

READ The BIBLE Together



Genesis 12-50 (Part I)

13th July - 13th September 2014

**SHALOM CHURCH, SINGAPORE
(Upholding the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith)**

Day 1 Read Genesis 12:1-9

Genesis chapter 12 begins a new section that develops from the concluding section of the previous chapter. We were introduced to Abram in chapter 11. Beginning in chapter 12, events involving Abram and his descendants become the primary focus of the Bible. This marks a major development in God's plan for man's salvation. In the first section of Genesis, Genesis chapters 1 to 11, God deals with the whole human race in general, although from time to time He did deal with certain receptive individuals (for example, Noah). But He had chosen no particular group of people or nation to concentrate His efforts. These first eleven chapters are virtually foundational to the whole biblical record. If we use the tree as a comparison, Genesis 1-11 is the root of the tree, Genesis 12-50, the trunk, and the rest of the Bible, the branches.

From Genesis chapter 12 onward, God's attention is focused on one man and his family, developed later to be a nation whom He primarily would deal with and through whom His plan of salvation on behalf of mankind would ultimately be accomplished. Shortly after Satan through the serpent had led men into sin in the Garden of Eden, God had promised in Genesis 3:15 that One would come who would defeat the works of Satan. This would be fulfilled by overcoming the power and consequences of sin. Since that promise was made, little has been said in the biblical record thus far about the means of its fulfillment. But God had a plan that He was working out for man's salvation, and the call of Abraham was a major step in the working out of that plan. So important was Abraham in God's plan of salvation that those who afterward would be God's true people are referred to as the spiritual descendants of Abraham (for example, Galatians 3:29). It is therefore not surprising that no less than fourteen chapters of Genesis are allotted to the life of Abraham that we will study from now till chapter 25.

1. From Genesis 11:31, it appears that Terah took his family from Ur to Haran and God appeared to Abram in Haran (Genesis 12:1). Did God call Abram out of Ur, or did He call Terah? You may need help from Genesis 15:7 and Acts 7:2-4 to answer this question.

2. God's command for Abram was to go to Canaan. Why did Abram stay in Haran instead? Locate where Ur, Haran, and Canaan are on the map provided on the next page (Figure 5).

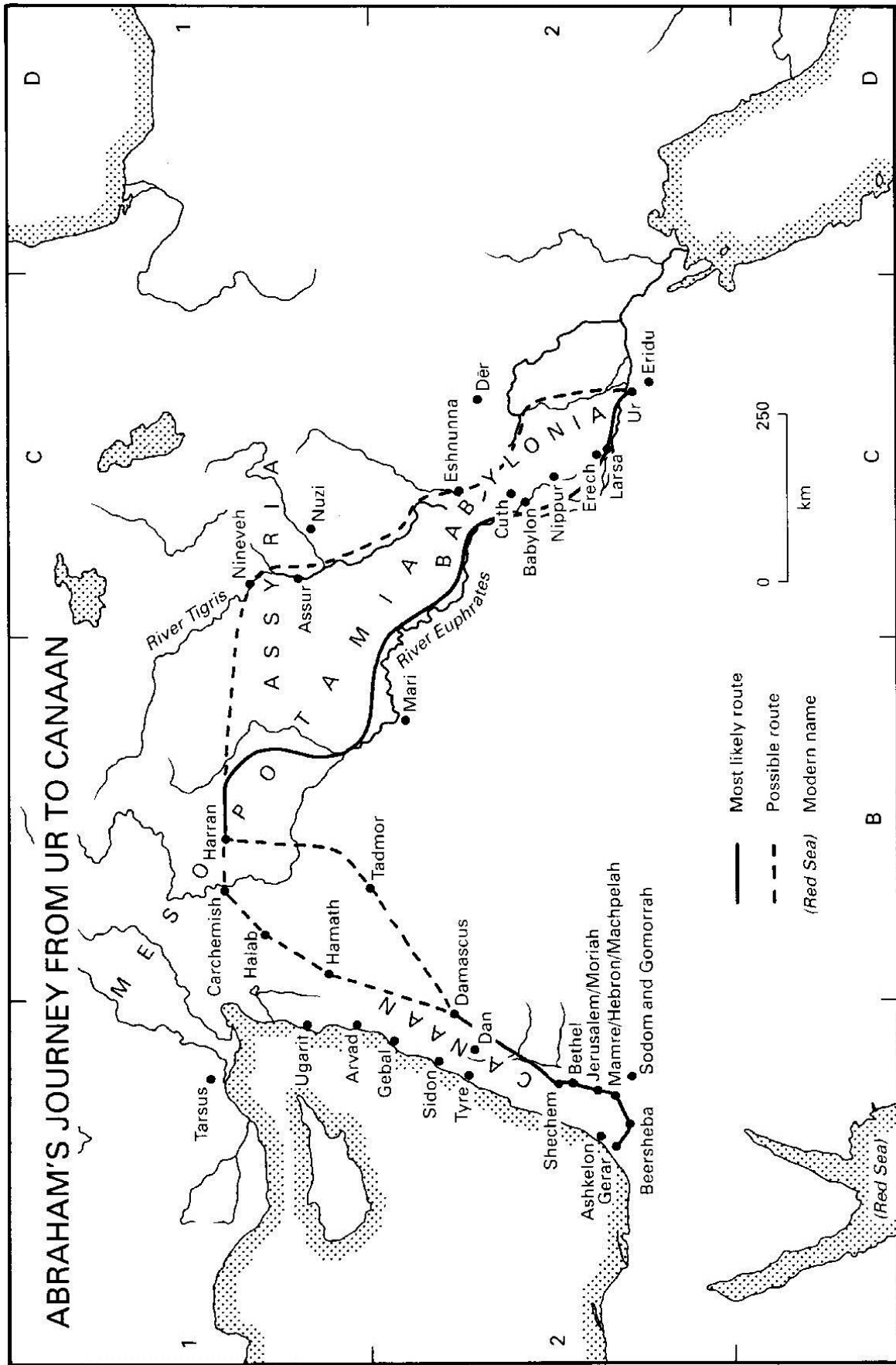


Figure 5 – Map of Mesopotamia and Canaan

3. Do you think Abram was a worshipper of God when he obeyed God's command to leave Ur?

Day 2 Read **Genesis 12:1-9**

1. Joshua 24:2 says that Abram served other gods in Ur of the Chaldeans, so why did God call Abram out of Ur?
2. In the call of Abram, what did God promise him?
3. What did Abram do with God's command? Do you think it was an easy thing for Abram to do what he did? Explain your answer.
4. What did God do when Abram was at the plain of Moreh? And what did Abram do?

Day 3 Read **Genesis 12:1-9**

1. Consider the call of Abram:

This was a gracious call by God. Abram did not deserve to be chosen by God. Ur of the Chaldeans has been explored by archaeologists who have found that in Abram's time (about 2,000 BC) the city was the center of the worship of the moon god. Instead of worshipping the true God, Abram's family "worshipped other gods" (Joshua 24:2). Yet Abram received this merciful call from the true God. Abram was called by God's grace and grace alone.

This was an effective call by God. Ur was a very highly civilized city, providing the best available comforts for its citizens. According to Halley's Handbook, "...Just prior to the time of Abraham, Ur was the most magnificent city in all the world; a center of manufacture, farming and shipping, in a land of fabulous fertility and

wealth, with caravans going in every direction to distant lands, and ships sailing from the docks of Ur down the Persian Gulf with cargoes of copper and hard stone. Then, about the time of Abraham, it was eclipsed by Babylon, but remained an important city..." Yet Abram totally abandoned all the wealth of this world. God came into Abram's life in some very compelling way so that Abram found it irresistible to obey. Acts 7:2 says "*The God of glory appeared to our father*". The glory of God outweighed the advantages of Ur.

This was a call of God to great blessings. The word "*blessing*" occurs five times in verses 2 and 3. God promised to give seven remarkable benefits, all of which were beyond the power of Abram to achieve for himself. The greatest of these blessings was that all nations of the earth would be eventually blessed by Christ the Saviour, who would be of Abram's race.

This was a call that required obedience from Abram in total separation from the idolatrous culture and society of Ur in order to live in the way that God would show him. Abram's wholehearted response shows that he had a remarkable faith in God (Hebrews 11:8).

It is clear at the time of this call that Abram was a worshipper of the true God for no man is able to obey God's command unless and until God's spirit has first worked a work of grace in his heart to quicken him for good work. How and when Abram came to know the true God is not stated in the biblical record. Presumably it happened before God called him out of Ur or at the time when God called him.

In the experience of every believer, there will be the same facts as seen in Abram's call. No one ever deserves to be called by God. Salvation is the work of God from beginning to the end. God's call has the power to change us. God's spirit works in us so that we can obey His call. God calls us to many blessings. Believers are called to live separated from ungodliness.

2. God calls you to believe in Jesus Christ, have you responded to that call?

Day 4 Read **Genesis 12:10-20**

1. Is it wrong to flee from a land plagued with famine? So, was it wrong for Abram to go to Egypt?

2. What did Abram do before entering Egypt? Why did he do that?
3. Do you think Abram's reasoning and action here are logical and sound judgment?
4. God plagued Pharaoh for what Abram did. Why did God intervene?

Day 5 Read **Genesis 12:10-20**

1. From our reading, what can you conclude about Sarai?
2. What did Pharaoh do in Genesis 12:18-20? What lessons can we learn from these verses?
3. From Genesis 12:10-20, what can you learn about Abram?
4. From Genesis 12:10-20, what can you learn about God?

Day 6 Read **Genesis 13:1-18**

1. Verse 1 says: "*Then Abram went up from Egypt . . . to the South.*" If Abram went up (i.e., north), how is it that he also went "*to the South*"?

2. Who were the two rich men mentioned in today's reading? Is it wrong to be rich? Can Christians be rich? In what way is getting rich wrong?

3. How did Abram settle the dispute with Lot?

4. What lesson(s) can we learn from Abram in the way he handled the dispute?

Day 7 Read **Genesis 13:1-18**

1. How did Lot make his choice of the land? Do you think he has made a wise choice? Give reasons for your answer. What lesson(s) can we learn from this?

2. What renewed and expanded promises did the Lord give to Abram in verses 14-17?

3. Why do you think the Lord chooses this moment to speak to Abram?

4. Where did Lot pitch his tent when he first chose the land, and where was he living later in Genesis 14:20? How would you explain this shift?

Week 2

[20th – 26th July 2014]

Day 1 Read **Genesis 14:1-17**

1. According to verses 1-4, who went to war against each other, and why did they fight the war?
2. What was the main consequence of the war?
3. Although Abram's 318 servants were trained, they were no military men. Moreover, it is likely that they were out-numbered. How do you think Abram was able to defeat the enemies?
4. What did Melchizedek in Genesis 14:20 say about Abram's victory?

Day 2 Read **Genesis 14:18-24**

1. Who is Melchizedek and what did he do?
2. Without referring to other Bible passages, identify the similarity between Melchizedek and the Lord Jesus Christ from today's reading.
3. Describe the behavior of the king of Sodom in verse 21.
4. How much of the spoils of war did Abram keep for himself and why did he do that?

Day 3 Read **Genesis 15:1-21**

1. Why did God in verse 1 tell Abram not to be afraid? What was Abram's fear?
2. What problem did Abram have regarding God's promise? What solution did Abram propose in verses 2-3?
3. How was Abram counted for righteousness?
4. What did God predict would happen to Abram's descendants in verses 13-14?

Day 4 Read **Genesis 15:1-21**

1. Verse 13 says that the affliction would be for 400 years. Yet Exodus 12:40 says 430 years. How can this difference be accounted for?
2. What does verse 16b mean? What can we learn about God's character in this verse?
3. How did God appear to Abram in verse 17?
4. In Abram's day, solemn agreements between two people were confirmed by the two persons walking together between the cut carcasses of animals. The action of walking between the bleeding pieces meant: *"May I be cut to pieces as these animals are if I break this agreement"* (see Jeremiah 34:18-20).

When the Lord made the covenant with Abram in verse 7, why only the presence of God passed between the pieces of animals (verse 17) while Abram did not?

Day 5 Read **Genesis 15**

1. Take time to review Genesis 15. Jot down your thoughts below:
2. Timothy 3:16 says that "*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness*", and this includes Genesis 15.

(a) What doctrine have you learnt from Genesis 15?

(b) What corrections did Genesis 15 give you?

3. We read these words in Luke 24:25-27 ~ *Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.*

How can we see Christ and His sufferings from Genesis 15?

Day 6 Read **Genesis 16:1-6**

1. Consider all the relevant factors, do you think Sarai's proposal in verse 2 an acceptable solution to Abram's lack of a son?

2. Describe the wrongs of the following people *when* Sarai's proposal was being carried out:

Abram:

Sarai:

Hagar:

3. Describe the wrongs of the following people *after* Sarai's proposal was being carried out:

Abram:

Sarai:

Hagar:

Day 7 Read **Genesis 16:7-15**

1. Who found Hagar? Where was she? Where was she going?
2. What was Hagar told to do? Do you think it was easy for Hagar to obey?
3. How can we observe the fulfillment of verse 12 today?

4. What can we learn from chapter 16 in relation to decision-making?

Week 3

[27th – 2nd Aug 2014]

Day 1 Read Genesis 17:1-14

1. Verse 1 says that God appeared to Abram. When was the last time God appeared to Abram?
2. God now appeared to Abram as the Almighty God (Hebrew: El Shaddai). What is the significance of this name in the context of to-day's reading?
3. Comparing Genesis 12:2 and Genesis 17:4, is there any difference in God's promise? Can you give some examples of how Genesis 17:4 is fulfilled?
4. What change was made to Abram's name? Why was the change made?

Day 2 Read Genesis 17:1-27

1. What did God promise Abraham that He would do in verses 2-8?

2. Verses 7-8 say that the covenant and the land were to be “everlasting” possessions of Abraham and his descendants. What is the meaning of “everlasting”?

3. What did God require Abraham to do to keep God’s covenant?

4. How did Abraham demonstrate obedience to God’s command?

Day 3 Read **Genesis 17:1-27**

1. How did Abraham react to God’s promise regarding Sarah? Do you think it was the result of unbelief? Refer to Romans 4:18-21 in your answer.

2. From verses 19-22, what do you think is the main difference in God’s promise to Ishmael and that to Isaac?

3. Was Abraham being reckoned righteous as a result of his obedience to God’s command? Refer to Romans 4:9-10.

4. What attributes of God can we learn from Genesis 17?

Day 4 Read **Genesis 18: 1-15**

1. Do you think Abraham somehow knew that the three visitors were not ordinary men?

2. What acts of hospitality did Abraham offer to the visitors?
3. How could you deduce from to-day's reading that Abraham's visitors were angelic beings (Jehovah and His angels)?
4. Bearing in mind who the visitors really were, what is the significance of verse 8 which says: "... as they ate ..."?

Day 5 Read **Genesis 18:1-15**

1. What prediction did the visitors make regarding Sarah?
2. How did Sarah react to this prediction and why did she react in this way?
3. What is the difference between Sarah's reaction and Abraham's similar reaction in Genesis 17:17 that Sarah was here rebuked by the Lord?
4. In Genesis 17:19, God said that Sarah shall bear Abraham a son and his name shall be called Isaac. What does "*Isaac*" mean?

Day 6 Read **Genesis 18:16-33**

1. Why did the Lord tell Abraham what He was going to do to Sodom?

2. What are the sins of Sodom? Refer to Ezekiel 16:49-50.

3. God is omniscient. Why did He need to go down to Sodom to find out whether or not what He had been told of the sins of Sodom was correctly reported to Him (verse 21)?

4. What was the basis of Abraham's intercessory prayer for Sodom?

Day 7 Read **Genesis 18:16-33**

1. Describe some of the characteristics of Abraham's intercessory prayer that we should imitate.

2. What request did Abraham originally make regarding Sodom, and what was his final request that God granted?

3. Why did Abraham stop at that final request and not proceed further?

4. What can we learn about the character of God in granting the final request of Abraham?

Week 4

[3rd – 9th Aug 2014]

Day 1 Read **Genesis 19:1-11**

1. From Genesis 13:12, 14:12 and 19:1, describe Lot's change in position with respect to Sodom.
2. What is the meaning of the expression "*know them carnally*" in verse 5?
3. Who were those in Sodom who demanded to "*know*" the two visitors in Lot's house?
4. Describe the degree of sinfulness of the people in Sodom.

Day 2 Read **Genesis 19:1-11**

1. How did Lot attempt to discourage the men of the city from committing the act they demanded?
2. Comment on Lot's suggestion in verse 8 to appease the men of the city.
3. Why do you think Lot offered such a solution as in verse 8?
4. What did the angels do to protect Lot from the threatening Sodomites?

Day 3 Read **Genesis 19:12-38**

1. How did God keep His promise to Abraham's intercessory prayer that He would not destroy the righteous with the wicked?
2. What was Lot's sons-in-law's response when Lot told them to get out of Sodom for the Lord was going to destroy the city? Why do you think they responded in this way?
3. In Luke 17:32, Jesus told us to remember Lot's wife who looked back at Sodom and became a pillar of salt. What lessons can and must we learn from Lot's wife?
4. What effects does life in Sodom seem to have on Lot and on the members of his family?

Day 4 Read **Genesis 20:1-18**

1. What is Abraham's failure recorded in this chapter?
2. What do you think are the causes of Abraham's failure?
3. What does the word "*took*" in verse 2 mean?

4. Some liberal scholars say that the event in this chapter is the same as that recorded in Genesis 12. How would you rebut such an allegation?

Day 5 Read **Genesis 20:1-18**

1. How did God intervene to keep His covenant with Abraham?
2. How could we know that Abimelech did not sin in this event?
3. What three excuses did Abraham give for lying to Abimelech? Are his excuses justified?
4. What lessons can we learn from this chapter about:
Abraham –

Abimelech –

God -

Day 6 Read **Genesis 21:1-7**

1. What does “*at the set time*” in verse 2 mean? What lesson(s) can we learn from this?

2. How old was (a) Abraham, (b) Sarah and (c) Ishmael when Isaac was born?

3. How old was Abraham when God first gave him the promise of a son by Sarah? Why did God take such length of time to fulfill His promise?

4. Why do you think was Abraham's son called "*Isaac*"?

Day 7 Read **Genesis 21:8-21**

1. How did Ishmael respond to Isaac's birth? How does Galatians 4:29 describe such response?

2. What did Sarah want to do with Ishmael and why?

3. How did Abraham feel about Sarah's intention? Why did he feel that way? What did God say about it?

4. Genesis 21 records the second occasion that Hagar leaves Abraham's camp; the first occasion is found in Genesis 16. Some scholars have suggested that these two stories are the muddled up accounts of one same event. How could we tell that these two occasions are actually two separate events?

Day 1 Read **Genesis 21:22-34**

1. Who is Abimelech?
2. What did Abimelech demand Abraham to do? Why did he make such demand?
3. How did Abraham settle the dispute with Abimelech over the well he has dug?
4. What do you think is the significance of Abraham planting a tamarisk tree in verse 33?

Day 2 Read **Genesis 22:1-10**

1. What does “*after these things*” in verse 1 mean?
2. What is so unusual about Abraham’s test in verse 2?
3. What is so unusual about Abraham’s faith in response to this unusual test?
4. How old was Isaac when God told Abraham to sacrifice him?

Day 3 Read **Genesis 22:1-24**

1. Describe what Abraham did to obey God's command in verse 2.
2. Do you think Abraham was telling the young men the truth when he said in verse 5: "*... and we will come back to you*"?
3. Why did God stop Abraham from obeying His command?
4. Why is the information regarding the family of Nahor (verses 20-24) given in this chapter?

Day 4 Read **Genesis 22**

1. Take time to review Genesis 22. Jot down your thoughts below:
2. Timothy 3:16 says that "*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness*", and this includes Genesis 15.
 - (a) What doctrine have you learnt from Genesis 22?
 - (b) What corrections did Genesis 22 give you?

3. We read these words in Luke 24:25-27 ~ *Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.*

How can we see Christ and His sufferings from Genesis 22?

Day 5 Read **Genesis 23:1-20**

1. Examine the following statements. Tick those that are true:
- (a) Sarah died when she was 127 years old.
 - (b) Sarah is the only woman in the Bible whose age at death is recorded.
 - (c) Like Eve, Sarah had sons and daughters at the time of death.
 - (d) Sarah is the mother of all believers.
 - (e) At Sarah's death, Abraham and Isaac were 137 and 37 years old respectively.
2. Where was Sarah's burial place? What is the significance of Abraham purchasing the burial place?
3. Who else were buried in the same place as Sarah? (Ref. Genesis 25:9; 35:27,29; 49:29-31, 49:29-31; and 50:13).

Day 6 Read **Genesis 23:1-20**

1. What did Abraham want to buy and what did he end up buying? How was this so?

2. Do you think the field Abraham purchased was bought at a good price? (Ref. 2 Samuel 24:24 and Jeremiah 32:9) Why did Abraham pay for it?

3. What lessons can we learn from:
 - * Abraham mourning over Sarah's death,

 - * Abraham purchasing the burial place for Sarah.

Day 7 Read **Genesis 24:1-14**

1. Verse 1 says that "*Abraham was old, well advanced in age*". How old was Abraham at this time when he commissioned his servant to find a wife for Isaac? How old was Isaac then?

2. What does "*put your hand under my thigh*" in verse 2 mean?

3. What are the two key instructions Abraham gave to his servant in this mission?

4. Where did Abraham send his servant to find Isaac's wife? How far was this place from where Abraham was at that time? (Refer to map in Figure 5)

Day 1 Read **Genesis 24:10-53**

1. From the prayer of Abraham's servant, describe the qualities he was seeking for the woman that would be his master's wife.
2. Describe the difficulties involved in the servant's mission.
3. Who is Rebekah in relation to Abraham?
4. In the servant's narration in verses 34-49, how many times do you find him referring to the Lord God? What was his purpose in making such references?

Day 2 Read **Genesis 24:54-67**

1. Do you think it was easy for Rebekah to come to the decision in verse 58? Why did she so readily agree to go as suggested by Abraham's servant?
2. What did Rebekah do when she saw Isaac in verse 64? What is the significance of her actions?

3. What lessons can we learn in this chapter about:

Abraham –

Abraham's servant –

God -

Day 3 Read **Genesis 25:1-11**

1. Did Abraham marry Keturah before Sarah died? Otherwise, (i) why was Keturah known as Abraham's concubine (verse 6 says, more than one concubine), and (ii) how could Abraham have six more sons when his body at the time of Isaac's birth was "as good as dead" (Romans 4:19)?
2. Who received Abraham's inheritance? What happened to his other sons? What was Abraham's rationale in doing that?
3. What does verse 9 tell us about Ishmael's character?
4. Did Isaac and Rebekah live together with Abraham?

Day 4 Read **Genesis 25:1-11**

Genesis 25:7-11 records the death of Abraham. This brings the section of Genesis on Abraham (12:1-25:11) to a close. At this juncture, let us do a review of the life of Abraham:

1. What is the single most important lesson you have learnt from the life of Abraham?
2. What is the one thing you most desire to emulate from the life of Abraham?
3. What is the one sin in the life of Abraham that you find present in your life as well, and which you must seek to overcome?

Day 5 Read **Genesis 25:12-26**

1. How many sons did Ishmael have? What can we say about Genesis 17:20 with respect to the genealogy of Ishmael? Who are the descendants of Ishmael today?
2. What is the similarity between Abraham and Sarah, and Isaac and Rebekah stated in verse 21? How did these two couples handle their problem?
3. How long did Isaac and Rebekah wait for their children to be born?
4. What does the Bible (and God, since the Bible is the word of God), call unborn life in a mother's womb? What is the implication of this to us today?

Day 6 Read **Genesis 25:27-34**

1. Did Abraham live to see his grand children from Isaac?
2. What were the two boys like when they grew older and what preference did Isaac and Rebekah have between the boys? Is this the recommended way to bring up children?
3. What is a birthright? Is there anything wrong with the way Jacob obtained the birthright?
4. What does "*Esau despised his birthright*" in verse 34 mean?

Day 7 Read **Genesis 26:1-11**

1. Verse 1 says that “*Isaac went to Abimelech king of the Philistines, in Gerar*”. Is this the same Abimelech that Abraham dealt with in Genesis 20?
2. What important decisions Isaac had to make on entering Gerar? Analyze his decisions.
3. What did the promise God gave to Isaac include? What is the difference between this promise and that God gave to his father Abraham?
4. On what basis was this promise given to Isaac?

Week 7

[24th – 30th Aug 2014]

Day 1 Read **Genesis 26:1-11**

1. Some critics suggest that Abraham’s experience in Gerar and that of Isaac’s are the same event repeated twice. Identify the differences between these two instances to show that such suggestion has no ground.
2. Was Isaac’s claim that Rebekah was his sister correct?
3. Give the underlying reason why Isaac made such claim.

4. What embarrassing situation did Isaac experience in Gerar? Why was it embarrassing?

Day 2 Read **Genesis 26:12-35**

1. What is unusual about what Isaac did in verse 12? What was the consequence? Why was there such consequence?
2. Why did Abimelech ask Isaac to leave his territory?
3. Why did the Philistines stop up all the wells dug by Abraham?
4. What was the key term of the covenant made by Isaac and Abimelech?

Day 3 Read **Genesis 26:12-35**

1. Describe the character of Isaac observed in this chapter, especially in his dealing with Abimelech and his men.
2. Describe the character of Abimelech observed in this chapter, especially in his dealing with Isaac.

3. Why do you think is information about Esau's wives given in verses 34-35, which appear to be almost incidental?

4. What have you learnt about God in this chapter?

Day 4 Read **Genesis 27:1-4**

1. Verse 1 says that "*Isaac was old and His eyes were dim . . .*" How old was Isaac at this time?

2. What did Isaac mean in verse 4: "*... that my soul may bless you ...*"?

3. Esau was the first born of Isaac and Rebekah. Was there anything wrong for Isaac to bless Esau?

4. When Isaac instructed Esau to hunt game for him to eat so that he may bless Esau, he said that he was about to die (verse 4). How many more years did Isaac live before he died?

Note: To calculate the age of Isaac (and Jacob) at the time of Genesis 27, we have to start from Jacob's son Joseph, who was 30 years old when he became a ruler in Egypt (see Gen. 41:46). Joseph was 39 (allowing for seven years of plenty and two years of famine; see Gen. 41:29–30; Gen. 45:6) when Jacob settled in Egypt at age 130 (see Gen. 47:9). Therefore, Jacob was about 91 when Joseph

was born (subtracting Joseph's 39 years from Jacob's 130 years). Jacob was about 77 when he parted from Esau, because Joseph was born 14 years after Jacob left home (see Gen. 30:25–31; Gen. 31:41). Since Jacob was born when Isaac was 60 (see Gen. 25:20, 26) and was about 77 at the time of the birthright blessing, Isaac was about 137.

Day 5 Read **Genesis 27:1-29**

1. Traditionally, blessing of the first born of the family is a time of rejoicing. The father of the family would inform and gather the whole family to witness the bestowment of this blessing that is then to be followed with a feast. Why did Isaac do it privately and secretly when he wanted to bless Esau?
2. When Rebekah learnt of Isaac wanting to bless Esau privately/secretly, why did not she confront Isaac and remind him of the oracle of God in Genesis 25:23?
3. What was Jacob's response when Rebekah told him to obey her voice in verses 6-10? Did Jacob do what he was told? Why did he do that?
4. How many times did Jacob lie to his father Isaac?

Day 6 Read **Genesis 27:18-46**

1. How and why was Isaac deceived into blessing Jacob instead of Esau?
2. What was the blessing Isaac gave to Jacob?

3. Why did Isaac tremble exceedingly (verse 33) when he realized he had been deceived into blessing Jacob instead of Esau?
4. Verse 34 says that Esau "*cried with an exceedingly great and bitter cry*". Was there a cause for him to cry?

Day 7 Read **Genesis 27:1-46**

1. What contributed to the breakdown of family ties in Isaac/Rebekah's family?
2. What can we learn about God in this chapter?
3. In summary, do you think that Jacob deserved the blessing from his father Isaac? Give reason(s) for your answer.
4. Do you think that Esau deserved the blessing from his father Isaac had Jacob not deceived him of it? Give reason(s) for your answer.

Week 8

[31st Aug – 6th Sep 2014]

Day 1 Read **Genesis 28:1-9**

1. In verse 1, "*Isaac called Jacob and blessed him*" before sending him to Padan Aram. Why was Isaac so willing to fully bless Jacob this time compared to chapter 27?

2. What are the key features in Isaac's blessing on Jacob?
3. How did Esau bring further distress to Isaac and Rebekah? Why did Esau do that?
4. What does what Esau did say about his character?

Day 2 Read **Genesis 28:1-9**

From Genesis 28:5 onwards, the spotlight will shift from Isaac to Jacob. Before we focus on the next patriarch Jacob, let us do a review of the life of Isaac:

1. What is the single most important lesson you have learnt from the life of Isaac?
2. How can you see Christ from the life of Isaac?

Day 3 Read **Genesis 28:10-22**

1. Describe Jacob's dream in verses 12-15.
2. What are the implications of Jacob's dream to Jacob himself? What New Testament truth(s) can we learn from Jacob's dream?

3. What promises did God make to Jacob? Why was this important?
4. Jacob described the place where he slept for the night as “... *none other than the house of God*” in verse 17. By what name did he call this place? What is the meaning of that name?

Day 4 Read **Genesis 28:10-22**

1. What is the significance of Jacob pouring oil on the rock?
2. What is a vow? Comment on Jacob’s vow in verse 20-22. Is this vow commendable?
3. What is tithing? Who was the first person recorded in the Bible who did it and how much did he tithe?
4. What can we learn about God in this chapter?

Day 5 Read **Genesis 29:1-14**

1. How far did Jacob travel before he reached Haran? (Refer to map in Figure 5)

2. Who is Laban? Why is he called “*son of Nahor*” in verse 5?
3. What impressive performance did Jacob do when Rachel came to the well?
4. Why did Jacob kiss Rachel while they have only met each other for the first time?
5. What did Laban mean when he said that Jacob was “my bone and my flesh” in verse 14?

Day 6 Read **Genesis 29:15-35**

1. Describe Laban’s two daughters.
2. What agreement did Jacob make with Laban in verses 15-19? Why did he make such agreement?
3. How was the agreement fulfilled at its full term?
4. What does “fulfill her week” in verse 27 mean?

Day 7 Read **Genesis 29:15-35**

1. How would you evaluate the following people involved in the deception of Jacob in his marriage?

Laban -

Leah -

Rachel -

2. What are the terms and conditions for Jacob to have Rachel as his wife?

3. Comment on the way Jacob treated his two wives.

4. Is it possible for Jacob to love both Leah and Rachel with the same degree of love?

Week 9

[7th – 13th Sep 2014]

Day 1 Read **Genesis 29:31-35**

1. How would you describe the conduct and character of Leah by the names she gave to her four sons?

2. From the descendants of Jacob came the 12 tribes of the nation of Israel. The two most distinguished tribes came from Leah. Who are these sons and what contributions did they make in the history of Israel?

3. Cite one example to illustrate the wisdom of Leviticus 18:18.

4. What can we learn about God in Genesis 29:31?

Day 2 Read **Genesis 30:1-24**

1. How did Jacob respond when Rachel demanded children from him in verse 1? Is his response reasonable?

2. It is attributed in Genesis 29:31, 30:17, 22, etc that God is the One who opened/closed the womb. Are all conceptions or barrenness the direct intervention of God?

3. What solution did Rachel propose in verses 3-8 to solve the problem of childlessness?

4. Did Jacob agree with Rachel's proposal? Why did he agree/disagree?

Day 3 Read **Genesis 30:1-24**

1. What is a mandrake? What is it used for? Did it fulfill its function?
2. Was what Leah said in verse 15 factual?
3. What does the mandrake tell us about Leah and Rachel's relationship with each other and with Jacob?
4. Was the birth of Joseph related to the mandrake Rachel obtained from Leah?

Day 4 Read **Genesis 30:25-43**

1. Explain the agreement made by Jacob and Laban in verses 31-33.
2. Why did Laban so readily agree to Jacob's plan?
3. Why did Laban separate all the solid coloured animals from those that were speckled and spotted?

4. Did Jacob's plan work for him? Explain how and why the plan worked.

Day 5 Read the note below: How does Jacob's sheep rearing method work?

In the agreement made by Jacob and Laban in verses 31-33, Jacob requested something very much to Laban's advantage. All he asked for was the spotted and speckled sheep and goats. That would usually have constituted a very small portion of the animals in Laban's flock. In fact, that would have been fewer than a normal shepherd would have asked for in a similar situation. A normal wage for a shepherd would have been around 10-15% of the flock, whereas what Jacob asked for was far less than that. To Laban, this seemed like a great deal with low risk of losing. After all, almost all the sheep were already white when Laban cheated on Jacob by sending all the spotted and speckled sheep away in his sons' keeping.

Jacob's breeding tactics seemed outlandish to us. Among the many things Jacob learned during the first 7 years of looking after Laban's sheep, one of them may be how to induce the animals to produce spotted and speckled offspring. Genesis 30:27-43 say that he selected three kinds of plants (green poplar, almond and chestnut trees), stripped them, and put the bare branches in the watering trough from which the animals drank. Some think that when the animals come to drink the water and mate while looking at the bare branches in the trough, they would produce spotted and speckled offspring. There is no scientific support for such belief since it is unlikely that the mere looking at the peeled branches could determine the colour of the animals. Some sheep breeders believe that there are signs that one can look for in a sheep that indicate a certain color gene, even in sheep that are all white. For instance, the nose, the legs, and the hooves will have certain indications that there is a recessive colour gene in that animal. Jacob could also be looking for bigger hooves to indicate strong animals. How the animal carries itself would also be a factor: how it stands, and how it moves, etc. So Jacob would choose such animals and breed them with other similarly strong animals to achieve a much higher rate of the color scheme that he wanted. A more plausible explanation, however, is given by Henry Morris who said that certain chemicals can and do have a significant prenatal influence if they can reach the embryo or, prior to conception, the DNA in the germ cells. It is possible that the chemicals in the wood of these peeled branches were actually in the water that the flocks drank and the animals were somehow affected. If nothing else, water so treated may have served as an aphrodisiac and fertility promoter among the cattle. Morris said that at least one such chemical substance in these trees has been used for such a purpose in both ancient and modern times. He hence concluded that Jacob's method of rearing the animals was founded on sound animal husbandry. Ultimately, the major factor for Jacob's success in increasing the population of spotted and speckled sheep is of course due to God's blessing as Jacob himself declared in Genesis 31:8-12. It was the Lord who

was acting for Jacob in all of this. The Lord saw that Laban was oppressing Jacob, and so He made the sheep bear more spotted and speckled sheep. The Lord tolerates Jacob's methods (whether they have scientific basis or otherwise), and blesses him in spite of them.

What can we learn about God in Jacob's strategy in increasing his share of Laban's sheep?

Day 6 Read **Genesis 31:1-21**

1. What prompted Jacob to decide to return to Canaan?
2. Were the words of Laban's sons in verse 1 true? Why did they say those words?
3. Why did Jacob consult with his wives (Leah and Rachel) about his desire to leave Laban? Was it a wise thing for him to do as the head of the household?
4. What are the essential things Jacob told his wives?

Day 7 Read **Genesis 31:1-21**

1. Why did Jacob tell his wives about his dream in verses 10-13?

2. What did Rachel and Leah mean in verse 15 when they said: "... he has sold us and also completely consumed our money"?
3. Why did Jacob leave Laban secretly? Was what Jacob did a wise thing to do?
4. By stealing away from Laban, do you think Jacob has deceived Laban?

Acknowledgement

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