered his life more than the truth ever could have done. Peter's

point is that Christian women, too, should be subject to their husbands, only of course, in the Lord, that is, not to do anything contrary to the word of God or the light God has given.

Mention should be made here again that Abraham, too, submitted to his wife's request to cast out the bondwoman and her son, even though it grieved him much to do it. He truly loved his wife Sarah. Also the Lord showed him that it was right for him to allow this.

Today hardly a voice is raised in objection to the tendency for women to refuse to submit to husbands even in the Lord. How often do the preachers of the Gospel extol the virtues of inward adornment in opposition to that external adornment which has its roots in pride and lust?

It is noteworthy that Sarah is the only woman in all of the Holy Bible whose age is given at her death: 127!

ABRAHAM OFFERS UP ISAAC

Read: Genesis 22:1-19; Hebrews 11:17-19; James 2:14-26

Memory Verse: By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son. (Hebrews 11:17)

What we should learn from this Lesson

1. *Absolute obedience to God is necessary in the life of faith.*
2. *The Lord, our provider, has indeed provided the Lamb for our redemption.*
3. *The Lord has eternal and glorious rewards for those who overcome and are victorious in the tests He allows us to endure.*
4. *We must prove the reality of our faith in God by our works of obedience to Him.*

I God Asks for an Offering: When a child comes to a couple who are older, it is quite natural for them to dote on that offspring. Imagine how Sarah and Abraham must have loved and guarded their precious son, Isaac. He had been born so miraculously, and wonderful promises had been given by God concerning him. He was surely the apple of their eye. When Ishmael and Hagar were sent away Isaac was the only one to receive the attention of Abraham and Sarah.

One day when young Isaac was grown to quite a young man, God spoke to Abraham to test him. God asked Abraham to offer his son; his only son Isaac, through whom the great promises were to be fulfilled, as a burnt offering unto the Lord on one of the mountains of Moriah. Don't you wish that we could know all that passed through Abraham's mind at that time? We do know He rose up early and took Isaac and two young men, chopped the necessary wood, and with a donkey set off on the journey.

As they drew near the area God showed Abraham the place in the distance. He asked the two young men to wait there. "I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you," he said (Gen.22:5). The author of the epistle to the Hebrews reveals that Abraham accounted that God could raise Isaac from the dead, if need be. At any rate Abraham had complete confidence in God! May we, too, recognize that whatever God may ask of us, we surely may trust Him to work it for our good and His glory.

II God Will Provide: Abraham took the wood from the young men and laid it on the shoulders of his son. Father Abraham took a knife and fire in his hands and "they went both of them together" (vs.6). Father and son must have often worshipped together. The thoughtful son suddenly realized that one thing was missing for the sacrifice. They had forgotten the lamb! "Father, behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb?" (vs.7). Every Christian father ought to worship with his children so that they become familiar with the praise and prayer and communion with God. Fathers ought to teach their sons wholesome sports and share in worthwhile activities with them. But it is even more important that boys see their father's worship and learn to worship with him. There is no better way for a boy to learn. And, of course, this applies to daughters and mothers as well, but the story here is of Father Abraham (about 115 years old) and son Isaac (late teens).

To answer Isaac's question Abraham spoke undoubtedly prophetically. "God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering" (vs.8). Again we read, "so they went both of them together" (vs.8). What deep and lasting impressions are made on children when they can share the spiritual experiences of their parents. Certainly this experience was one that Isaac never could or would forget.

Abraham and Isaac came to the place and the father built an altar. The wood was laid upon the altar and then Isaac found out that he was to be the burnt offering. Surely he could have run away from 115 year old Abraham, or even pushed him aside and refused to become that burnt offering. But willingly, just like another only son 1900 years later, he meekly submitted to the will of his Father. Isaac was laid on the wood of the altar and Abraham took the knife to slay his son. Here the angel of the Lord intervened and called to Abraham out of heaven and said "Abraham, Abraham." Can you imagine Isaac's thoughts as he lay with eyes closed waiting for the cutting blade when he heard that welcome voice! "Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything to him" (vs.12). Surely Isaac was quickly cut loose, and then a ram caught in a thicket nearby attracted their attention. God had fulfilled naturally the spontaneous prediction of Abraham, that God would provide Himself a Lamb. The greater fulfillment of the offering up of the Lamb of God on the cross of Calvary brought about an end to all animal sacrifices for by that one perfect offering all was accomplished for man's salvation and redemption.

There is a lesson here for every parent. God is pleased when we consecrate children to Him. The form of baby dedication or baptism is not enough. Every parent ought to sincerely dedicate their children to the Lord for whatever use He can make of them. Missionary work and full-time ministry is not for those disappointed in love, or too clumsy to do anything else. The highest aspiration for their offspring ought to be that they serve God.

Parents who are unwilling to see their children answer the call of God to the ministry or mission field, are sometimes anxious and proud for the same offspring to serve in the armed forces or to marry into virtual slavery for life. Let us who are parents be Jochebeds and Hannahs and Abrahams and train our children for the greatest work there is and let us offer our children up to God for His glory!

III To Him That Overcometh: Abraham came through the test God gave him as more than conqueror. "Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me" (vs.12). "By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: 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 seashore; and thy seed shall possess the gates of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice" (vss.16-18). God confirmed and established the promises given earlier to Abraham. Abraham's faith and his obedience did not diminish with age. God's promises are conditional. They depend upon our faith and obedience. God made promises to Aaron concerning his descendants and the priesthood, but because of the carelessness and disobedience of Eli and his sons the promise was annulled and the descendants were cursed. The promise of God to Josiah was that he should come to his grave in a good age and in peace, (II Kings 22:20), but because he refused to hearken to the warning word of the Lord, the promise was forfeited and he died prematurely in battle against Pharaoh-Nechoh (II Kings 23:29-30). Not so with Abraham. He did not rest presumptuously upon his laurels, but continued to walk carefully and obediently before the Lord. Therefore to him the promise was confirmed and that with an oath. That promise was gloriously fulfilled in Jesus Christ who was born of the seed of Abraham and through whom all nations of the earth are blessed.

Let us be sure that, having obtained the promises of God in some measure, we never allow ourselves to become careless in our obedience to the word of God and His personal dealings with us. No matter how great the blessings we have experienced we must remain watchful and vigilant that we may receive a full reward.

IV Faith and Works: Not only is Abraham held up in the New Testament as the great example of a man of faith, but he is also used as an example of one who proved his faith by his works. James describes the necessity of putting faith to work in order for it to have any practical value. As sight is to seeing, so is faith to working. You may have the gift of sight but not be in a position to see anything. So we may have faith but not use it. Rahab and Abraham are used as examples of faith with works. Rahab believed in the God of Israel and did works to prove that faith: she gathered her loved ones to her home where the red cord was hung in the window according to the instruction of the spies of Israel. Faith without the works of obedience would not have saved her. Abraham believed God and proved his faith when he followed God's commandment perfectly and offered Isaac up on the altar. This was a work of obedience which proved the reality of Abraham's faith.

Martin Luther in his reaction against the dead works of the apostate Roman Catholic church had great difficulty in understanding the teaching of James on faith and works. The great truth that brought liberty and victory to him and the many who followed him, was: The just shall live by faith. It is by faith and not of works that we are saved.

The difficulty is overcome when we understand that the works that cannot help or save us, are dead works, rituals and meaningless traditions that are performed for

the Lord. If Abraham would have made a tradition of going to Moriah every year and performing the motions of offering up Isaac, it would have been a dead work, but because he did it in response to God's direct command it was a work of obedience that brought great victory and blessing.

Let us be sure that our faith is not only mental and so abstract that it never works. Let us put our faith to work in works of obedience to God expecting him to do whatever is necessary to bring victory to us and glory to His great name.

ISAAC AND REBECCA

Read: Genesis 24, 26; Ephesians 5:22-33;
Revelation 19:7-10, 21:2, 9-27

Memory Verse: Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? (II Corinthians 6:14)

What we should learn from this Lesson

1. *It is tremendously important that believers obtain and follow the guidance of the Lord concerning marriage.*
2. *A Divinely inspired marriage is a fitting picture of the relationship of Christ and the church.*
3. *Isaac's peaceable nature is a virtue to be sought for believers today, but his partiality to one child and his inordinate love of spicy food and pessimistic outlook should be avoided.*

I The Right Partner: Sarah died at 127 years of age. Isaac was born when she was 90. So Isaac was 37 years of age when his mother died. His marriage to Rebecca took place when he was 40 (Gen.25:20). Twins were born to Isaac and Rebecca when Isaac was 60 years old. Abraham lived until the twins, Jacob and Esau, were fifteen years old. He died at the age of 175 and was buried with his wife Sarah in the cave of Machpelah. The Lord said of Abraham, "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord" (Gen.18:19).

Shortly after the death of Sarah, Abraham realized that Isaac should have a wife. But he was very particular about the choice of a bride for his son. Abraham called his trusted servant, probably Eliezer, and instructed him to choose a wife for his son. Abraham made the servant swear that he would not take a bride from among the children of the Canaanites. He also warned the servant not to take his son back to the land from which Abraham had been called out. The servant was to go to Abraham's relatives and there choose a wife for Isaac. Abraham assured his servant that the angel of the Lord would go before him. If none would come to be Isaac's wife the servant would be free from responsibility in the matter. So the servant took an oath, placing his hand under the thigh of Abraham according to the custom of the times. He took ten camels and several servants and set out.

The servant led the procession to Mesopotamia, to the city of Nahor. There he

waited at the village well. He prayed to his master's God to send him good speed in his mission. It was near evening and time for the women to come to draw water from the well. "Let it come to pass," the servant prayed, "that the damsel to whom I shall say, 'Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink;' and she shall say, 'Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also:' let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast showed kindness unto thy master" (Gen.24:14).

Hardly had the servant finished praying when Rebecca, daughter of Abraham's brother, came to the well with her pitcher on her shoulder. She was unmarried and very beautiful. This was evident because of the custom of married women veiling their faces. She went down to the well and filled her pitcher. As she turned to go, the servant requested a drink from her. She quickly lowered her pitcher and gave him a drink of water. Then she said, "I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking." This was very remarkable for a camel drinks a lot of water, and there were ten camels.

When the camels had finished drinking, the servant gave Rebecca two golden bracelets and a golden earring and asked whose daughter she was. He also requested accommodations for the night. When she declared her family and assured the servant that they had room for him to lodge with them and even provender for his camels, Abraham's servant was overwhelmed and he bowed his head and worshipped. "...I being in the way, the Lord led me to the house of my master's brethren" (Gen.24:27).

When Laban saw the costly bracelets and earrings the man had given to his sister Rebecca, he rushed to invite the man to lodge with them. "Come in thou blessed of the Lord; wherefore standest thou without?" he urged. The servant did come in, but before he would partake of the evening meal he told his errand. He carefully explained Abraham's wealth and that Isaac was his only heir. He also told of his own prayer by the well and of Rebecca's fulfillment of all the conditions. Now the servant asked for their response. Would they send Rebecca with him to be Isaac's bride or not? The custom of those days was that the parents arranged the marriages of their children.

Can you imagine the emotions in Rebecca's heart as these negotiations were going on? How excited she must have been. Little did she dream when she dutifully started for the well that evening, what a dramatic turn her life would take before that day ended. Laban, her brother and Bethuel her father (probably very sick) recognized that the proposal proceeded from the Lord and agreed to the marriage. How Rebecca's heart must have beat. She probably slept little that night, wondering what her husband would be like, and worrying perhaps how he would like her.

In the morning Abraham's servant wanted to leave at once. Laban and Rebecca's mother wanted to wait ten days to prepare her for the trip and wedding, but the servant insisted on going at once. The difference was settled by asking Rebecca herself (at least she had something to say in the whole affair). "Wilt thou go with this man?" she was asked. And she said, "I will go." The servant gave gifts of gold and silver to Laban and Rebecca's mother, (Bethuel, the father is not mentioned) and after Rebecca received the blessing of her loved ones, they started out on the long journey to the bridegroom.

Isaac was walking in a field and meditating towards evening when the caravan

approached. Rebecca saw him and asked who this man was. She covered her face with a veil according to the custom of the times. The servant told of the miraculous way the Lord had led him. Isaac took Rebecca to be his wife and he loved her and was finally comforted concerning his mother's death.

Surely there is much instruction in this story for us today. Customs have changed drastically and parents cannot arrange marriages for their children as Abraham did for Isaac. And yet there is much that can be done. Parents can certainly pray that if it is in the plan of God for their children to marry, that the Lord will prepare the right partner for their child. It is also important to see that our children have fellowship with other Christians. Abraham made his servants swear that he would not take a bride for Isaac from among the Canaanites. We, too, ought to teach our children that no born again Christian may marry an unsaved partner. The Christian is not to look for a partner from the world and hope to get him or her saved after the wedding. When one young girl told Moody that she would get her husband saved after they were married, he lifted her bodily onto a table and giving her his hand told her to pull him up onto the table also. He was 5'5" and near 5' around the middle. When she said she couldn't do it, he told her "neither will you get that fellow saved after the wedding."

Ruth was the daughter and granddaughter of godly ministers of the gospel. She was a truly born again believer. While attending college a fine and promising young man became interested in her. She ignored his attentions. But he was so persistent that she finally told him that if he was that interested he should become a born again Christian and only then would she even consider a date with him. The young man began to attend church, was convinced of his sins and finally was soundly converted. Today Ruth and her husband have a lovely Christian home and are leaders in their church. "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" is a command for us to obey. Let us, like Abraham, command our children and our households after us in the way of obedience to God's word.

II Christ and the Church: The figure of a bride is used as a type of the church of Christ. Paul speaks of the obligation of a wife to submit to her husband because he is the head of the wife like Christ is the head of the church. "As the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything" (Eph.5:24). The husband also is to love his wife as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it. While giving specific instructions in regard to the husband-wife relationship Paul concludes with, "This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the church" (Eph.5:32).

Abraham's servant represents the Holy Spirit whose office it is to prepare a people who will make a fitting bride for our heavenly Isaac. As the servant adorned and enriched the bride with costly jewels, so the Holy Spirit gives gifts to the church to enrich and beautify it. Just as the servant led the way to Isaac, and Rebecca had only to follow him day by day, so we too, need only yield to the Holy Spirit's guidance day by day until the great day of the marriage of the Lamb. We must be prepared and made ready: fine linen clean and white which is the righteousness of saints (Rev.19:8). The new Jerusalem is compared also to "a bride adorned for her husband" (Rev.21:2). "The bride, the Lamb's wife," is gloriously des-

cribed as the celestial city by John the Revelator (Rev.19:9-27). May we be as careful to meet our heavenly bridegroom, as is the most careful bride to meet her beloved at the altar!

III Isaac - A Peaceable Man: At Gerar Isaac made the same mistake his Father, Abraham made before. He told the men of the place that Rebecca was his sister and not his wife. Too often our sins are repeated in our children. The lie caused Isaac much shame and embarrassment as it had done for Abraham many years before.

Isaac became exceeding prosperous and as is always true, that prosperity fostered envy. Isaac opened the wells of water his father had dug. The Philistines had filled them with rubble. Water was very precious in that area and when Isaac successfully dug for water in the valley of Gerar the herdmen of the area contended with him for the well. Rather than fight Isaac moved on. Again he found water and again there was argument and once more Isaac chose to move on rather than contend for the well. Finally, the third well was uncontested, so Isaac dwelled there for a while. This is a noble virtue in Isaac and something which we may seek to imitate. We are too prone to fight for self and our rights. Where no matter of principle is involved it is virtuous to suffer loss rather than fight.

Isaac built an altar at Beersheba and God appeared to him there and renewed the promises made to Abraham, his father, but Isaac's overall seeking after God could not compare to that of Abraham. He was old before his days and sick probably because of his inordinate love for savory (spicy) meat. At the time when Jacob obtained the blessing by deceitful means, Isaac was expecting to die, yet twenty years later, when Jacob returned from Hebron and his sojourn with Laban, Isaac was still alive.

Both Isaac and Rebecca made the mistake of showing partiality to their children. Isaac loved Esau because he was a rugged outdoor man and hunter. Rebecca favored Jacob because of what God had revealed to her before the twins were born: that the older (Esau) would serve the younger (Jacob). Such favoritism will surely devastate family unity in any age. Parents must carefully maintain strict impartiality among their children. Isaac also declined somewhat from the brilliant example of the faith of Abraham. There is a tendency on the part of second generation Christians to decline a little in zeal for the Lord. We can learn from Isaac and take warning. It need not be so.

LESSON 9

JACOB: THE SUPPLANTER

Read: Genesis 25:19-34, 27:1-46, 28:1-22

Hebrews 12:14-17; Romans 9:6-16

Memory Verse: By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff. (Hebrews 11:21)

What we should learn from this Lesson

1. *What it was that pleased God in Jacob, and what displeased Him in Esau.*
2. *We should recognize that partiality and favoritism in the family destroys harmony.*
3. *The Lord is just as anxious to manifest Himself to us as He was to reveal Himself to Jacob at Bethel.*
4. *We can take warning from the shortcomings in the later life of Isaac.*

I The Birthright: Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebecca. For twenty years they had no children, but after Isaac "intreated the Lord for his wife" she bore twins. The first-born was Esau followed quickly by Jacob, the younger. The custom of the times was to give double honor and inheritance to the firstborn. Accordingly, Esau was entitled to this "birthright". Isaac was 60 years old when his twin boys were born. Although they were twins the boys were quite different in many ways. Esau was an outdoorsman and a cunning hunter. Jacob was a plain man who stayed much at home. Isaac and Rebecca were unwise in that they each had a favorite. Isaac loved Esau especially because Esau often prepared venison for him. Probably Isaac admired the sportsman hunter aspect of Esau, traits which were certainly not found in Isaac himself. Rebecca played favorites with Jacob. Perhaps she had some excuse for her favoritism, but the results were not all good. God had revealed to her before the twins were born, that "the elder shall serve the younger." No doubt, Rebecca kept this in mind as she taught Jacob how to scheme with his wit. Jacob learned to plan for the future. The promises of God were important to him. Esau lived for the moment.

When Esau returned home after an exhausting hunt one day, Jacob was cooking red pottage. Esau was faint and the smell of the delicious stew overcame him. Jacob took full advantage of the opportunity, and when pressed for a portion by Esau, he refused unless Esau would give him the birthright. "I am at the point to die, and what profit shall this birthright do to me," he said. But Jacob wanted to make it sure and so asked Esau to swear

to him. This brought the Lord into the bargain for, surely, though it is not spelled out, the oath was pronounced in the name of the Lord. Thus Esau despised his birthright and is characterized by the inspired author of Hebrews as a "profane person who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright" (see Heb.12:16). Esau was sorry later and even repented with tears, but it was too late. It is displeasing to the Lord for his people to despise future blessings in favor of present pleasure. Food is necessary, but when men will sell future blessings for food and drink it becomes sin. Esau was like his father in one way at least. He *loved* food. So often our offspring inherit our peculiarities. Let us learn to bring every appetite of the body under the control of the Holy Spirit.

II Favoritism Brings Strife: It is inevitable that when parents favor one child over another that there will be jealousy, strife, and perhaps even hatred. Partiality divided the household of Isaac and Rebecca. Esau was the Father's boy and Jacob was Mother's favorite. God had made choice of Jacob over Esau foreknowing the nature of each. Rebecca was aware of God's choice and did her best to further Jacob in obtaining the favored position.

Isaac was feeble and nearly blind. He thought he might die at any time and so he asked Esau to hunt and prepare "savoury meat such as I love...that I may eat...and bless thee before I die" (Gen.27:4). Though Jacob had purchased the birthright Isaac wanted his favorite to have the patriarchal blessing. But Rebecca heard Isaac speak with Esau and quickly, while he was hunting, she connived with Jacob to deceive her husband and get the blessing for Jacob. Surely the high esteem in which Rebecca and Jacob held the blessing was admirable and virtuous, but the methods they used to obtain it were less than honorable. Rebecca told Jacob to kill two kids of the goats (note: 2 goats to satisfy Isaac's appetite!) that she could fix to taste like venison, in a savoury (spicy) manner. Then he could pretend to be Esau and take Isaac the meat and obtain the blessing. Jacob protested that since Esau was hairy and he himself was smooth he would be discovered and bring a curse upon himself instead of a blessing. Rebecca had an answer for every objection. She put some of the hairy goat skins on the arms and neck of Jacob and gave him Esau's best garments to wear. With haste the scenario was played out before Esau could return. Jacob brought the disguised meat to his aged Father. "Who art thou?" the dim-sighted man asked. "I am Esau" Jacob lied. "How is it that thou hast found it so quickly, my son?" Isaac questioned. "Because the Lord thy God brought it to me," Jacob boldly lied again. Isaac became suspicious, but when Jacob came closer and Isaac felt his hands he said "the voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau," and so he gave Jacob the blessing. He ate the meat and drank and asked Jacob to kiss him. Once again he asked, "art thou my very son, Esau?" "And once again Jacob lied and said, "I am."

So, Jacob indeed obtained the blessing, but he also brought the wrath of Esau upon himself. Esau cried with an "exceeding bitter cry" (Gen.27:34), but there was no place of repentance for him despite his tears (Heb.12:17). Isaac blessed Esau with a secondary blessing but Jacob was given the blessing of ruling over his brother. Esau complained bitterly, "Is he not rightly named Jacob? for he hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright; and behold now he hath taken away my blessing" (Gen.27:36).

Little wonder that Esau hated Jacob. He purposed to slay Jacob after his Father's death which both he and Isaac himself thought imminent. Isaac lived, however, many years after this. Rebecca learned of Esau's purpose and determined to send Jacob away. So although Jacob got the blessing he had to flee from home and the twin brothers became enemies. This was the result of the parental partiality.

Since the blessing was an inspired utterance, Rebecca could have perhaps chosen to intreat the Lord concerning the matter. It was the Lord who had foretold that the older would serve the younger, and surely the Lord could have seen to it Himself that Jacob received the proper blessing from God. In any event, the good purpose to obtain the blessing of God, did in no wise justify the deceitful means they used to obtain their purpose.

III Isaac's Latter Days: Like many others since him, Isaac did not die as quickly as he expected. He lived to the ripe old age of 180. He is always accorded equal honor with Abraham and Jacob. The three patriarchs' names are recorded together many, many times in the holy scriptures. Nevertheless, Isaac certainly fell far short of the spiritual experiences of Abraham and Jacob. Twice we are told of his *love* for savoury food. Very little is recorded concerning Isaac's seeking after God. His partiality toward his oldest son was basically wrong as well as misdirected. Jacob followed the poor example of his father to his own sorrow and Joseph's hurt. Certainly the relationships between Isaac and Rebecca in their older years, each with their favorite son pitted against the other, was not ideal.

When Jacob returned to Canaan after spending 20 years with Laban in Padanaram; old Father Isaac was still alive and indeed he lived yet another 20 years plus beside. He died just before Joseph was elevated to the second place of honor in the government of Egypt. It is also interesting to figure out the age of Jacob at the time he deceived his father. It can only be figured out by reckoning backwards from Joseph. The trick played on Isaac was no teenager's prank, for Jacob and Esau had to be more than 75 years old at the time! Old Father Abraham died at the age of 175 when Isaac was 75 years of age and Jacob and Esau were 15 years old.

IV God Starts to Work in Jacob: Nathaniel must have been meditating on the story of Jacob while he sat under the fig tree before he met Jesus. Perhaps he was thinking how full of deceit Jacob was and what a remarkable change took place in him so that his name was changed to Israel (prince of God). Philip interrupted his reverie with the announcement that they had found the Messiah: Jesus of Nazareth. Nathaniel doubted that anything good could come from Nazareth until Jesus surprised him by expressing the secret thoughts of his meditation. "Behold an Israelite in whom is no guile." Now Nathaniel exclaimed, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the king of Israel!" "Jesus referred once again to the story of Jacob when he told Nathaniel "do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? Hereafter you will see (like Jacob) the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man" (John 1:50-51).

It was the first night away from home that God met Jacob. As he slept with a stone for a pillow, lonely and probably cold, God appeared to him and promised to bring him again

to his parents and land. Jacob saw a ladder with the angels ascending and descending. The Lord stood above the ladder and spoke to Jacob, renewing His promises which had been made to Abraham and Isaac. The Lord promised to be with Jacob on his journey and to bring him back again to Canaan. When Jacob awoke he was frightened for he knew God was in that place. There he set up the stone which he had used for a pillow and poured oil upon it and named the place Bethel (the House of God). There Jacob made vows to the Lord. This marked the beginning of the Lord's gracious dealing with Jacob. How full of mercy the Lord is toward them that fear Him. Jacob did little to deserve God's favor and so with us, the goodness of God brings us to repentance.

JACOB BECOMES ISRAEL

Read: Genesis 29:1-35, 30:1-43, 31:1-55, 32:1-32, 33:1-20

Memory Verse: 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. (Genesis 32:28)

What we should learn from this Lesson

1. *Tithing is a part of the eternal economy of God and not a ritual of the Law superceded by the Gospel.*
2. *Just as Jacob reaped deception by his uncle after he had deceived his father, so we will reap whatsoever we sow.*
3. *Selfish scheming alienates friends and creates enemies.*
4. *God uses distressing circumstances to draw us closer to Himself.*
5. *When we finally get really earnest with God, He meets us with life changing power.*

I Reaping What Was Sowed: Jacob's deception brought the fierce anger of Esau, his twin brother, upon him. He had to flee for his life. Isaac his father advised him to go to Padanaram and there take a wife of the daughters of Laban, his uncle. God appeared to Jacob at Bethel while he was on the way. He saw the angels of God ascending and descending on a ladder that reached from the place where Jacob slept to heaven. God spoke very kindly to Jacob and promised to bring him back home again. Jacob, for his part promised to give tithes of all he would gain to the Lord. Abraham had also paid tithes to the priest of the Lord, Melchizedek, when he rescued Lot and the inhabitants of Sodom from the conquest of Chedorlaomer. This indicates that tithing is a principle of God's economy that predates the Old Testament law.

Jacob continued his journey and found his way to the home of his Uncle Laban. He continued there working for his uncle for one month. Laban then suggested to Jacob that they should make an agreement for wages for his services. Laban had two daughters. The older Leah, was unattractive to Jacob probably because of sore eyes. She was "tender eyed". The younger, Rachel, was well favored and beautiful and Jacob loved her. He struck a bargain with his Uncle Laban: he would serve seven years for Rachel to become his wife. Laban agreed. Such love did Jacob have for Rachel that seven years seemed like a few days. At the end of that period, Laban brought the bride to Jacob in the evening after a day of

feasting. The marriage was consummated, but in the morning, Jacob discovered that Laban had given him the sore-eyed Leah. Jacob had played the part of his brother Esau and deceived his father; now Leah had played the part of her sister and fooled Jacob. It is very interesting, to say the least, how we reap what we sow.

Laban explained to Jacob that custom demanded that the elder daughter must be married first. He asked Jacob to be husband to Leah alone for one week and then Rachel also would be his in exchange for seven more years of service. Jacob agreed, but of course, as may easily be understood Leah was despised and Rachel was loved by Jacob. It was not a very wonderful way to start the family life of a Patriarch.

God has a way of evening things out. So Leah bore Jacob sons one after another, but Rachel was barren. Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah were her first four sons. And remember, our Lord was of the tribe of Judah. The philosophy of those ancient times would not be too popular today, for a woman's worth was estimated by the number of sons she bore for her husband (daughters counted little). Rachel, like Sarah, Jacob's grandmother, gave her personal maid (Bilhah) to her husband to bear children for her. And she did. Dan and Naphtali were born to her and named by Rachel. Leah also gave her maid (Zilpah) to Jacob and Gad and Asher became the seventh and eighth sons of Jacob. Then Leah herself bore two more sons to Jacob; Issachar and Zebulun; and finally a daughter, Dinah.

II Jacob Alienates His Relatives by His Schemes: After all this in response to her prayer, God gave Rachel a son and she named him Joseph. Of course, he became the favorite, but that is the subject of another study. Now Jacob desired to return to his own country with his family. Laban urged him to stay and told Jacob to name his own wages. Laban recognized that God had blessed him because of Jacob and he desired the continuation of that blessing of prosperity. Jacob bargained for the speckled and spotted cattle and goats, and the brown sheep. Laban agreed and so Jacob became owner of part of Laban's flocks which had greatly increased under Jacob's care. Now Jacob culled the weaker cattle from the rest and allowed only the stronger cattle to mate. He used every trick in the book to increase the strength and number of his flock at the expense of Laban's. Jacob had the strong cattle and Laban had the feeble flocks.

Laban's sons realized that Jacob was increasing his own wealth at their expense. When Jacob overheard their complaint he noted that Laban's attitude changed toward him. God spoke to Jacob in a dream (see Gen.31:3,11), telling him to return to his land, and promising to be with him. Jacob spoke to his wives and revealed how that Laban had deceived him and changed his wages ten times. He told them how God had showed him how to use selective breeding to overcome the deception of Laban (ch.31:10). He told Rachel and Leah how the Lord remembered his vow at Bethel and commanded him now to return to his land.

III God Draws Jacob: The wives agreed to go with him. They stole away unawares while Laban was busy shearing his sheep. Rachel stole an image which belonged to her father. This tells us a good deal about Laban and Rachel. Abraham and Isaac had rejected this

mixed up worship of God the creator and other idols and the host of heaven in favor of worshipping God, the creator, alone. For this reason God blessed them and manifested Himself to them. No wonder Abraham did not want Isaac to return to Haran for his bride.

After three days Laban was told that Jacob had fled. He gathered his servants and overtook Jacob in Mt. Gilead after seven days. He probably would have tried to repossess the cattle, but God warned him in a dream to leave Jacob alone (ch.31:24). They had quite an argument especially concerning the stolen image. But Laban could not find it, and Jacob knew nothing of the matter and Rachel had cleverly hidden it. Laban remonstrated that he had not even had the opportunity to say good-bye to his daughters and his grandchildren. Finally they agreed to go their separate ways and they erected a pillar and made a covenant together. They named the place Galeed (heap of witness) and Mizpah (watchtower). Laban said, "The Lord watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another" (Gen.31:49). The next morning they bade each other farewell. Laban returned to Haran and Jacob continued his journey to Bethel.

IV Jacob is Changed: Angels of the Lord appeared to Jacob again and he named that place Mahanaim. He then sent messengers to advise Esau of his return. They were to explain his circumstances and to prepare for the reunion. But they returned with disconcerting news. Esau was coming to meet him with four hundred men. Jacob was greatly distressed. He immediately divided his entourage into two units, figuring that if one group was attacked the other might escape. Then he humbly called upon the Lord. He recognized that he was unworthy of God's favor, but reminded Him that he was returning at His command and with the promise of His Presence and protection.

Then he went to scheming again. He sent a whole string of separate presents to Esau to arrive one after the other. He hoped to soften Esau up with these gifts. He then sent his wives and children over the brook Jabbok and stayed alone on the other side. That night Jacob did not sleep, but he dealt with God. He literally wrestled with "a man" till the break of day. Jacob would not let him go without a blessing. Great business had been done that night and Jacob limped after the visitor touched his thigh. The blessing Jacob received was invaluable. It was a change of name and nature. No longer was he Jacob the supplanter and trickster, but now he was Israel: prince of God. He had wrestled, as it were, with God and had prevailed. He also had power with men. One night of earnest fervent wrestling with God brought about the great change. It was wonderful, and it ought to inspire us to lay hold of God for everything in our natures that is contrary to the example of Christ. But there is something else here. Jacob was almost 100 years old by this time and welcome and wonderful as the regeneration of old Jacob was, would it not have been well for Jacob to have wrestled with God in his youth? We are prone to wait too long to deal with God for full sanctification. Many of the sad experiences Jacob had might have been averted had he had his Jabbok experience earlier in life.

Needless to say, the effectual fervent prayer of this righteous man availed much, and Esau forgot his hostility and greeted Jacob warmly. Jacob was now Israel: "for as a prince," he had, "power with God and with men" (Gen.32:28).

JOSEPH'S YOUTH

Read: Genesis 37:1-36; 42:21-24

Memory Verse: And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him yet the more. (Genesis 37:5)

What we should learn from this Lesson

1. *Parental favoritism destroys family harmony.*
2. *Sometimes it is wise to be discreet and not tell all that God reveals to us.*
3. *When jealousy is harbored it breeds hatred and violence.*
4. *Joseph stands as a beautiful type of Christ.*

I The Evils of Partiality: Jacob's favorite wife, Rachel, had no children for many years. Ten sons and one daughter had been born to Jacob by Leah, Bilhah, and Zilpah, before Rachel finally conceived and bore Jacob a son, Joseph. She had cried to the Lord and He had heard her prayer. Since Rachel was the wife Jacob loved the most, it was natural for him to show partiality to her son. Joseph became Jacob's favorite. Once again we see the failures of parents repeated in their children. Isaac and Rebecca each showed favoritism to Esau and Jacob respectively; and now their fault is repeated in Jacob's preferential treatment of Joseph.

Jacob made Joseph a coat of many colors. This was an extravagance for those times. The ten brothers, whose coats were all of one dull color and fabric were tempted to be jealous of Joseph. Have we not also been tempted to be jealous of a brother's or sister's clothing? In large families often the youngest get all the hand-me-downs from the other children. Or sometimes an unwise and doting parent may shower one favorite child with many garments to the neglect of others in the family. This is unwise and unfair.

Joseph played the part of the favorite well. He brought back to his father the evil report from the brothers who were caring for the flocks. It could be that he did not miss any opportunity to tattle on his older brothers. The jealousy of the brothers ripened into hatred. So bitter did the brothers become toward Joseph that they could not speak civilly to him (Gen.37:4). Apparently Joseph, who was 17 years old, was allowed to stay at home when the other brothers had to feed the flocks of their father Jacob (vs.12,13).

II Joseph's Dreams: Joseph had prophetic dreams at this same time and unwisely he told

his dreams to his brothers. In one of his dreams Joseph saw himself and his brothers binding sheaves in the field. His own sheaf stood upright but his brothers' sheaves all bowed down before his. Joseph indiscreetly told this dream to his brothers. The result was predictable: they hated him still more (vs.8). Yet another prophetic dream was given to Joseph. In this second dream he saw the sun, the moon and eleven stars all bowing in obeisance to him. Again Joseph related the dream, this time not only to his brothers but also to his father, Jacob. The father rebuked Joseph for his impertinence and asked, "Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?" (vs.10). This second dream aroused the brothers' hatred again. Jacob, however, took note of the incident.

Suppose Joseph had kept all these dreams and pondered their meaning in his heart. He might have saved himself unnecessary animosity. To be sure God allowed all these things to work out for the salvation of His people, yet perhaps we can learn a lesson here. It is only human nature when God has revealed something to us, to want to tell what we know. Why even an ordinary secret is hard to keep, but when the Lord has given us light, how natural for us to want others to know that God has showed us something. The sacred narrative finds no fault with Joseph, but it will do us no harm to see that discretion concerning his dreams might have saved Joseph a great deal of anguish. Let us be careful to keep the words of our mouths under the constant check of the Holy Spirit.

While the brothers were feeding the flock at Shechem, Joseph remained at home. After some time Jacob sent Joseph to see that all was well with them. Joseph obediently set out. But the brothers had moved on. Joseph found a man who had overheard them speak of going to Dothan. Joseph followed to that place. As he approached their camp his brothers spied him coming. His coat of many colors made him conspicuous and aroused their hatred and jealousy again. "Behold this dreamer cometh" one of them said, "let us slay him...and...say some evil beast hath devoured him, and we shall see what will become of his dreams" (vs.20). Reuben, the oldest of the brothers, felt some responsibility and delivered Joseph from instant death. He suggested that they throw Joseph into a pit, but forbade them to shed the blood of Joseph. Reuben intended to release Joseph later from the pit (vs.22).

The brothers tore the offensive coat of many colors from Joseph and threw him into a dry pit. They then sat down to eat and while they were satisfying their appetites a caravan approached. Reuben apparently was absent for the moment and Judah suggested they might make a little money on Joseph by selling him as a slave. In this way they need not stain their hands with his blood, and yet they could be rid of him for good. The caravan was going to Egypt and Joseph was brought out of the pit and sold to them for twenty pieces of silver. It is a little ironic that the great grandson of Abraham by Sarah, the free woman, was here sold into slavery to the Ishmaelites, descendants of Abraham by Hagar the bondwoman who had been cast out. The narrative goes quickly over this portion of the story, but later on we learn how Joseph pled with his brothers in great anguish (see ch.42:21-24). When the brothers were in great distress they remembered, "we are verily guilty concerning our brother in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us: and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us" (Gen.42:21). Their guilt

had haunted them for twenty years. They had fooled their father Jacob, but they could not forget their own guilt. They had taken Joseph's offending coat and ripped it and dipped it in the blood of a goat. Then they brought it home to Jacob. They asked him whether it was Joseph's coat. He deduced at once, as the brothers knew he would, that Joseph had been attacked by a wild beast and devoured. Poor Jacob! How he mourned for Joseph. The guilty brothers attempted to comfort him. But he refused to be comforted. "I will go down into the grave unto my son, mourning," he lamented (ch.37:35).

It is interesting and sad to note how Jacob reaped exactly what he had sowed. He fooled his father when he pretended to be Esau, and now ten of his sons deceived him, causing him to believe that Joseph was dead. It often works out that way, our sins are repeated in our own children. Repentance brings forgiveness from God, but often the consequences of our sin cannot be undone. Let us sow the seeds of honesty and purity so that we may reap good fruits from our lives. How unfortunate that the ten brothers did not recognize the temptation to be jealous of their younger brother. They could have dealt with God about it and received grace from Him to overcome. They chose to brood over their grievances, and jealousy developed into full-grown hatred. It got so that they could not speak decently to their brother. Perhaps some Christians fall into the same trap. Thinking over our grievances usually magnifies them. The more we think of how we have been wronged the worse the offence becomes until it is blown up out of proportion. Then follows inevitably, rash actions for which we are usually sorry. Don't you think Joseph's brothers wished time and again that they could undo the terrible deed and get Joseph back from Egypt? It is wise to deal with the temptations of jealousy and bitterness when they begin. To confess and forsake the way of envy will save much bitter remorse later. Many a marriage can be saved by a little dealing with God for patience and a forgiving spirit. Don't ever again go to sleep with any unforgiven wrong eating at your soul. Ten brothers would have had twenty easier years had they dealt with jealousy quickly and severely. Who knows what we may save ourselves.

IV Like Christ: Whatever faults we may find in Joseph, the scripture makes no mention of them. Many think that he is the most perfect type of Christ in the Old Testament. He was the beloved son of his father, if not the only begotten. His brothers like those of our Lord did not believe him. Joseph was sold for twenty pieces of silver and our Lord for thirty. Joseph's coat was stripped from him and our Lord's coat was taken from him and lots were cast for it. Joseph endured the jealousy of the sons of Israel and Jesus was the victim of the envy of the Scribes and Pharisees who were the leaders of the children of Israel. There are more, similarities but we will consider this again in another lesson.

JOSEPH: SLAVE, PRISONER, PRIME MINISTER

Read: Genesis 39:1-23, 40:1-23, 41:1-57
Acts 7:9-14; Psalm 105:15-23

Memory Verse: But the Lord was with Joseph, and showed him mercy, and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. (Genesis 39:21)

What we should learn from this Lesson

1. *It is possible for the Lord's people to prosper in the midst of trying circumstances.*
2. *We should recognize temptation for what it is and absolutely refuse to commit wickedness and sin against God.*
3. *Every bit of suffering for righteousness' sake is recognized by God and brings an exceeding and eternal weight of glory in the end.*

I Potiphar's Slave: Joseph was seventeen years old when his brothers sold him (ch.37:2). When he finally stood before Pharaoh in Egypt he was thirty years of age (ch.41:46). Jacob learned of Joseph's survival only after seven years of plenty and two years of famine. For twenty-two years Joseph did not see his father, Jacob, who loved him so. But Joseph learned some lessons very well.

The caravan which had purchased Joseph from the jealous brothers delivered him to the slave market in Egypt. What a tremendous change in circumstances! From the best loved son to a lowly slave. Perhaps Joseph, like Paul, had learned in whatsoever state he was to be content. Whatever the case, no bitterness or resentment kept him from serving his new master. Joseph went right to work and served Potiphar well. The Lord was with Joseph. Everything he did prospered. The undeserved circumstances did not deter Joseph from performing his duties with all his heart. Soon Potiphar noticed the good results from all that Joseph did. He gave him more responsibility. At last he made Joseph overseer over his whole house and entrusted all that he had to Joseph.

The servant of the Lord can surely learn from Joseph. He performed his duties well even though he was in a situation that could have been considered hateful and undeserved. Christians ought to do their best in whatever situation they find themselves. Usually, the employer will note those who perform their duties well and promote them. The best preparation for higher office is the faithful performance of present duties. Even if the employer never notices our faithful performance of duties, we certainly know it ourselves and also the Lord is aware of it. The Christian worker should rise in his occupation because of his

character and principles. It glorifies our Lord to perform our jobs well for His sake.

II Overcoming Temptation: Joseph was a handsome young man in the bloom of manhood (ch.39:6). Potiphar's wife looked at him with lust. She tried to seduce the promising young overseer. He was far from home in a strange country. No one would know. But Joseph had a remarkable character. He brushed aside every advance of his master's wife. How many promising young people have fallen headlong into similar temptations, especially when far from home and loved ones. Lives have been ruined by one moment of weakness.

Joseph recognized the temptation exactly for what it was: great wickedness in betraying the confidence his master had placed in him; and outright *sin against God!* We ought also to remember the responsibility we have to our fellow Christians and to our assemblies and to our loved ones and make sure that no excuse or rationalization will allow us to yield to temptation. Just at the time of this writing a prominent Christian educator who has been a vocal advocate for moral virtue in America, the minister of a nationally known church, has been exposed as an adulterer and pervert. He has excused his actions (fully admitted) with shallow rationalization and pleas for the grace of God on "the chiefest of sinners," but he has betrayed the confidence of his large congregation and committed gross wickedness against the thousands who have been students in his school. The social codes of morals change like the weather with a general deterioration, but the standard of God on purity, as in other areas, is unchangeable. Adultery and fornication are sins against God as well as sins against the human body. True, Jesus did not condemn the woman taken in adultery, but neither did He condone the sin, for He told her to go and *sin no more.*

Joseph acted wisely. Potiphar's wife was unfaithful to her husband and enticed Joseph at every opportunity. He would not listen to her and did his best to avoid her. Unfortunately she caught Joseph alone one day and once again attempted to seduce him. When Joseph resisted her advances she grabbed his garment. Joseph left his garment and fled. "Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned" might well have been written of this unfaithful vixen. Having utterly failed to lure Joseph into uncleanness she immediately accused him of the very thing she herself had desired. She supported her accusation by the garment she found in her hand when Joseph fled.

When the master returned to his home the false accusation was made against Joseph. It seems that Joseph did not accuse his master's wife nor defend himself. Perhaps he had no opportunity to clear himself. At any rate, the master, Potiphar, filled with wrath, and totally deceived by his unfaithful wife cast Joseph into prison. Now Joseph seemed to be in a worse condition than ever. A slave was a mean position, but a prisoner was worse yet. But God would yet cause the wrath of man to praise Him. The prison where Joseph was incarcerated was one in which the king's prisoners were bound. This was important for it brought Joseph in contact with one (at least) who would have access to the king. Though Joseph's situation seemed more intolerable than ever, he was indeed closer than ever to the place of great honor and service that God had been preparing him for. Let us not be discouraged when our circumstances take a decided turn for the worse. If we are faithfully

following the Word of God, our victory and promotion might be just around the corner. Let us then be true and faithful.

III From Prison to Palace: Despite the setback Joseph was not despondent. He was a model prisoner. The warden soon realized that Joseph was one whom he could trust. Presently, Joseph was entrusted with the oversight of the prisoners. God was with him. Surely it must have been some comfort to Joseph that God was with him.

One day the royal butler and the royal baker were thrown into Joseph's prison. There must have been a plot on Pharaoh's life and both suspects were jailed to be sure the conspiracy was squelched. After some time in prison the butler and baker had strange dreams, both in the same night. When Joseph saw them in the morning he noticed immediately that something was amiss. They told him of their dreams. Joseph responded, "Do not interpretations belong to God? tell me them I pray you" (ch.40:8). They did, and Joseph interpreted. The butler's dream foretold that in three days he would be restored to his former position. Joseph asked the butler to remember him when he was in the king's presence again, and get him out of this undeserved bondage. When the baker heard the good interpretation of his fellow-prisoner's dream, he told Joseph his dream. Once again Joseph interpreted. However, this interpretation was not so pleasing as the former, for Joseph foretold that in three days the baker would be executed by hanging.

Both interpretations were fulfilled to the letter. The third day was Pharaoh's birthday. On that day he restored the butler and had the baker executed. But in his joy at being restored to his former position of honor the butler forgot all about the unfortunate Joseph, languishing still in prison. God's time was not yet fully come.

Two more years elapsed before there was any change in Joseph's circumstances. At that time the king (Pharaoh) had two curious dreams (see Gen.41:1-8). They puzzled him and none of his advisors could interpret them for Pharaoh. Then the butler remembered Joseph. He told Pharaoh of the prisoner who had so accurately interpreted his own and the baker's dreams. Joseph was sent for at once. He was quickly brought out of the dungeon. He shaved himself (the only time face-shaving is mentioned in the Bible) and changed his clothing and immediately was taken to the king. Pharaoh said that he understood that Joseph could interpret dreams, but Joseph acknowledged that God must give the interpretation.

The dreams were interpreted as a warning of a great famine to come which would last seven years. The famine, however, would be preceded by seven years of unprecedented harvest. Joseph advised Pharaoh to find a wise administrator for this life and death program. The king knew just the man. Who could be better suited than the man who could commune with God and so give the interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams? Joseph was his man. He put his own ring on Joseph's finger, dressed him in fine linen and put a golden chain about Joseph's neck. The prisoner of the morning was second only to the king before the sun went down. Faithful Joseph had been well prepared by God for this life-preserving place of honor. As my wise old Dad used to say, "The buffeting and discipline of Joseph during those thirteen long years prevented him from becoming dizzy when he ascended to the

throne." God knows how to prepare his vessels. David, also went through similar hardships for about the same length of time before he finally became the king. So, Joseph, went from the prison to the palace in God's time and way. May God help us to be faithful to Him no matter what our circumstances may be here so that in His time and way we may one day sit with Him in His Throne and Kingdom.

JOSEPH, RULER IN EGYPT

Read: Genesis 41:46-57, 42:1-38, 43:1-34,
44:1-34, 45:1-28, 50:1-26

Memory Verse: By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones. (Hebrews 11:22)

What we should learn from this Lesson

1. When God gives us a surplus of provisions we should seek his guidance for the prudent use thereof.
2. The dreams and visions which are truly from the Lord eventually are fulfilled.
3. There are no second causes for the true believer. God works all together for good.
4. We too, may face the end of our days or the return of the Lord with hope and faith and leave a blessing and example for our loved ones.

I Preparing for the Famine: The interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams began to be fulfilled at once. The earth brought forth fruit "by handfuls" (ch.41:47). Joseph was now the administrator of the food program. He ordered all the grain possible to be stored. So abundant was the harvest year after year that the provisions could no longer be measured. During these seven years of plenty, Joseph was given a wife. She bore him two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. Their names were significant. Manasseh means *forgetting*. This name was chosen because the birth of this child enabled Joseph to forget the home of his youth in joy of having his own home and family. He now could *forget* also all the suffering he had endured. The second was named Ephraim; which means *fruitful*. Joseph was now "fruitful in the land of his affliction" (ch.41:52).

Just as foretold, after seven years of abundance, famine struck. This is very understandable in the land of Egypt, for every year's harvest depends largely on the overflow of the Nile river. There are records in ancient history which tell of other periods of severe famine in Egypt. A seven year famine from 1064-1071 A.D. resulted in horrible disasters. Pestilence broke out with the famine. Cattle died off and were eaten by starving inhabitants. Prices for carcasses of dogs and cats were high beyond belief. Human flesh was widely eaten. Various recipes for human flesh were exchanged. The greater part of the population was swept away by death. This famine and another about 1200 A.D. were the result of no overflow from the Nile river.

Such terrible consequences were avoided by the wise administration of Joseph. As Joseph laid up food for the years to come, so ought we as Christians to lay up treasure in heaven. We also ought to seek the Lord with all our hearts now and call upon Him while He is near so that in time of great need we are prepared to trust Him and obtain His help.

When the harvest failed and the people began to hunger they cried to Pharaoh. He sent them to Joseph who sold them grain. In this way the government made money. While this policy would not be too popular in this age of socialism, it was an acceptable procedure in those ancient times. This famine was widespread and the nations round about sent to Egypt to purchase grain.

II The Dreams Fulfilled: Jacob, also, heard that provisions were available in Egypt. He sent Joseph's brothers to get some. When they arrived in Egypt they were sent to Joseph whose Egyptian name was Zaphnath-paaneah (revealer of secrets). There they had to apply for permission to buy grain. Joseph saw them and recognized them at once. They bowed themselves down before Joseph just as the sheaves had done in Joseph's dream twenty years before. Joseph spoke roughly to them and accused them of coming to spy on the provisions of Egypt. They denied it and told Joseph that they were all sons of one man. They told him that one younger brother was at home with their father and that one brother *is not*. How Joseph must have chuckled over that one!

Joseph then told them that if they told the truth he would know it for he demanded to see that younger brother before he would believe them. But after three days of imprisonment he allowed nine brothers to return to Jacob and kept Simeon as hostage till they should return with Benjamin. Their guilt weighed heavily on them. They spoke in their own tongue never dreaming that Joseph could understand them. They recalled Joseph's anguish and beseeching when they had sold him as a slave. Reuben reminded the others that he had told them not to harm the lad. When Joseph heard this conversation he had to turn his back on them to hide his tears.

Corn was given to the nine brothers and they were sent off to return to Egypt only if they brought young Benjamin along. Joseph hassled his brothers by restoring the purchase money to each of them in the top of the sacks of grain. They did not know what to think. Jacob was distressed when he heard the news. He counted Simeon as good as dead, Joseph was not and now they wanted to take Benjamin. "All these things are against me," he cried. If only he had known what joys were just over the horizon! Let us take heart in affliction. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."

Jacob would not consent to Benjamin going until hunger overcame fear. Reluctantly Jacob sent Benjamin along. He also sent double money, fearing that the restored funds were an error. In Egypt once again the brothers all bowed in obeisance to Joseph as in his youthful dreams. Joseph enquired somewhat more than politely of the welfare of the old man the brothers had spoken of. He was introduced to Benjamin, his only full brother and had to retreat to his chamber to weep in emotion at seeing him. Joseph ordered a meal to be served to the brothers. They were astonished that they were seated in the exact order of their age. Joseph continued to harass the brothers by placing his silver cup in the sack

of grain belonging to Benjamin. He made them come back after they had started for home. Joseph wanted to keep Benjamin there. The brothers would not go without him. It would kill old Jacob, they assured Joseph.

III God Meant It For Good: Finally Joseph could restrain himself no longer. He dismissed all his Egyptian attendants and began to weep before his brothers. "I am Joseph," he cried, "doth my father yet live?" But the brothers were dumbfounded. They did not know whether to rejoice or to flee for their lives. Joseph told the brothers not to be grieved for it was God who had sent him into Egypt to save many lives. He told them that there would be five more years of famine. He told them to return home and get Jacob and come to dwell in Goshen where Joseph could care for them all. Joseph sent "wagons" to get his aged father. These were probably royal coaches of the type in which Pharaoh rode. Jacob's heart fainted when he heard the news. He could not believe this good news. But when he saw the royal carriages which Joseph had sent for him, he revived and said, "It is enough; Joseph my son is alive: I will go and see him before I die" (ch.45:28). The whole family (70 souls) went to Egypt as honored guests. Several generations later their descendants were the oppressed slaves of another Egyptian Pharaoh which knew not Joseph.

The guilt weighed heavily on the brothers, for having sold Joseph. Joseph himself understood that God had worked it out for good. When Jacob finally died, the brothers feared that now Joseph would take revenge. They went to him and once again bowed before him. They asked for his forgiveness. But Joseph restrained them, "Ye thought evil against me," he explained, "but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass as it is this day, to save much people alive" (ch.50:20).

IV By Faith: Before Jacob died he blessed all of his sons. He also blessed the two sons of Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim. Joseph set the two boys before the patriarch so that the oldest would have Jacob's right hand laid on his head, but Jacob crossed his hands and gave the greater blessing to the younger. Does this not suggest that if Jacob himself had trusted the Lord to work out his blessing for him from Isaac, that something similar might have happened. These blessings were from God, and the Almighty could cross the hands, or whatever, to bestow the right blessing on the right son. The author of Hebrews tells us that Jacob blessed these sons of Joseph *by faith*.

It was a proclamation by faith, on Joseph's part that instructed the children of Israel to carry forth his bones from Egypt when they went out to possess the land which God had promised them. Joseph died at the age of 110. His body was embalmed (only reference in scripture). Probably, the mummified corpse was not buried, but preserved for about 140 years until the Exodus. From Adam to Joseph, the book of Genesis covers 2369 years.