

God Created the Heavens and the Earth Genesis 1:1

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The Bible teaches the universe was created, but God is eternal.

Practical Application

1. Are your priorities in line with the first verse of the Bible?

Questions

1. Who was the inspired author of the Pentateuch? What is the Pentateuch?
2. Events recorded in Genesis begin with _____, and end with the death of _____.
3. Is the creation account a) a Hebrew parable with symbolic language, b) a Hebrew poem, or c) a historical narrative? Why do you think so?
4. Is it a reasonable faith to believe that the universe was created, but God is eternal? Why?
5. It requires faith to believe Genesis 1:1. Cite at least one other Bible verse to support this.
6. When is the word, "create," used in the Bible?

Answers

1. Moses, who was an eyewitness to the events recorded in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. The Pentateuch comprises the first five books of the Bible.
2. The events in Genesis begin with creation and end with the death of Joseph, taking place before the time of Moses. However, Moses wrote about these events. He may have had some historical documents, perhaps written by the earlier patriarchs, or God could have revealed them directly to him.
3. c) A historical narrative.
4. Yes. Because the only other logical option would be to believe that the universe is eternal. And a universe cannot just start out of nothing.
5. Hebrews 11:3, and Psalm 90:1-2.
6. The word, "create," is the Hebrew word, "bara." It is only used in the Bible for God's activity, and never used for man's activity. This emphasizes that God brought this universe into existence out of nothing. See Romans 4:17.

Discuss / Consider

1. The second law of thermodynamics, a proven scientific law in nature, indicates that the universe is running down and becoming more disordered as time goes on. How does this relate to Genesis 1:1?

2. The first law of thermodynamics states that matter or energy is not being created at the present time, but is only changing in form. How does this relate to Genesis 1:1?

Challenge

1. Are your priorities in line with the first verse of the Bible? Does God come first in your life? If not, list your idols. (An idol is anything that comes before God in your life; anything that comes between you and God).

2. See Hebrews 11:3 and 11:6. In what ways do these verses describe your own faith?

The Earth Was Without Form and Void
Genesis 1:2

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. There was a time when the earth was formless and empty.
2. There was never a time when the earth was not under God's control.

Practical Application

1. Remember that your life is never out of God's care and control.

Questions

1. Who formed the earth through a process? Who was controlling the process?
2. Those with a high view of Scripture have two theories about the first verse of the Bible. What are they?
3. How does the creation account give evidence not only of God's power, but of God's very divine nature?
4. What is the "matter-old, light-young" theory of the creation of the universe?
5. What is the "gap" theory of the creation of the universe?
6. Was there a time when the earth was not under God's control?

Answers

1. God. The Spirit of God.
2. The verse is a summary statement of all that is to follow in the creation account, or it is part of the first day of creation week.
3. One way God's nature is reflected in creation is in the fact that God created a tri-universe. That is, a spacematter-time universe. As God is a trinity (one in essence, yet three persons), so is the universe.
4. This theory states that Genesis 1:1 refers to the creation of the basic matter that God used to form this universe, but that it is not part of day one. Rather, it is billions of years in the past; Genesis 1:2 represents the millions or billions of years in time when God was slowly forming the earth; and Genesis 1:3 begins God's creation week in the not-too-distant past.
5. The "gap" theory, or the "ruin and reconstruction" theory, states that Genesis 1:1 describes an original perfect creation, including life; Genesis 1:2 represents a ruined creation, involving many years of time; and Genesis 1:3 begins God's re-creation or reconstruction week.
6. Never!

Discuss / Consider

1. Review the matter-old, light-young theory. What are its shortcomings in light of Scripture?

2. Review the gap theory. What are its shortcomings in light of Scripture?

Challenge

1. Does your life at times seem dark and out of control? Remember that your life is never out of God's care and control. See 1 Peter 5:7

God's Work on the First Five Days of Creation Week
Genesis 1:3-23

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The days of creation week had evenings and mornings.
2. The days of creation week are not parallel to the theory of evolution.

Practical Application

1. Remember that all of God's work is good.

Questions

1. Is the light brought into being in Genesis 1:3 sunlight? Explain why or why not.
2. What is the "firmament" that was created on day two?
3. How did God create the dry land on day three?
4. Granite is the foundational rock for the continents, and is found throughout the world. How does granite substantiate the account of creation?
5. What is unique about the plant life that God created on day three?
6. Genesis says the days of creation week had evenings and mornings. Why is this an important point?

Answers

1. No, because the light of the sun comes on day four of creation week. See Genesis 1:16-19. God can have other sources of light, including all of magnetic radiation, not just the visible part of the spectrum (e.g., infrared, ultra-violet, X-rays).
2. An expanse to divide the waters under it from the waters above it.
3. God brought it out of the waters below the firmament. 2 Peter 3:5 seems to indicate that God drew the solid earth right out of the waters.
4. Granite cannot be made in a laboratory. The beautiful, well-formed solid granite found throughout the world is hard to explain apart from creation.
5. God created the various plants and trees fully functional. They already produced fruit and seed.
6. It emphasizes the fact that the days are normal, literal days of twenty-four hours, earth time.

Discuss / Consider

1. Theistic evolution is the theory that God brought the different life forms into being, including man, by the process of evolution. Theists try to work this theory into the creation account of Genesis 1 and 2. Discuss some inconsistencies in this theory.

2. On day four, God made the sun and moon and stars. Some people say that the six-day literal creation is not possible because of the millions of light years needed for the light of the stars to reach the earth. As a creationist, how would you answer this?

Challenge

1. God pronounces His work of creation as good. You are included in that statement. Describe evidence of God at work in your life right now.

God Creates Man on the Sixth Day of Creation Week
Genesis 1:24-27

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. God created plants and animals according to their kind.

2. God created man in His own image.

Practical Application

1. Do you have fellowship with God?

Questions

1. In the Genesis account, God tells us that He created matter and life in one week. How did he do this? Refer to Psalm 33:6.

2. What is necessary to accept the Genesis account of creation? See Hebrews 11:3 and Matthew 18:3.

3. God created plants and animals according to their kind. See Genesis 1:12, 21, 24, 25. What does “according to its kind” mean?

4. What is the difference between evolution and genetic variation?

5. Why did God say, “Let Us make man in Our image...” (Genesis 1:26). Is this proof of the Trinity?

6. Man was created in the image of God. What does this mean?

7. Were both male and female created in the image of God?

God Pronounces that His Creation is Very Good
Genesis 1:28-31

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. God said that the ruler of His finished creation was man.

2. God said that the condition of His finished creation was good.

Practical Application

1. Let's worship God for His wonderful creation.

Questions

1. What was the crowning act of God's creative work?

2. Are there ancient accounts of creation other than the Genesis account? Are they similar to or different from the Genesis account?

3. When did Moses write Genesis?

4. To whom did God give dominion over His finished creation?

5. What did it mean to be "given dominion?"

6. Read Psalm 8. When will the Messianic aspects of this psalm be fulfilled?

Answers

1. The creation of man. Adam and Eve were created on the sixth day of creation week.
2. Yes. Some accounts were recorded earlier than the Genesis account, before the time of Moses. There are both similarities and differences between the accounts. The main difference is that the Bible is the true inspired account.
3. Circa 1500 B.C.
4. The man that God created. See Genesis 1:26.
5. It meant that man could develop and use the earth's resources. It meant that he was given responsibility to care for the earth, and its animals and its natural resources.
6. In the future the whole earth and the universe will be subject to the Perfect Man, the Lord Jesus Christ. When He returns, the Messianic aspects of Psalm 8 will be fulfilled. When the Lord returns and sets up His glorious kingdom on this earth, we will see this carried out as He intended it.

Discuss / Consider

1. Discuss the responsible position man has been given by God. See Psalm 115:16.

2. How has man abused this high calling?

Challenge

1. God's wonderful creation will be one of the themes of our worship forever. Read Revelation 4:10-11. Consider including God's wonderful creation in your present worship.

Further Details of the Creation Account
Genesis 2:1-7

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. God formed man on the sixth day of creation week.

2. God rested on the seventh day of creation week.

Practical Application

1. Remember that God made you from the dust of the ground.

Questions

1. Is Genesis 2 a second and different account of creation from Genesis 1? If not, what is it?

2. Describe the conditions on earth according to Genesis 2:4-5.

3. What is the source of man's immortal soul?

4. What does theistic evolution have to say about the formation of man? Does it agree with the Genesis account of the creation of man?

5. God rested on the seventh day. Does this mean that He was tired from doing His work of creation?

The Garden of Eden; the Test of Man's Obedience
Genesis 2:8-17

Background

Doctrinal Points

- 1. In the beginning, God gave man paradise with responsibility.**
- 2. In the beginning, God gave man work without sweat.**
- 3. In the beginning, God gave man freedom within limits.**

Practical Application

- 1. Let God design the perfect place for you.**

Questions

1. What two things does the description of the garden of Eden challenge us to remember?
2. Read Genesis 2:8-9 and Ezekiel 28:13. After reading these verses, how would you describe the Garden of Eden?
3. Should we expect to find the long-lost Garden of Eden?
4. What were the two areas of responsibility given by God to man?
5. When did work become laborious and difficult?
6. When will the curse be removed? Will it be like it was before the curse?
7. Were the trees in the Garden of Eden real trees or symbolic trees?

Answers

1. a) The Garden of Eden existed before the flood in Noah's Day.
b) Moses, the inspired author of Genesis, wrote this account in about 1500 B.C., a good 2500 years after the Garden of Eden.
2. It is a wonderful place. It was the Garden of God, designed and planned by God for man's pleasure.
3. No, because the world-wide flood of Noah's day was a global catastrophe, and the earth's topography and geography would have drastically changed.
4. a) To tend and keep the garden.
b) To obey his Creator.
5. Man was designed by God to be active, to work and to serve. But after the fall of man, the work became difficult. Before the fall of man the garden was not threatened by thorns and thistles and weeds. But after the fall, part of the curse was that there would be sweat associated with work. Man would have to toil and labor to subdue the earth.
6. When the Lord returns there will be no more curse. See Revelation 22:3. When the curse is removed there will be service, but no sweat. That's the way it was in the beginning and that's the way it will be when the Lord returns.
7. They were real trees.

Discuss / Consider

1. The tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil were in the midst of the garden. Which tree was off limits to man? Why did God put this tree off limits?

2. Eating from the forbidden tree was an act of disobedience. What were the results of this disobedience?

Challenge

1. Let God design the perfect place for you. God prepared the Garden of Eden, a perfect place for man to live in and to work in. God designed it specifically for Adam, knowing all about him. God knows all about you - your strengths, weaknesses, likes and dislikes. He knows the best location, the best job, the best friends, the best of everything for you. Are you letting God design the perfect place for you? In what ways may you be hindering His design?

The Formation of Eve and the First Marriage **Genesis 2:18-25**

Background

Doctrinal Points

- 1. Adam and Eve are a picture of Christ and the church.**

- 2. Adam and Eve are a model for husbands and wives.**

Practical Application

- 1. Let God bring the right person to you.**

Questions

1. Critics of the Bible like to point out what they think are three problems with this section of Scripture. List these “problems.”

2. Critics of the Bible say that Adam would not have had enough time to name all the animals. How would you answer these critics?

3. Some people believe you can harmonize evolution with the Bible. This is particularly difficult with the Genesis account of the formation of Eve. Why?

4. Why didn't God form Eve the same way He formed Adam?

5. Marriage begins a new social unit. What does this mean?

Answers

1. a) Critics say that Genesis 1 contradicts this part of Genesis 2. Namely, Genesis 1 says that God created animals before man, but Genesis 2 sounds like man was created before the animals; b) Adam would not have had enough time to name all the animals; and c) men and women still have the same number of ribs.

2. a) The Bible does not say that Adam had to name all the fish and insects, but only the beasts of the field and the birds of the air. Remember that in the beginning there were only kinds, not every variety that we have today; b) Adam did not have to run all over creation to find the animals and catch the birds. God brought them to him; and c) Adam was in his unfallen state. Think of the mental ability and acuity he had, unaffected by any genetic disorder, decline or deterioration at that point.

3. If Adam was only an advanced male ape in which God put a spirit, then suddenly there would have to have been an advanced female ape around for God to make into Eve. But Genesis 2:20 says, "But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him."

4. Because God wanted to convey a spiritual message of Adam and Eve as a picture of Christ and the church.

5. The married man and woman are to leave their parents and be joined together. The chain of command between children and parents has ended, but not the chain of counsel.

Discuss / Consider

1. Adam and Eve are a picture of Christ and the church. Explain.

2. Marriage was instituted by God for man, and it is good (Genesis 2:18, 21-24). Describe marriage as God designed it.

Challenge

1. Let God bring the right person to you. Don't you trust that He can do this for you as He did for Adam? If God wants you to be married, He will bring it about.

The Temptation of Adam and Eve **Genesis 3:1-7**

Background

Doctrinal Points

- 1. Satan's tactics are the same today as they were in the Garden of Eden.**

- 2. Man's temptations are the same today as they were in the Garden of Eden.**

Practical Application

- 1. Are you still wearing fig leaves?**

Questions

1. Is the story of Eve's temptation a literal account of what happened or is it an old testament parable to be taken allegorically?

2. Satan is not mentioned by name in this account. How do we know that Satan was the talking serpent?

3. Where did Satan come from?

4. In the Garden of Eden, how did Satan mix error and truth?

5. Read Matthew 4:1-11 and Luke 4:1-13. How did Satan tempt the Lord Jesus? How was Jesus' temptation similar to Eve's?

Answers

1. It is a literal account. The serpent actually talked to Eve. Satan possessed the body of the serpent, and talked to Eve through it.
2. We know because other parts of the Bible say so. For example, see 2 Corinthians 11:3 and Revelation 12:9.
3. See Isaiah 14:12-15 and Ezekiel 28:1-19. Satan was created as an unfallen, lofty angel. But he rebelled against God because of pride.
4. Satan said, "You will not surely die." That was an outright lie, for God had said in no uncertain terms, "For in the day you eat of it, you will surely die." The serpent said, "God knows...your eyes will be opened." There was some truth in that statement - their eyes would be opened and they would know good and evil, but not in the same way that God knows good and evil.
5. Our Lord was tempted in the same three areas as Satan tempted Eve. Satan suggested that Christ turn the stones into bread (an appeal to the flesh), then he showed Him all the cities of the world and their glory (an appeal to the eyes), and finally, he suggested that the Lord jump off the pinnacle and be miraculously preserved (an appeal to the pride of life.).

Discuss / Consider

1. Satan tried to get Eve to question God's word and God's goodness. See Genesis 3:1, 4. See also 2 Corinthians 11:3. Has this ever happened to you?

2. There were three areas of temptation that appealed to Eve: the fruit of the forbidden tree a) was good for food, b) was pleasant to the eyes, and c) it could make one wise. See 1 John 2:16. Man's temptations today are the same as then. Do you find this to be true personally? Give examples.

Challenge

1. When Satan tempts you, through whatever sources he has chosen, how can you combat the temptations? See Matthew 4:4, 7, 10.

The Fall of Man and the Promise of a Redeemer
Genesis 3:8-24

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The judgment of God was displayed because of the fall of man.

2. The grace of God was displayed because of the fall of man.

Practical Application

1. The Lord's first question to us is still, "Where are you?"

Questions

1. Why did God put the tree of good and evil off limits to Adam and Eve?
2. When did God put the tree of life off limits to Adam and Eve? Why was it put off limits?
3. Who were cherubim? What did God assign them to do in Genesis 3?
4. Why did Adam call his wife Eve?
5. What does the Eve gene mean?
6. God's judgment was displayed because of the fall of man. What were (are) some of the evidences of this judgment?

Answers

1. Because their eyes would be opened to good and evil; they would lose their innocence.
2. After the fall. So they would not live forever in their sinful state.
3. They were a class of angels. They were placed at the east of the garden with a flaming sword to guard the way to the tree of life.
4. Because she was the mother of all the living.
5. Our genetic codes mitochondria DNA, which we inherit only from our mothers. Recent genetic studies show that all human beings are descended from the same woman.
6. A woman's pain associated with childbirth, the friction between the sexes, and thorns and thistles and sweat and toil involved in making the land produce.

Discuss / Consider

1. Discuss the free will of Adam and Eve before the fall and after the fall. That same sinful nature has been passed on to us. Consider your free will and your sinful nature. How can you keep them in check?

2. The Bible tells us that Satan would bruise the heel of Christ. What does this mean? What does it mean to you?

Challenge

1. God asks each of us, "Where are you?" Where are you in reference to your fellowship with God? Are you walking with the Lord, or are you hiding from God because of some sin or problem in your life? Confess that sin, bring that problem to the Lord, and restore your fellowship with Him.

Cain and Abel
Genesis 4:1-12

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. God does not accept Cain-type offerings.

2. God does accept Abel-type offerings.

Practical Application

1. We are our brother's keeper.

Questions

1. Who was the first person ever born?

2. Why was Cain angry? Was his anger justified?

3. How is faith defined in Scripture?

4. Was Cain rejected by God because he was a farmer and not a shepherd?

5. Abel came to God by way of animal sacrifice. What does animal sacrifice represent?

Answers

1. Cain. Adam was not born, but created by God.
2. Cain was angry because God did not accept his sacrifice. His anger was not justified, because God had revealed to Cain the acceptable way of sacrifice to Cain, yet Cain chose to do it his own way.
3. Faith is defined as a reasonable step, a belief, based on God's revelation. See also Hebrews 11:1.
4. No, Cain was rejected because he came to God in his own way and not by God's revealed way of sacrifice.
5. It is a picture of the Lamb of God, the Lord Jesus, going to the cross and dying for the sins of the world. Abel's sacrifice looked forward to the one great sacrifice to come in the future.

Discuss / Consider

1. What are Cain-type offerings? Why doesn't God accept Cain-type offerings? Do you ever offer Cain-type offerings to God and expect to be justified by Him?

2. What is God's way of sacrifice today? By what sacrifice can we approach God? Are there other ways?

Challenge

1. We are our brother's keeper. Read 1 John 3:11-12. We are warned not to have a Cain-like spirit. Do you ever catch yourself displaying a Cain-like spirit toward your brothers and sisters in Christ?

God's Judgment of Cain and the Birth of Seth
Genesis 4:13-26

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. God's grace is not a guarantee of God's approval.

2. Man's advancement is not a guarantee of God's approval.

Practical Application

1. Are we using our skills to advance the world or the Kingdom?

Questions

1. Was Cain sorry for his sin?

2. What were the consequences of Cain's sin?

3. Where did Cain get his wife?

4. The Lord set a mark on Cain. What did this mark do for Cain? Does God's grace to Cain show God's approval?

5. In this portion of Scripture, who was the only exception in the line of Cain in the decline of man morally and spiritually?

Answers

1. No, there was no repentance. He was only sorry for the consequences of his sin.
2. The ground would no longer produce the fruit for him, which he was so proud of. Cain would be a fugitive and vagabond on the earth, his life would be in danger, and he was sent out from the presence of the Lord.
3. Cain married his sister, or perhaps a niece.
4. The mark was God's protection over Cain's life, but it did not mean that God approved of Cain.
5. The line of Seth. Enosh was born and men began to call on the name of the Lord.

Discuss / Consider

1. If things are going reasonably well for you, does this mean that God has put His stamp of approval on your actions? Read Matthew 5:45. This is called God's common grace, but it is not a sign of His approval. Do you have God's approval on your actions?

2. As the line of Cain grew, there was an advancement in technology and the arts, but man's rapid advancement did not mean he advanced spiritually. Actually, the line of Cain went downhill morally and spiritually. Today, there is phenomenal advancement in technology, but man has not advanced morally and spiritually. How do you view this?

Challenge

1. 1. Are you using your skills to advance the world or the Kingdom of God? What skills are you using for the Lord?

A Genealogy from Adam to Noah **Genesis 5**

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Enoch is a model of the faithful Christian.

2. Enoch is a picture of the faithful church.

Practical Application

1. Let's have guts like Enoch.

Questions

1. Adam lived 930 years and Methuselah lived 969 years. What is the explanation for these long lives?
2. Is the genealogy from Adam to Noah a genealogy with gaps, or is it a type of chronology without gaps?
3. Adam begat... What does "in his own likeness" and "after his own image" mean?
4. How is Enoch a model of a faithful Christian?
5. How is Enoch a picture of the faithful church?

Answers

1. After Adam and Eve sinned there may have been some time before the full effect of sin began to take its toll on the genetic system and shorten man's life span. In addition, there may have been a water vapor canopy surrounding the earth before the flood, which would have helped to screen out the dangerous radiation that contributes to aging.
2. It is most probably a chronology without gaps, because for each link, the number of years before and after the first born is given, and then the total number of years is given. See Jude 14. There were no gaps when Enoch was counted as the seventh from Adam.
3. This phrase refers to the sinful nature being passed on to each generation. Everyone born since Adam has been born with a sinful nature.
4. Enoch walked with God for three hundred years. He was faithful over the long haul. He had a steady and consistent faith. He walked with God without wavering, believing and obeying God. He worshipped God and had fellowship with Him. He witnessed for God and passed the test of faith.
5. Enoch was raptured out of this world before the great flood of God's judgment in Noah's day. This is a picture of the rapture of the church before the great flood of judgment during the tribulation period. See 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17.

Discuss / Consider

1. Enoch was a model family man. What was his testimony? Are you a model family man / woman?

2. Enoch walked with God. Refer to answer # 4. Does this describe your walk with God?

Challenge

1. Refer to Jude 14-16. Enoch was bold and courageous in witnessing. He preached and prophesied and spoke out against all ungodliness. Relatives and family members were the unbelievers in his day. Enoch did not hesitate to speak out against the ungodly deeds and ungodly talk of unbelievers. Are you an Enoch?

Answers

1. a) The godly line of Seth, while the daughters of men represent the ungodly line of Cain.
b) Kings or dynastic rulers of the ancient world.
c) Fallen angels.
2. Satan knew from what God had said earlier that his head would be crushed by the Seed of the woman. The Redeemer of mankind would be human (Genesis 3:15). Satan thought he could thwart God's purpose if he could corrupt the human race.
3. Yes. God said, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man forever." Genesis 6:3
4. See Genesis 6:8.
5. No, but his life was characterized by walking with God, and he was a bearer of God's word to the world. See 2 Peter 2:5. Most important, however, Noah was considered righteous by God.

Discuss / Consider

1. "Man's sin is God's sorrow." What does this mean concerning both unbelievers and believers? See Ephesians 4:30. Is it possible that you are grieving the Holy Spirit right now? Are you bitter about something? Are you unwilling to forgive someone? If so, you are grieving the Spirit of God.

2. Re-read Genesis 6:8-9. "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." List character traits found in Noah. Would you have found grace in the eyes of the Lord in Noah's day? Have you found grace in the eyes of the Lord today? On what do you base your relationship with the Lord?

Challenge

1. Who are your heroes? Read 1 John 2:17b. Are you this kind of a hero?

God's Instructions to Noah
Genesis 6:13-22

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. God always judges the way of sin.

2. God always provides a way of salvation.

Practical Application

1. Do we practice full obedience?

Questions

1. Describe the physical features of the ark.

2. How difficult was it for Noah to round up all of the creatures to go into the ark?

3. How many doors were in the ark?

4. Contrast Genesis 1:31 with Genesis 6:13.

5. What is the first mention of the word covenant in the Bible?

Answers

1. The ark was 300 cubits (450') long; 75' wide and 45' high. It had three decks and many rooms. It was more like a barge than a ship. Its purpose was to be stable in high flood waters. It was made of "gopher" wood (probably cedar or cypress), and covered with pitch inside and out. There was one window for air-flow, probably a protective 18" gap that ran the length of the ark right below the roof line. There was one door.

2. Noah did not have to round them up. God brought them to him.

3. One.

4. "Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good." (Genesis 1:31) "And God said to Noah, 'The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them, and behold, I will destroy them with the earth.'" (Genesis 6:13). The change was from very good to very bad. From God's pleasure to God's judgment. Why? Because of man's sin. God created man with a free will, and man chose to turn away from and sin against God. Now God must judge man's sin. God must judge sin because He created a moral universe.

5. "God said, 'I will establish My covenant with you.'" (Genesis 6:18)

Discuss / Consider

1. God is longsuffering, but sin will be judged someday. As God judged sin in Noah's day, so He does today. It's only a matter of time.
See Matthew 24:37.

2. How is the ark a picture of God's eternal way of salvation for man?

Challenge

1. Noah did according to all that God commanded him. Noah passed God's difficult test of faith. Do you do all that God commands you?

Noah, His Family, and the Animals Enter the Ark
Genesis 7:1-16

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. God's promised judgment on the unbeliever is certain.

2. God's promised salvation for the believer is certain.

Practical Application

1. Fathers, let's lead our families by a strong faith.

Questions

1. Where did all the water that caused the flood come from?

2. What is the water vapor canopy theory?

3. The unbelievers of Noah's day not only lost their earthly lives, but they now are in a lost eternity. Is this true? Substantiate with Scripture.

4. Name Noah's sons.

5. What does the ark picture for us today?

Answers

1. There were two sources - fountains or springs of the great deep, and the windows or floodgates of the waters of heaven.
2. It is possible that a water vapor canopy surrounded the earth. This type of canopy would have had a world wide greenhouse effect. This would explain why there was no rain before the flood. It would have shielded the earth from dangerous cosmic radiation. Its existence would explain why there were semi-tropical conditions around the world at one time.
3. See 1 Peter 3:19-20 and Hebrews 9:27.
4. Shem, Ham and Japheth.
5. It is a picture of salvation. The ark took the storm of God's judgment, while Noah and his family were safe inside. Similarly, Christ took the storm of God's judgment on the cross, but those who have believed are safe in Christ.

Discuss / Consider

1. It is the same today as it was in Noah's day. People don't believe that a judgment day is coming. See Luke 17:26-27. Note the suddenness of God's judgment. His judgment is coming, and there will come a day when it's too late for salvation. How does this affect you?

2. The ark is a picture of salvation. It is also a picture of the eternal security of the believer. Discuss / consider.

Challenge

1. Noah, in godly fear, prepared the ark. His primary concern was for his family. What is your primary concern? Are you living a life of faith as an example to your family?

The Extent and Results of the Flood
Genesis 7:17-24

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. God destroys the wicked with judgment.

2. God delivers the righteous from judgment.

Practical Application

1. Let's trust God in the storms of life.

Questions

1. Was the flood local or worldwide?
2. Why did God destroy all living things on earth?
3. Describe some of the bad fall-out when man sinned?
4. Does the word "destroy" mean annihilation?
5. How did God deliver the righteous in Noah's day?
6. Why did God declare Noah righteous?

Answers

1. It was worldwide. See Genesis 7:19, 21, 23, noting all.
2. See Genesis 6:5-7.
3. The animals and plants suffered the consequences of man's sin when God destroyed the wicked.
4. No. The word "destroy" means ruin and loss.
5. By the ark. Only Noah and those with him in the ark remained alive. See 2 Peter 2:5.
6. Noah was not sinless, but he was declared "righteous" because he believed God. See Genesis 7:1 and Hebrews 11:7.

Discuss / Consider

1. Consider God's judgment on the world in Noah's day. Consider God's judgment on the world in the future.

2. God delivered Noah and his family from judgment. How does He deliver those He declares righteous today? (If necessary, discuss the meaning of righteousness).

Challenge

1. Are you trusting God in the storms of your life? When things seem to be out of control, where do you turn? Do you think that God doesn't remember (know) your situation? Does God seem to be silent at times in your life? See Isaiah 43:2. Trust God in the storms of life. He cares for you and He is in control.

The Ark Rests on Mt. Ararat
Genesis 8:1-12

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. God remembers His people.

2. Christ rests from His finished work.

Practical Application

1. Are you a raven or a dove?

Questions

1. How long did the flood last before the ark came to rest?

2. What kinds of geologic activity would have taken place on the face of the earth during the flood?

3. What is tectonic activity?

4. Would Mt. Everest and the Himalayan mountains have existed before the flood?

5. What evidence is there of volcanic activity during the flood?

6. What does it mean, "God remembered Noah?" Had God forgotten Noah?

7. How did the Lord intervene and act on behalf of Noah?

Noah Sacrifices to the Lord
Genesis 8:13-22

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. God has always preserved a godly remnant.

2. God is always pleased with a godly response.

Practical Application

1. Wait for God's green light.

Questions

1. Does Noah's ark still exist?

2. Where did all the water from the worldwide flood go?

3. Throughout biblical history God preserved a godly remnant. Name some of these people.

4. Will there be a godly remnant during the Great Tribulation yet to come?

5. What did Noah do as soon as he came out of the ark?

6. When did the Noahic Covenant begin? How long did it continue?

Answers

1. Although we cannot be sure, Christian scholars believe that the ark still exists and would be located somewhere in the Ararat Mountains in the region of Armenia.
2. It's still here. There's a lot more water on the earth now than in the past. The eroded continental shelves and sea mouths, for example, are evidence that sea level was much lower in the past. Furthermore, the vast amount of water tied up in the polar ice caps evidence the fact that there is much more water on the earth now than in the past. There is evidence that both the north and south poles were once exposed and semi-tropical.
3. Noah, the 7,000 in Elijah's day, Ezekiel, Daniel, Anna, Simeon, John the Baptist.
4. Yes, there will be a godly remnant of both Jewish and Gentile believers during the Great Tribulation.
5. He built an altar and worshipped the Lord with burnt offerings.
6. The Noahic Covenant started in Genesis 8 and continued into Genesis 9. God promised that as long as earth's history continued, there would never again be a worldwide catastrophe such as the flood of Noah's day. Therefore, the Noahic Covenant is still in existence.

Discuss / Consider

1. Noah may be a spiritual picture or type of a godly remnant.

2. God is pleased with godly responses, as seen in this lesson. What is your response? How do you handle times of testing and trials? Do you thank God for His faithfulness?

Challenge

1. Wait for God's green light. Remember, Noah did all that the Lord commanded him, and he did it when God commanded. Are you prone to rush ahead with plans without consulting with God and without waiting for His green light? Does the Lord smell a soothing aroma from your sacrifices?

**Post-Flood Conditions; Capital Punishment Instituted
Genesis 9:1-7**

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Eating meat has a biblical basis.
2. Capital punishment has a biblical basis.

Practical Application

1. Let God worry about population control.

Questions

1. What was the greatest catastrophe this world has ever seen?
2. Was the flood a local flood confined to the Mesopotamian Valley, or was it a worldwide flood?
3. What does a conglomerate mountain have to do with Genesis 6-8?
4. Explain the Biblical basis for eating meat. Was there always such a basis?
5. Does support of capital punishment entail a low view of life, or a high view of life? Substantiate your answer.
6. What are the differences between the Mosaic Covenant and the Noachic Covenant?

The Rainbow as a Sign of God's Covenant **Genesis 9:8-17**

Background

Doctrinal Points

- 1. The rainbow is a guarantee that God cares for His creatures.**

- 2. The rainbow is a guarantee that God keeps His promises.**

Practical Application

- 1. There's more than a pot of gold for us at the end of the rainbow.**

Questions

1. Is the Noahic Covenant in effect today? Substantiate your answer.
2. The Noahic Covenant is the authority for biblical government on this earth. Explain.
3. What guarantee do we have that God will never again destroy earth with a worldwide flood?
4. What causes a rainbow?
5. Explain the significance of the "bow," as derived from ancient treaties.

Answers

1. Yes, the Noahic Covenant is still in effect today. The Noahic Covenant was made with Noah and his sons and their descendants. This includes us because we are all descendants of this family.
2. The Noahic Covenant gives nations the right to maintain law and order, even to the extent of capital punishment in the case of murder.
3. God said that he would not do so. His word is a guarantee. See Genesis 9:15. The rainbow is the sign that God gave to confirm this covenant. See Genesis 9:12.
4. The dispersion of sunlight shining through the rain.
5. The Hebrew word for “bow” is the same word that is used for a bow used to shoot arrows in battle. When peace covenants and peace treaties were made in ancient days, the warrior would put away or hang up his battle bow as symbolic that there was now peace. God said, “I set my bow in the cloud.”

Discuss / Consider

1. The rainbow is a guarantee that God cares for His creatures. When you see a rainbow, don't just admire its beauty, remember that it is a guarantee that God cares for both people and animals. Share this with others as a testimony to God's care. See also 1 Peter 5:7. Think of examples of God's care in your life.

2. The rainbow is God's guarantee that He keeps His promises. Consider His promise in Hebrews 13:5. You can be sure of this promise. Remember that truth the next time you see a rainbow.

Challenge

1. There's more than a pot of gold for us at the end of the rainbow. Believe this! Contemplate the heavenly scene awaiting you where there is yet another rainbow. See Revelation 4:3.

Answers

1. Ham, Noah's youngest son, saw his father's nakedness and mocked him. Shem and Japheth refused to look at him and covered him.
2. Noah's prophecy blessed Shem and Japheth. Noah cursed Canaan, the son of Ham.
3. The blessing on the line of Shem ordained the Messianic line for Christ's coming. The enlarging of Japheth's descendants is well documented in history. The world's greatest empires have come from the line of Japheth. The curse on Canaan, the son of Ham, is seen in the judgment of the Canaanites when the Israelites conquered Canaan and subjugated the Canaanites to forced labor.
4. It means to be morally improper. Noah showed moral impropriety when he got drunk and exposed himself. Ham showed moral impropriety when he mocked his father, dishonoring him.
5. It begins at home, is later seen in interaction with others.

Discuss / Consider

1. Most of us are descendants of Japheth. How have we found blessing because of Noah's blessing on his sons?

2. Noah was a believer, but in one instance he exhibited moral impropriety. Ham was a believer, but he exhibited moral impropriety. As a godly person, how can you be an example of moral integrity? Start with your family, then move out to others.

Challenge

1. You are never immune to sin in this lifetime. How can you keep up your guard? See 1 Peter 5:8-9. There are biblical examples of godly people who let down their guard. Walk in the Spirit, and depend on the Lord's empowering or enabling.

The Table of Seventy Nations and the Descendants of Noah's Sons **Genesis 10**

Background

Doctrinal Points

- 1. All people and nations have descended from the three sons of Noah.**

- 2. All people and nations are responsible to the one God of Noah.**

Practical Application

- 1. You can be mighty for or against God.**

Questions

1. Why is Genesis 10 an important chapter in the Bible?
2. Reread Genesis 10:32. How were the nations divided after the flood?
3. To what does Genesis 10:25 refer?
4. From whom were all people descended before the flood? From whom were all people descended after the flood?
5. How did the races come about?
6. Who are the descendants of Japheth today? The descendants of Ham? The descendants of Shem?

Answers

1. It bridges the gap between Noah and Abraham. Here we learn how all people and nations descended from the three sons of Noah. Here we learn how and where the different nations spread out after the flood and after the Tower of Babel.
2. From the families of the sons of Noah, according to their generations, in their nations.
3. The Tower of Babel.
4. Adam and Eve. Noah and his sons.
5. There are a number of possibilities. The genetic variation seen in the people around the world today could be the result of spreading out after the tower of Babel, and thus selective repopulation and genetic drift. The gene pool of Noah's three sons and their wives consisted of all that was necessary for the so-called racial differences to emerge. Another possibility is that a few mutations of the genetic pool after the flood led to different racial features.
6. The Indo-European nations descended from Japheth. The descendants of Ham spread southwest into Canaan and Egypt and other parts of Africa. The descendants of Shem continued to possess the Mesopotamian Valley and the surrounding areas.

Discuss / Consider

1. In spite of some minor genetic differences, we are all one people, so racism is foreign to the Bible. See Acts 17:26.
2. The prevailing thought among social scientists today is that monotheism is a late development in human evolution. They say that early man was an animist, worshipping the spirits in the objects of nature. Then, they say, man moved up polytheism, worshipping many gods. Finally, they say, that man arrived at monotheism. The Bible teaches just the opposite.

Challenge

1. Nimrod was a mighty hunter before the Lord, but his actions were against the Lord. He was known for his prowess not in hunting animals, but in hunting souls of people. There are many Nimrods today; people of influence who use their power against the Lord. They undermine and scorn Biblical standards. Are you mighty for the Lord?

The Tower of Babel and the Confusion of Languages **Genesis 11:1-9**

Background

Doctrinal Points

- 1. Man in his pride tries to reach heaven by his own efforts.**

- 2. God in His wisdom thwarts man's proud religious efforts.**

Practical Application

- 1. Whose name are we trying to magnify?**

Questions

1. The Tower of Babel was most likely what type of tower?

2. From archaeological evidence, these towers of ancient pagan religions are also associated with other forms of worship. Name some of these forms, which remain prevalent even today.

3. How was it possible that the seventy nations of Genesis 10 could develop in such a short time?

4. How did the different languages come about? What is the support for the biblical account of the Tower of Babel concerning the different languages?

5. What is human religion by definition?

6. How was God's wisdom seen in His scattering of the people and dividing them into nations?

Answers

1. The Tower of Babel was probably an ancient ziggurat. A ziggurat was a wide-based temple tower. It looked like a step-pyramid, with a staircase or ramp running from top to bottom. The staircase was designed to allow man to ascend the tower to reach the shrine at the top and to allow the gods to descend from heaven to earth. Some of these towers reached as high as 300'.
2. Polytheism, astrology and the zodiac find their roots in ancient pagan religions associated with these ziggurats.
3. Peleg is the fifth generation after Noah, which could produce enough people to form seventy sub-groups of about a dozen or more extended family members, which became the basis of the seventy nations.
4. The study of languages indicates that all languages are related.
5. Man in his pride tries to reach heaven by his own efforts.
6. God scattered the people and divided them into nations, which was far better than allowing them to be unified in apostasy against God.

Discuss / Consider

1. "Let us make a name for ourselves..." (Genesis 11:4) Man rebelled against and disobeyed God. In building the Tower of Babel, man's desire was not to reach God, but to reach the heavens for his own advancement. Do you see this today?

2. Discuss how God in His wisdom thwarted man's proud religious efforts in the building of the Tower of Babel. How does God thwart man's proud religious efforts today?

Challenge

1. The builders of the Tower of Babel tried to magnify their own names. Can you say with Paul, Philippians 1:20-21?

A Genealogy from Shem to Abraham
Genesis 11:10-32

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. **There is enough time between Noah and Abraham for wide spread repopulation.**

2. **There is enough time between Noah and Abraham for wide spread apostasy.**

Practical Application

1. **God's will for your life may come in stages.**

Questions

1. Who was the great great great great grandfather of Abraham?

2. What is the difference between type chronologies and genealogies? Are the genealogies in Genesis 5 and Genesis 11 type chronologies or just genealogies?

3. If the genealogies are type chronologies, what would be the date of creation week?

4. If Genesis 11 is essentially a chronology, then only a few hundred years elapsed between the time of the flood and Abraham. Is that enough time for widespread population by the time of Abraham?

5. What are some evidences of a wide spread population in Abraham's time?

6. What is apostasy.

Answers

1. Eber
2. Type chronologies do not have time gaps, whereas genealogies may skip some generations.
3. Circa 4000 B.C.
4. Yes. The Tower of Babel was like a jump start which accelerated the birth and growth of the nations. Using equations with relevant input, it is possible to calculate future population levels. For example, starting with Noah and his three sons, using conservative estimates and using the years given in the Bible, these equations accurately predict today's population.
5. By the time of Abraham, there must have been an Egyptian civilization. For example, when Abraham went down into Egypt, a Pharaoh already ruled. As another example of widespread population, there must have been a Hittite civilization because Abraham bought a tomb for Sarah from a Hittite.
6. Apostasy means a turning away from God and from the truth.

Discuss / Consider

1. Noah and his family were believers in the one true God. But by the time of Abraham, it seems that the whole world was given over to apostasy, had turned apart from God and the truth. See Joshua 24:2 and Judges 2:10-13. Ponder how quickly people can turn away from God. What are the warnings to us?

2. The bottom line of the New Age Movement (really an old age movement) is one-world government and one-world religion. How does this remind you of the Tower of Babel?

3. What would you predict for our country in the next few years concerning apostasy or faithfulness? God intervened in the Tower of Babel, scattering the people and confounding their language. How could God turn around the apostasy in our day?

Challenge

1. God's will for your life may come in stages. God's will for Abraham's life came in stages, with each stage setting forth a test of faith. Review some of the stages in your life. Are you looking for stages that God is planning for you?

The Abrahamic Covenant
Genesis 12:1-9

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The preservation of the people of Israel is part of God's unconditional covenant with Abraham.

2. The gift of the land of Israel is part of God's unconditional covenant with Abraham.

Practical Application

1. Let's have a faith that obeys like Abraham.

2. Let's have a faith that witnesses like Abraham.

Questions

1. What is Abraham called according to 2 Chronicles 20:7, Isaiah 41:8, and James 2:23?

2. How are all the families of the earth blessed through Abraham?

3. What is learned about Abraham's religious background from Joshua 24?

4. Did God call Abraham because he was good or because he was a godly person?

5. Why were the names of Abram and Sarai changed?

Answers

1. Abraham is called the friend of God. He is the only person in the Bible who is called a friend of God.
2. Abraham was the father of the Jewish people, and it was through the Jewish people that the Savior of mankind came. The Lord Jesus Christ was in the line of Abraham.
3. Abraham came out of a background of idolatry. See Joshua 24:14-15.
4. No. God called Abraham according to His own sovereign and elective choice. This is the way that God calls us as well. He does not save us according to some intrinsic goodness or godliness in us, but according to His sovereign grace and mercy.
5. The name changes had to do with God's promise to Abraham that he would be the father of many nations, and that Sarah would be the mother of nations and kings. Their names are changed as seen in Genesis 17.

Discuss / Consider

1. Why are the Jewish people still in existence today? Relate this to the unconditional covenant that God made with Abraham.

2. Do the Jewish people have a right to the land of Canaan (ancient Palestine and modern Israel)? If so, does this give them the right to use any means to regain the land?

Challenge

1. "Abraham departed as the Lord had spoken to him..." (Genesis 12:4). Suppose God were to call you to a new sphere of service for him to live a life of sacrifice. This could mean leaving the area where you are happily settled and content. Do you have a faith like Abraham's that would obey?

2. Abraham was told to be a blessing in the land of Canaan. Recall how he was a blessing in that land. Do you have a faith that witnesses like Abraham? Do you witness to your neighbors? to the people with whom you work or study? to friends? to strangers? Let God make you a blessing like Abraham as you witness for him.

Abraham Goes Down to Egypt
Genesis 12:10-20

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. God never approves of lying as a means of protection for the believer.
2. God sometimes rescues the believer from the consequences of foolish mistakes.

Practical Application

1. Let's not forget the Hagar factor.
2. Let's not have to be rebuked by an unbeliever.

Questions

1. Why did Abraham go down to Egypt?
2. What was Abraham's lie when he was in Egypt? Why did he lie?
3. List some parallels between Abraham's trip to Egypt and the later sojourn of Israel in Egypt after Jacob and his family went to Egypt.
4. Does God ever approve of lying as a way to protect the believer?
5. Does God always rescue the believer from the consequences of foolish mistakes?

Answers

1. It was a time of severe famine in Canaan, and there was food in Egypt.
2. Abraham lied to Pharaoh, saying that Sarah was his sister. His motive was self-preservation.
3. In both cases, God's people went down into Egypt due to famine. In both cases, there was the control of Pharaoh and the divine protection of God's people. There were plagues and the request of Pharaoh for God's people to leave the land.
4. No.
5. Not always. In Abraham's case, God rescued him from the consequences of his foolish mistakes, and He can do the same for us. But God does not always step in to get us off the hook.

Discuss / Consider

1. When we are tempted to lie to cover our tracks or protect ourselves, think of the example of our Lord Jesus. He never lied to protect Himself. He always did the right thing. Recall some ways in which He is our biblical model.

2. Have you ever found yourselves in the fallout of your own foolish mistakes? Has God ever rescued you from their consequences? Think through the decisions of life before you act hastily.

Challenge

1. Review the Hagar factor. What worldly habits have you picked up along the way? How are they affecting you and your family?

2. Have you ever been rebuked by an unbeliever because of your deception or unChristlike behavior? Resolve to avoid giving occasion for an unbeliever to rebuke you.

Abraham and Lot Separate
Genesis 13:1-9

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. God fully restores the backslider who returns.

2. Sometimes the best solution to strife is separation.

Practical Application

1. Why not go back to square one?

Questions

1. What does Genesis 13:3-4 tell us about Abraham?

2. Why did Abraham and Lot separate? How did Abraham handle the separation?

3. What is a “backslider?” How did God restore Abraham after he had backslidden?

4. Did Abraham make a wise decision in separating from Lot?

5. Should separation always be the solution when there is strife?

Answers

1. Abraham was not only back in the land physically, he was also restored spiritually.
2. Both had many livestock, and this accumulated wealth led to problems (strife) between Abraham's herdsmen and Lot's herdsmen. Abraham magnanimously gave Lot the first choice of the land before them.
3. A "backslider" is a believer who has a lapse of faith. God fully restored Abraham when he returned to Bethel, the house of God, where he was at the beginning. Abraham was back in fellowship with the Lord, worshipping again at the altar, and calling on God's name.
4. Yes, because the strife between their herdsmen was not a good testimony to the Canaanites, and their range war was escalating. God confirmed this separation as a good solution.
5. Not always, especially in family situations (such as when a married couple considers divorce, denying Matthew 19:5-6). However, we should always separate when evil and moral corruption of this world are involved. See 2 Corinthians 6:16-17.

Discuss / Consider

1. When the believer backslides in lapse of faith, he loses time in Christian service and mars the effectiveness of his testimony. Further, he may lose out on all that God wanted to do with his life. Let God restore your soul and return to that blessed fellowship with Him. Read Psalm 23:3.

2. There are times when separation may be an appropriate solution to strife. However, believers should try very hard to resolve situations of strife to the glory of God. Recall incidents in your life when it would have been a better choice to separate. Recall incidents when it would have been better to reconcile differences.

Challenge

1. Abraham went back to square one. He started over again when he returned from Egypt. The tent speaks of the pilgrim character of the believer, and the altar speaks of worship. Are you are in need of returning to the place of faith? Recapture the pilgrim character of the believer, and drop off the entanglements of the world. Go back to square one.

Answers

1. Lot saw the well-watered plains of Jordan, and chose for himself.
2. After Lot made his choice of the land for himself. (Genesis 13:14-17)
3. In Genesis 13:18 we read that Abraham moved his tent to higher ground in Hebron, which meant a closer fellowship with the Lord, and he continued to walk with the Lord.
4. Because he was a man of faith and he believed the promises of God. God had promised the whole land to Abraham's descendants, and he believed God. He was walking by faith in the promises of God.
5. On the basis of sight. Lot selfishly and greedily chose the best looking land, but he failed to consider what the move toward wicked Sodom would mean to his family.

Discuss / Consider

1. Abraham walked by faith, believing the promises of God. Lot made his choices on the basis of sight. How do you make your choices? Consider some definite promises of God for you as a believer. How do you respond to these promises?

2. Consider Lot's increasing desensitization and the effect it had on him and his family. In what ways have you become desensitized? Can you trace the increasing desensitization toward sin and increased tolerance of it in your lifetime?

Challenge

1. Step by step Lot traveled the road to failure. Trace his steps, beginning with his choice of the "good" land. Trace your steps, beginning with some materialistic choices of the "good" life. Don't travel Lot's road to failure.

Abraham Rescues Lot After the Defeat of Sodom
Genesis 14:1-16

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Carnal believers will suffer the consequences of their choices.

2. Spiritual believers are responsible to restore fellow believers.

Practical Application

1. Let's not write off a fellow believer saying, "It serves you right."

Questions

1. Describe the skirmish between the five kings from the Jordan Valley and the four kings from the Mesopotamian Valley.

2. What did Abraham do when he heard that Lot had been taken captive?

3. What does Lot's life illustrate for us?

4. Are spiritual believers responsible to restore their fellow believers?

5. What was the result of Lot's choice to move into Sodom?

Answers

1. The four Mesopotamian Valley area kings invaded. The cities of the Jordan Valley were conquered and plundered, and Lot was taken into captivity. The kings of the city states of the Jordan Valley rebelled and refused to pay their annual tribute to King Chedolaomer of Shiner (Babylon), who was then in power over this whole area.
2. Abraham took 318 of his own servants to pursue the enemy and rescue Lot. Although they were greatly outnumbered, they traveled quickly and overtook the enemy by surprise and set them to flight.
3. Lot is a picture in Scripture of the carnal or worldly believer.
4. Yes. This is pictured by Abraham's rescue of Lot, and confirmed in Galatians 6:1.
5. Lot was taken captive along with all of his possessions. In other words, he lost everything.

Discuss / Consider

1. What is your responsibility as a spiritual believer to an unspiritual believer? Think of a specific person and how you could help him / her.

2. Have you ever written off a fellow believer by saying in effect, "It serves him right?" If so, can you rectify that mistake and adjust your attitude?

Challenge

1. Beware of carnal thinking and making short-sighted choices. Avoid thinking like Lot and cultivate the habit of walking by faith, like Abraham. Note that Lot lifted his eyes and chose for himself, whereas Abraham lifted his eyes in faith. Genesis 13:10, 14

Abraham and Melchizedek; Abraham Refuses the King of Sodom's Offer
Genesis 14:17-24

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Melchizedek, the king of Salem, is a picture of Christ who encourages the believer.

2. The king of Sodom is a picture of the prince of this world who tempts the believer.

Practical Application

1. Let's not try to get around tithing.

Questions

1. Who was Melchizedek and why was he so distinct?

2. How is Melchizedek a picture of Christ?

3. What is a theophany? How does it relate to this story?

4. How is the king of Sodom a picture of Satan?

5. What was Abraham's response to the king of Sodom?

Answers

1. Abraham feared retaliation by the armies of the kings who had been defeated. The Lord encouraged him. See Genesis 15:1.
2. Eliezer was Abraham's servant. Abraham had not seen the promise of a son, so he thought to make his servant his adopted heir.
3. No. God told Abraham that Eliezer would not be his heir, but that his heir would come from his own body. See Genesis 15:4.
4. The doctrine of justification by faith. Genesis 15:6 is quoted three times in the New Testament - Romans 4, Galatians 3, and James 2.
5. It means to credit to your account. The believer's charge account with God is credited with righteousness - not the believer's own righteousness. Rather, he is credited with Christ's righteousness because Christ paid all the charges of the believer's sin with His perfect sacrifice.

Discuss / Consider

1. Refer to Genesis 15:1. This is the first "fear not" in the Bible. Can you recall other "fear nots" in Scripture? Recall some times when God's "fear nots" were given to you. How is the Lord your shield and reward?

2. How would you refute the "salvation by works" argument from this portion of Scripture? Refer also to Romans 4:24-25. Is this the basic content of your faith?

Challenge

1. Are there times when you question God? Abraham questioned God and was not rebuked, but given understanding. The same can be true for you, providing you have the right attitude. What are some of your questions?

God Confirms His Covenant with Abraham
Genesis 15:7-21

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. God's delays are not necessarily His denials.

2. God's promises are always as sure as His existence.

Practical Application

1. Let's drive away the vultures.

Questions

1. How was a covenant made in the time of Abraham?

2. What was the Abrahamic Covenant?

3. What does the covenant ceremony picture?

4. How was the Abrahamic Covenant fulfilled?

5. Is the Abrahamic Covenant valid today? What portion is yet to be fulfilled?

6. Explain the symbols used in Genesis 15:17.

Abraham and Sarah Take God's Promise into Their Own Hands
Genesis 16:1-6

Background

Doctrinal Points

- 1. Biblical ends never justify unbiblical means.**

- 2. Unbiblical means always result in bad fallout.**

Practical Application

- 1. Don't blame others when you are frustrated.**

- 2. Don't rush ahead of God.**

Questions

1. When Abraham was 75 years old and Sarah was 65, God gave them the promise of a child. By the time Abraham was 85 and Sarah was 75, they still had no descendants. So they decided to help God out. How?

2. What was the result of "helping God out?"

3. What was wrong with Abraham and Sarah trying to help God keep His promise?

4. What was some of the bad fallout of the action of Abraham and Sarah?

The Lord Himself meets Hagar
Genesis 16:7-16

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. **God hears and sees the disadvantaged.**

2. **God's plans are not ruined by man's mistakes.**

Practical Application

1. **Don't try to run away from your problems.**

Questions

1. Who was the angel of the Lord who found Hagar by the spring?
2. What did the Lord tell Hagar about her son, Ishmael?
3. How does Hagar fall into the category of the disadvantaged?
4. How did God relate to Hagar when she was in the wilderness?
5. Can God's plans be ruined by man's mistakes? Give an example from this portion of Scripture.
6. What did God tell Hagar when she tried to run away from her problems?

Answers

1. Most likely the angel was what was called a theophany or Christophany, that is, the Son of God in the Old Testament taking on the appearance of man.
2. The Lord said that he would be a wild man. This is a good description of the Bedouins of the desert. They move freely in the wilderness and are a law unto themselves.
3. She was taken advantage of by Abraham and Sarah; she was reduced from a maid servant to slave status (and that for following their orders). Her chances for marriage had been taken away in that culture, and she was treated harshly and forced to flee.
4. God knew all about Hagar's problems. He heard her cries and saw her situation. The Lord personally came to her to strengthen her and encourage her.
5. No. God's plans were to give Abraham and Sarah a son named Isaac. They made the mistake of rushing ahead of God and trying to help God out in their own way. As a result, Ishmael was born and there has been a lot of bad fallout, which continues today. But in spite of this, God's plans were not ruined and Isaac, the child of promise, was eventually born.
6. God told her to return and submit to Sarah. (Genesis 16:9)

Discuss / Consider

1. Are there times when you feel disadvantaged and despondent? That someone has taken advantage of you? God sees and hears. Turn to Him.

2. Have you made some mistakes? Perhaps you've rushed ahead of God. Maybe you are experiencing some bad fallout. Be encouraged, for God's plans are not nullified by your mistakes.

Challenge

1. Hagar tried to run away from her problems, but they were solved when she returned. Have you tried to run away from your problems? Consider Hagar. Face your problems and trust the Lord to give you the strength and courage to deal with them.

The Sign of the Abrahamic Covenant
Genesis 17:1-14

Background

Doctrinal Points

- 1. God can and will keep His covenant with believers.**

- 2. Believers are obligated to walk in line with God's covenant.**

Practical Application

- 1. Why not try the best formula for living?**

Questions

1. Why did God change Abram's name to Abraham? What is the meaning of these two names?

2. By what sign did God establish the Abrahamic covenant? What are some of the implications of this sign?

3. Was this a mutually designed covenant between God and Abraham?

4. Note the number of times that God says, "I will," in Genesis 17:1-8.

5. By what name did God reveal Himself to Abraham?

Answers

1. God was going to keep His covenant promise to make Abraham the father of many nations and of many kings. See Genesis 17:6. Abram means exalted father. Abraham means father of multitudes.
2. God instituted circumcision as the sign of the covenant. The covenant had to do with the promised seed and descendants of Abraham. The association is obvious between circumcision and having children. Furthermore, this sign would visibly confront and perhaps prevent any Jewish male and female from departing from God's clearly defined sexual boundaries. Circumcision was a cutting rite - the implication was that if any Jewish male was not circumcised or did not keep the covenant, then he was to be cut off from the covenant community.
3. No. God planned, designed and initiated the covenant. It is His and He will keep it.
4. Refer to Genesis 17:1-8 and count the "I wills" of God.
5. "I am God Almighty" (El Shaddai). This is the first occurrence of that name in the Bible. It refers to God's majestic might and His ability to keep His promises.

Discuss / Consider

1. God can and will keep His covenant promises to believers today. Consider some of God's promises to you, as found in His word. Do you believe them? Do you behave as if you believed them?

2. The Abrahamic covenant was unconditional and everlasting. It was instituted by God, but Abraham and his descendants were obligated to keep it. See Genesis 17:9. Keeping the covenant was not just practicing the sign, but also walking in line with the covenant. What are the implications for believers today?

Challenge

1. Contrast the world's formula for living and God's formula for living. Do the right thing.

God's Specific Promise that Sarah Would Bear a Son
Genesis 17:15-27

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. **With God, all things are possible.**

2. **The Abrahamic covenant is made with Israel, but its blessings are not limited to Israel.**

Practical Application

1. **Don't delay to obey.**

Questions

1. Why was Sarai's name changed and to what was it changed?

2. What was the spiritual parallel of the sign of the covenant?

3. Did circumcision save Abraham?

4. What is the truth illustrated in Genesis 17 and in Mark 10:27?

5. Was Abraham weak in faith when he laughed at God's promise to give him descendants as numerous as the stars? (Genesis 17:17) Remember, he was an old man and Sarah was beyond normal child-bearing years.

6. Look at doctrinal point # 2. What blessings belong to the Jewish people? What blessings belong to others?

Answers

1. Sarai was changed to Sarah. The meaning of both are basically the same, “princess.” Perhaps it was changed to emphasize to Sarah that she really was a princess at this point and would have royal blood coming from her. She would be a mother of nations and kings would come from her.
2. Although circumcision, the sign of the covenant, was a physical operation, it implied that there was to be a circumcision of the heart. Note Deuteronomy 30:6 and Romans 2:28-29. Circumcision of the heart means obedience.
3. No. Abraham was saved by faith. See Romans 4:2-3 and 9-11.
4. With God, all things are possible.
5. No, Abraham was not weak in faith. See Romans 4:19-21. Perhaps Abraham’s laugh was an “it’s-too-good-to-be-true” type of laugh.
6. God will one day give the Jews all the land promised to them when they return to the Lord and recognize Him as their Messiah. As for others, see Isaiah 19:24-25. In “that day,” when the Lord returns, Egypt will be blessed as well. And the blessings are for believers through the ages. See Romans 4:16, 23-25.

Discuss / Consider

1. Circumcision had nothing to do with Abraham’s salvation. Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness. What does this mean in our lives today? How are we saved?

2. With God, all things are possible. Abraham and Sarah were beyond child-bearing years, but God gave strength to have Isaac, the promised son. Are there things in your life that you think are impossible? With God, all things are possible. What dreams do you have for His glory?

Challenge

1. The sign of the covenant was painful for Abraham to carry out, but he did not delay to obey. Have you delayed to obey the Lord in any area of your life? Don’t delay to obey.

The Lord Appears to Abraham Again and Rebukes Sarah
Genesis 18:1-15

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The life of faith is not 100% doubt free.

2. Is anything too hard for the Lord?

Practical Application

1. Do we pass the hospitality test?

Questions

1. God had promised Abraham and Sarah a child and that all the families of the earth would be blessed through him. But they had no children, so they tried to help God out. How did they do this?

2. What did Abraham do when three men showed up at his tent?

3. Is the life of faith doubt-free?

4. In the context of Genesis 18:14, what does the word “hard” mean?

5. Is anything too hard for the Lord?

Answers

1. First, Abraham thought that his servant, Eliezer, would be the heir. Then Sarah gave her maid, Hagar, to Abraham as a concubine to produce an heir.
2. With typical Bedouin hospitality, he urged them to stay for a meal.
3. No. Even with Abraham, the friend of God, there were doubts. And Sarah laughed at the promise of a son. After all, she was 89 at that point. Wouldn't you have doubted?
4. "Hard" can also be translated as extraordinary, marvelous or wonderful. It is the same word as "wonderful" in the Messianic prophecy of Isaiah 9:6.
5. No, nothing is too hard or wonderful for the Lord to do. Even as with Sarah, He can give you strength beyond your own.

Discuss / Consider

1. Abraham showed hospitality when strangers appeared at his tent. Read Hebrews 13:1-2. Are you entertaining strangers? Perhaps you have entertained angels without knowing it.

2. Sarah laughed, and then denied laughing because of fear, but she is remembered for her faith. Neither Abraham nor Sarah was 100% doubt free, but they are remembered for their faith. See Hebrews 11. Have you had doubts in your Christian life? This need not detract from your faith.

Challenge

1. Are you passing the hospitality test? See Romans 12:13 and 1 Peter 4:9.

Abraham Intercedes with the Lord for Sodom
Genesis 18:16-33

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The Lord enjoys close fellowship with the believer.

2. The Lord encourages the believer to pray for others.

Practical Application

1. Are you the friend of Jesus?

Questions

1. What was the basis for Abraham's intercessory prayer?

2. Would God hold back His judgment for the sake of a few righteous?

3. Did the Lord share His plans with Abraham?

4. Was it a bargaining process on the part of the Lord as Abraham reduced the quota of righteous persons in Sodom?

5. Refer to 2 Chronicles 20:7, Isaiah 41:8 and James 2:23. What does this tell us about Abraham?

Answers

1. It was based on Abraham's concern for Lot and the righteous in Sodom. (Genesis 18:23) It was also based on biblical principles and the way God has revealed Himself, "Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Genesis 18:25).
2. Yes. Read Genesis 18:26.
3. Yes. See Genesis 18:17 and Amos 3:7.
4. No. The Lord was encouraging intercessory prayer.
5. Abraham is called the friend of God. He is the only believer in the Bible who is referred to in this way.

Discuss / Consider

1. God did not hide His plans from Abraham. The Lord wanted to share His ways with Abraham. This is part of having close fellowship with the Lord. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. What degree of fellowship do you have with the Lord? How can you have even closer fellowship with Him?

2. Analyze your prayer life. What percentage of your praying is for others? Review Abraham's intercessory prayer. Read 1 Samuel 12:23.

Challenge

1. Are you the friend of Jesus? See John 15:14. Are you obeying Him in your personal life, your thought life, in your relationships? Jesus said, "You are my friend if..."

Answers

1. They found Lot sitting in the gate. The gate of the city in Bible days was like the town hall. The elders of the city would sit there and determine city policies and judge community affairs. It appears that Lot had not only moved into Sodom, but that he was also active in its government.
2. The bottom line? Lot had not come to serve God and be a missionary to Sodom, but to selfishly get all that he could out of this worldly city.
3. For two reasons:
 - 1) To confirm that the sins of Sodom were great and the judgment of God was just.
 - 2) To rescue Lot and his family in answer to Abraham's prayers and concern.
4. No. This record shows God's disapproval of homosexuality. See also Jude 7, Leviticus 20:13 and Romans 1:26-27.
5. Lot's desensitization to sin is demonstrated by the fact that he would give his daughters to the wicked men surrounding his house.

Discuss / Consider

1. Are you taking the biblical stand on homosexuality? How do you handle the arguments for it (e.g., it's genetic, or it's God's fault, or it's OK today)?
Review the references in answer # 4 and also 1 Corinthians 6:9-11.

2. In what ways have you become desensitized to sin? Consider what you are willing to tolerate now compared to a decade ago.

Challenge

1. Is your Christian life a joke? Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, but his life and testimony were a joke to them. His message was ignored. Are you living a materialistic and pleasure-seeking lifestyle that would negate your testimony?

Answers

1. It could have been, but in any case, it was precisely timed by God. There are a number of miracles in the Bible that are of this kind - natural events, but precisely timed by God Himself.
2. She was turned into a pillar of salt because, in direct disobedience to the Lord's command, she looked back and lingered.
3. a) Lot's wife hesitated, disobeyed God's commands, and her life was taken.
b) Salvation is freely offered to all who will receive Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. The Bible teaches that in order to avoid the judgment of God upon sin, one must repent of his sin and turn to Christ for salvation before it's too late. See John 14:6, John 3:36, Acts 4:12, and Hebrews 9:27
c) Lot was a believer and escaped the judgment, but he lost just about everything. He invested all his time, energy and material possessions in Sodom. It all went up in smoke. Lot had an opportunity to get out of Sodom when he was rescued by Abram, but he went back because his attachments were so strong. Even when he escaped, he hesitated to go to the mountains as directed. Lot's attachments to the things of this world should be a lesson to believers to hold loosely to the things of this world.
4. "God remembered Abraham..." (Genesis 19:29). The Lord was merciful to Lot because of the intercessory prayers of Abraham.

Discuss / Consider

1. Lot's wife became a monument to disobedience. Will your life be a monument to obedience or disobedience? See Luke 17:32. Lot's wife is a biblical illustration of, "He who hesitates is lost." She hesitated, lingered, looked back, and was lost in the judgment. The judgment of God against sin is sure and can come suddenly. How does this concern you?

2. Abraham's prayers were effective. How effective are your prayers? See James 5:16b.

Challenge

1. Sodom and the cities of the plain are a picture of the world under judgment. Even after Lot had escaped out of Sodom, he wanted to move into another city in the plain, little Zoar. He wanted to continue to have one foot in this world. Are you such a Christian? Not in Sodom, but in Zoar; not 100% worldly, but not a fully committed Christian? Note Jesus' prayer to the Father in John 17. See also 1 John 2:15-17.

The Far-Reaching Results of Lot's Sin
Genesis 19:30-38

Background

Doctrinal Points

- 1. Moving toward Sodom will have drastic effects on the believer's personal life.**
- 2. Moving toward Sodom will have drastic effects on the believer's family life.**
- 3. Moving toward Sodom will have drastic effects on other people.**

Practical Application

- 1. How would you like to be Lot in heaven?**

Questions

1. How complete was the destruction of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah?
2. How and why did Lot bargain with the angels when they were fleeing from Sodom?
3. Where did Lot go wrong? Trace his downward pathway.
4. What is Sodom a picture of?
5. What were some of the long-range effects of Lot's moving toward Sodom?

Abraham and Abimelech
Genesis 20:1-18

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Mature believers can make selfish mistakes more than once.

2. Mature believers may receive stinging rebukes more than once.

Practical Application

1. Let's not blame God for our selfish choices.

2. Let's not assume we know an unbeliever's heart.

Questions

1. Who was Abimelech? Why was he important here?
2. What is a prophet? Who was the prophet in this biblical account?
3. Did Abraham, the friend of God and a man of faith, duplicate his mistakes?
4. How was Abraham rebuked for his lies?
5. Abraham made an erroneous assumption about Abimelech. What was it?

Answers

1. He was the king of Gerar and one of the early Philistine kings. He is important to this scriptural account because of his dealings with Abraham.
2. A prophet is defined as one who speaks the word of God to the people. Abraham was called a prophet in Genesis 20:7. This is the first mention of a prophet in the Bible.
3. Yes. He lied twice about Sarah being his wife, first to Pharaoh (Genesis 12) and then to Abimelech (Genesis 20). The fact that Sarah was Abraham's half-sister (Genesis 20:12) didn't make their lie less than a lie.
4. He was rebuked by unbelievers, first by the pagan Pharaoh and then by Abimelech.
5. See Genesis 20:11. Abraham assumed that Abimelech was a pagan like the rest of the Canaanites. He was unaware that Abimelech had a knowledge of God, that he heard the true God, and that he had integrity of heart before God. See Genesis 20:6.

Discuss / Consider

1. Abraham was not preserved from making foolish mistakes. He even repeated the same mistakes. A selfish mistake can take an active, productive, mature believer right out of the loop of God's blessing. How can you learn from this lesson?

2. Abraham was rebuked by unbelievers for lying. What a sad testimony! Did you ever receive a stinging rebuke from an unbeliever? This is a lesson in walking by faith. Heed it.

Challenge

1. Abraham tried to shift the blame of his mistake to God (Genesis 20:13). Abraham failed to take his own responsibility for making a mistake. Don't be an Abraham in this regard.

2. Abraham assumed that Abimelech did not know or fear or obey God. Have you been guilty of such assumptions about some people in your spheres of life?

Isaac, the Promised Son, is Born
Genesis 21:1-7

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. God fulfills His perfect word in His time.

2. God sees our imperfect faith in His grace.

Practical Application

1. Remember that your strength will equal your days.

2. Let's laugh with God and not at God.

Questions

1. Was Isaac, the promised son, conceived in the natural way?

2. Does God deliver what He promises?

3. How is God's grace shown in the birth of Isaac?

4. Refer to Deuteronomy 33:25b. What promise did God make to the tribe of Asher? How was Sarah an illustration of this promise? Can this promise be applied to us?

5. Concerning the promise of Isaac, who laughed?

Answers

1. Yes, but it was obvious that God had worked a miracle. Sarah's ninety year old body was not only rejuvenated. She was even enabled to nurse the child. See Genesis 21:7.
2. Yes, always. However, God's time may differ from what we consider to be the right time.
3. Sarah laughed and doubted God. However, she had a genuine faith, albeit weak and immature and imperfect. God in His grace not only tolerated this kind of faith, but He strengthened it to the point where God Himself could inspire the writer of Hebrews to write, "Sarah, by faith..."
4. "As your days, so shall your strength be." The Lord gave Sarah the bodily strength and stamina to carry a child and give birth at an old age. Yes, God will give you the strength to do what He calls you to do.
5. Abraham laughed, although it is supposed that this was an "it's-too-good-to-be-true" type of laugh. Sarah laughed in unbelief. God named the child Isaac, which means laughter. Perhaps this was to remind the parents that where there had been the laughter of unbelief, there was now the laughter of joy.

Discuss / Consider

1. Consider the fact that nothing can deter or thwart God's sovereign plans for believers. Although these plans may be delayed (according to our timetable), they are not denied. What God has promised, He will do in His perfect time. Do you become impatient thinking that God has missed the right time? Perhaps in His design and timetable, God has included discipline for your impatience. Be encouraged. See Philippians 1:6.

2. Sarah's faith was imperfect and immature, but God in His wisdom strengthened it to the point where she became known as a woman of faith. God sees your imperfect and immature faith, but He can strengthen you and cultivate your faith. Let God do this in your life.

Challenge

1. Whatever God calls you to do, He will give strength to do it. Sometimes that's the way the Lord can guide us as to whether we are doing His will or not. There should be no burn out. Check your vision and your attitude. Are you in sync with God's will for your life?

Hagar and Ishmael Separate from Abraham and Sarah **Genesis 21:8-21**

Background

Doctrinal Points

- 1. Hagar and Sarah picture the great contrast between law and grace.**

- 2. Ishmael and Isaac picture the great contrast between the flesh and the spirit.**

Practical Application

- 1. It isn't always easy for us to do the right thing.**

- 2. When in need, remember Hagar.**

- 3. Husbands, listen to your wives.**

Questions

1. What was the purpose of giving Hagar as a concubine to Abraham?

2. How old was Ishmael when Isaac was born? What was the precipitating factor in casting out Hagar and Ishmael?

3. How do Hagar and Sarah picture the contrast between law and grace?

4. How do Ishmael and Isaac picture the contrast between the flesh and the spirit?

5. The husband is to be the spiritual head of the house (Ephesians 5:22-24). As such, is it seemly that the husband receive counsel and advice from his wife?

Answers

1. The purpose was to obtain an heir for Abraham, since Abraham and Sarah had no children, and God had promised them an heir.
2. Ishmael was fourteen when Isaac was born. Abraham made a feast on the day that Isaac was weaned (Ishmael was now at least sixteen). During this feast that Sarah saw Ishmael mocking Isaac. Sarah couldn't take it any longer and told Abraham to cast out Hagar and her son, Ishmael.
3. Refer to Galatians 4:21-31. Abraham and Sarah tried to produce an heir in their own strength, through Hagar, and not in God's way. It was like trying to please God in their own strength by doing the works of the law. Sarah, on the other hand, received strength from God in His time, recognizing that God is faithful. This is of grace.
4. See Galatians 4:29. Ishmael was born of the flesh and persecuted him who was born of the Spirit (Isaac). As Ishmael was in conflict with Isaac, so is the flesh in conflict with the Spirit. See also Galatians 5:17.
5. This is not in conflict. The authority structure designed by God is that the husband is the head of the household, and the wife is given as a helpmeet. Many times the husband is given good counsel by God through his wife. Husbands are to ascertain that their wives are giving advice in concert with Scripture. Wives can give advice and counsel, and should be listened to.

Discuss / Consider

1. Abraham and Sarah did not please God by taking matters into their own hands, and trying to do His work. We cannot please God by trying to keep His commandments in our own strength. Come to the Lord in simple faith trusting His promises. Trust also in God's timetable.
2. We are to practice the principle found in Galatians 4:30 and 5:16 by continually casting out the flesh and walking in the Spirit. Avoid putting yourself in situations where it is easy to give in to the flesh. What are you watching on TV? What are you reading? With whom are you associating? Walk in the Spirit by reading and watching and doing things that help you mature in Christ.

Challenge

1. When in need, remember Hagar. Lost in the wilderness with no water and no hope for the future, God saw her condition and heard her cries. God opened Hagar's eyes and showed her water, and gave her strength and promises...and a command, which she obeyed. Do you have needs right now? As with Hagar, God hears your cries and can meet your needs.

Abraham and Abimelech Make a Covenant
Genesis 21:22-34

Background

Doctrinal Points

- 1. Believers should try to live peaceably with unbelievers.**

- 2. Believers should not jettison justice for the sake of peace.**

Practical Application

- 1. Do your non-Christian friends have to say, “Don’t deal falsely with me?”**

- 2. Do you know God as El-Olam (the God of Eternity)?**

Questions

1. Why did Abimelech desire to make a peace treaty with Abraham?
2. What is the Hebrew meaning of Beersheba?
3. Read Romans 12:18 and Hebrews 12:14. What do these verses tell us about the way we should live?
4. How did Abraham practice doctrinal point # 1?
5. How did Abraham practice doctrinal point # 2?
6. Why did Abimelech say to Abraham, “Don’t deal falsely with me?”

God Asks Abraham to Offer Up His Son Isaac
Genesis 22:1-8

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The Bible teaches by the law of first mention.
 - a. The first mention of the word “test” in the Bible. (Genesis 22:1)
 - b. The first mention of the word “love” in the Bible. (Genesis 22:2)
 - c. The first mention of the word “worship” in the Bible. (Genesis 22:5)
 - d. The first mention of the word “obey” in the Bible. (Genesis 22:18)

Practical Application

1. Parents, are you willing to give up your children to the Lord?

Questions

1. Why did God ask Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac?
2. How does the Bible teach by the law of first mention?
3. Explain the idea of first mention in each of the following words.
 - a. “Test”
 - b. “Love”
 - c. “Worship”
 - d. “Obey”

Answers

1. God was proving that Abraham's faith was a great faith. Also, importantly, this event is an outstanding spiritual picture of the great sacrifice of the Lamb (the Lord Jesus) at Calvary.
2. The law of first mention states that wherever key biblical words are mentioned in the Bible, there you will find the essential meaning and depth of that word as God wants us to understand it as used throughout Scripture.
3.
 - a. The idea of "test" (or tempt) is not a temptation to do evil, but rather a test of faith. The tests of life are not easy to understand and God expects believers to have faith in God in the darkness.
 - b. "Love" is part of the spiritual picture that God paints for us to convey the love that He had for His own Son as they walked together to Calvary. It is a great love.
 - c. "Worship" involves thanksgiving and praise, but also sacrifice and obedience.
 - d. "Obedience" to God means obeying Him in the hard commands as well as the easy commands.

Discuss / Consider

1. God tested Abraham by asking him to give up his prize possession. Has God ever tested your faith in the area of your prize possessions? Did you pass or fail the test?

2. Refer to 1 Peter 1:7 and James 1:2-4. How do these verses help you understand more about how and why God tests our faith?

Challenge

1. Review the portions of this lesson that have to do with worship. Does your worship include thanksgiving and praise? Does your worship include sacrifice and obedience?

2. As a parent, are you willing to give up your children to the Lord?

The Ram as a Substitute Sacrifice
Genesis 22:9-14

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The sacrifice of Isaac is a type of the death of Christ.

2. The receiving back of Isaac is a type of the resurrection of Christ.

Practical Application

1. Have you come to know God as Jehovah-Jireh?

Questions

1. List and explain three ways by which the Bible teaches truth.

2. How is the sacrifice of Isaac a type of the death of Christ?

3. Who is the angel of the Lord in Genesis 22:11?

4. How is the receiving back of Isaac a type of the resurrection of Christ?

5. What does the name Jehovah-Jireh mean?

Answers

1. By precept (command, as in Luke 10:27), by principle (God will test our faith as He tested Abraham's faith), and by picture (a spiritual picture or type given in an Old Testament person, place or event which illustrates a New Testament truth).
2. Abraham pictures God the Father. As Abraham loved his son Isaac, God loved His Son the Lord Jesus. Abraham shared his thoughts with his beloved son, the promised heir into whose hand all was given as they walked with the wood to the place of sacrifice. Abraham did not spare his son; God did not spare His own Son. Isaac went willingly to the place of sacrifice. The Lord Jesus went willingly to Calvary.
3. It is the Lord Himself, the preincarnate Son of God in the Old Testament.
4. See Hebrews 11:17-19.
5. Jehovah-Jireh means God will provide. Jehovah is the name by which God reveals Himself to His people as the Lord who cares and keeps His covenants with them. Jireh means that He will see to it, or provide for His people.

Discuss / Consider

1. Review doctrinal point # 1, comparing Abraham and Isaac with God the Father and God the Son. How much does the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus mean to you?

2. Do you know God as Jehovah-Jireh? In what ways?

Challenge

1. How far would you (do you) go in trusting God for your needs (physically, emotionally, financially, whatever)?

God's Confirmation of His Covenant with Abraham
Genesis 22:15-24

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Blessing follows obedience.

2. Confirmation follows obedience.

Practical Application

1. It's not over until it's over.

Questions

1. Abraham passed God's supreme test of his faith, to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac. But Isaac was spared when a ram was substituted. How, then, was this a test of faith if Isaac was not literally sacrificed?
2. What does it mean to "possess the gates of their enemies?" (Genesis 22:17)
3. Why is the record of the descendants of Nahor included in this account?
4. Refer to Genesis 22:17-18. Why was Abraham promised such blessing?
5. What does the Jukes-Edwards study illustrate?

Answers

1. God looks on the heart, and He saw the reality of Abraham's faith, even to the point of giving up his son to the Lord.
2. The massive gates of ancient walled cities were the strong point of the defense of the cities, and the gates were where all the major decisions were made. So to "possess the gates" means to completely conquer your enemies.
3. To show where Rebecca came from. She would become the wife of Isaac.
4. Because he obeyed the voice of God.
5. That blessing follows obedience. The Jukes family father was an unbeliever, a man of no principles, and his descendants made no significant contribution to society. On the other hand, Jonathan Edwards, a great force in the awakening of America in the 1700s, fathered descendants of renown and faithfulness.

Discuss / Consider

1. Blessing followed obedience in the account of Abraham and in the account of Jonathan Edwards. Obedience is the key to blessing from God. This is a divine principle. Do you want blessing in your life? Have you received blessing by being obedient?

2. Confirmation follows obedience. God confirmed the covenant that He made with Abraham several times. The Christian life is a step by step walk of faith. How can you be sure of your steps?

Challenge

1. Abraham had to keep walking by faith with tests along the way. His life of faith was not over until it was over. Are you walking by faith, passing the tests along the way?

The Death and Burial of Sarah
Genesis 23:1-20

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The believer's death should be a demonstration of great faith.

2. The believer's death should be a time of great witness.

Practical Application

1. It's not wrong for you to grieve.

2. Let's not distort the biblical concept of death.

Questions

1. Where was Sarah's burial place located?

2. What does it mean to die in faith?

3. How was Sarah's funeral a witness to the people of the land?

4. Is it wrong for a Christian to grieve over the death of a loved one?

Answers

1. Abraham bought a field containing a cave, where Sarah was buried. It is known as the field and cave of Machpelah. Today it is beneath a Muslim mosque in Hebron.
2. It means to face death without wavering in your faith. It means to trust the Lord fully to the very end. The way you face death can be a demonstration of great faith.
3. In that day and in that culture, the custom was to bury your dead in the land of your fathers, the land where your relatives lived. That was considered home. Abraham's relatives did not live in Canaan, but God had promised that land to him. Canaan was home, even though Abraham was still a sojourner in the land. When Abraham buried Sarah in the land of Canaan, rather than return to Haran or Ur, it was a witness to his faith in God.
4. No. Abraham came to mourn and grieve for Sarah, and we know he was a man of great faith. Losing a loved one is a sorrowful time, but as Christians we sorrow not as others sorrow, for we have the sure hope of heaven. See 1 Thessalonians 4:13.

Discuss / Consider

1. Do you know a Christian who is facing death daily? Would you hope to face death in such a way?

2. How do you handle the loss of a loved one? See 1 Thessalonians 4:13 and 2 Corinthians 5:8. As you comfort others, what Scriptures do you use?

Challenge

1. Have you planned your funeral service? Would it honor the Lord and bring people closer to Him?

Abraham Commissions His Servant to Go on a Journey
Genesis 24:1-9

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. In Genesis 24, Isaac is a picture (type) of Christ at the present time.
2. In Genesis 24, the unnamed servant is a picture (type) of the Holy Spirit at the present time.

Practical Application

1. The Holy Spirit will not manipulate your will and force you to become a Christian if you do not want to.
2. The more biblical counseling you get before marriage, the better your marriage will be later.

Questions

1. Explain the meaning of “type” as used in the Bible.
2. How is Isaac a type of Christ?
3. How is the unnamed servant a picture of the Holy Spirit?
4. Sometimes God forces people to become Christians. Right?
5. Should people seek biblical counseling before marriage? If so, why?

Answers

1. Type is an Old Testament person, place, event or other item which illustrates a New Testament truth.
2. In Genesis 22, Isaac was “sacrificed” on Mount Moriah; Christ was sacrificed on Mount Calvary. In Hebrews 11:19, Isaac was raised up as from the dead; Christ was resurrected from the dead. In Genesis 24, Isaac waits for his bride; Christ is waiting for His bride, the church.
3. The fact that he has been with Abraham from the beginning and is unnamed here, enhances his portrayal of the Holy Spirit. Isaac remained at home with Abraham while the servant searched for the bride; Christ is at home in heaven with God, the Father while the Holy Spirit calls out His bride. The servant was carrying out Abraham’s plan to search out a bride for his son Isaac; the Holy Spirit is carrying out God’s plan to search out a bride for Christ. Further, the servant speaks not of himself, but of the father and the son; the Holy Spirit speaks not of Himself, but of the Father and the Son.
4. Wrong. The Holy Spirit will speak to someone, but He will neither manipulate nor force anyone to become a Christian. This choice is left to the individual.
5. Yes, the more biblical counseling before marriage, the better the marriage later. Marriages grounded in Christ are more apt to fulfill God’s plan for marriage. See Ephesians 5:22-29, for example.

Discuss / Consider

1. What is the significance of the vow Abraham requested from his servant? (Genesis 24:2-4)
2. Does the unnamed servant have a name? See Genesis 15:2.
3. Did you seek biblical counseling before marriage? Should you and would you seek biblical counseling?

Challenge

1. Have you seen evidence of the Holy Spirit working in your life? What is your response to Him?

Abraham Sends His Servant to Find a Wife for Isaac
Genesis 24:10-28

Background

Doctrinal Points

- 1. God guides the believer through specific prayers.**
- 2. God guides the believer through specific circumstances.**
- 3. God guides the believer through scriptural conditions.**

Practical Application

- 1. Let's remember to thank the Lord for His guidance.**

Questions

1. Abraham's servant prayed for God's guidance, both generally and specifically, while he was on his commissioned journey. Which Scriptures illustrate each type, general and specific?
2. Was Abraham's servant setting out a fleece? What is a fleece? What about Gideon?
3. Was it by chance that Rebekah was the first woman on the scene? Was it by chance that her family let her go? Was it by chance that Rebekah agreed to marry a man she had never seen?
4. How did God guide Abraham's servant through scriptural conditions?
5. Who can be led by the will of God?

Answers

1. Generally - "O Lord God...please give me success...and show kindness to my master..." (Genesis 24:12)
Specifically - "Let her be the one You have appointed for Your servant Isaac" (Genesis 24:14)
2. Abraham's servant made a specific prayer, not a fleece. A fleece is a sign asking God to confirm your decision in a miraculous way. Gideon's fleece was not a sign of a strong faith, but of a weak faith.
3. No, none of these events were by chance. God was working behind the scenes to bring about special circumstances.
4. The servant was "in the way." He was being obedient and seeking God's will, meeting scriptural conditions. Look up Proverbs 3:5-6.
5. Believers who are doing the will of God; believers "in the way."

Discuss / Consider

1. Have you had the experience of having prayer answered even before you finished praying? See Genesis 24:15 and Isaiah 65:24.
2. Have you experienced God's leading through special circumstances? Did the Lord open or close doors to indicate His leading in your life?
3. After having done this lesson, what do you think about setting out a fleece?

Challenge

1. Recall the response of the servant, "He bowed his head and worshiped the Lord." Have you thanked the Lord for your mate, your church, your job? Not only that, but have you ever thanked Him for His guidance to those things? Or, do you take what God gives for granted, thinking they've just happened by chance? Time out! Thank Him for what He gives and how He leads.

The Servant's Mission is Successful
Genesis 24:29-49

Background

Doctrinal Points

- 1. Faithful servants stick rigidly to their priorities.**

- 2. Faithful servants speak highly of their masters.**

Practical Application

- 1. Remember that God has put the ball in your court.**

- 2. Use your answered prayers as a testimony.**

Questions

1. Faithful servants should stick rigidly to their priorities, doctrines and practices. Right?
2. Give an example of the servant sticking to his priorities.
3. How did Abraham's servant speak highly of his master?
4. What does it mean that the ball is in your court? How does this apply in this story? How might it apply to you?
5. How did Abraham's servant use his prayers as a testimony?

Answers

1. Wrong in two out of three. Faithful servants should stick rigidly to their priorities, but they need to be flexible concerning man-made doctrines and man-designed practices.
2. Even though he was tired and hungry after the long journey, he would not eat until he made known his errand.
3. See Genesis 24:12, 14 and 27. There are other indications of the servant's respect for his master later on in this chapter, as well.
4. It means that you are responsible for the next move. When Abraham's servant told Rebekah and her family about the greatness of his master, he said to them, "Now you tell me." He was asking for a clear response from them. In the same way, God's message has been clearly communicated for you through His Son and through the Bible. If you are not a Christian, the ball is clearly in your court. It's decision time.
5. See Genesis 24:34-48. Even they who heard his testimony, acknowledged that it was from the Lord (Genesis 24:50).

Discuss / Consider

1. Prayer and human effort work together. Abraham's servant related to Rebekah's family how God answered his prayers. How have you used your prayers as a testimony?

2. Abraham's servant spoke highly of his master. Do you speak highly of the Lord Jesus Christ? Do you share with others by telling of His riches and greatness?

Challenge

1. See Genesis 24:33. Abraham's servant would not eat until he told of his errand. How keenly do you prioritize spiritual matters? As a believer, your urgent mission is to share the good news of the gospel and to make disciples.

Rebekah Decides to Marry Isaac
Genesis 24:50-61

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Rebekah is a picture (type) of the church in her position.

2. Rebekah is a picture (type) of the church in her response.

Practical Application

1. Parents, are you willing to let your children go?

2. Don't delay the decision you must make.

Questions

1. Did Abraham's servant accept the offer of extending his time with them?

2. Explain, "May your descendants possess the gates of those who hate them." (Genesis 24:60)

3. How is Rebekah a picture of the church in her position?

4. How is Rebekah a picture of the church in her response?

5. Why is it unwise to delay a decision that must be made?

Answers

1. No. He replied, "Do not hinder me...that I may go to my master."
2. The gates had to do with victory and protection.
3. Rebekah was planned for and selected to be the bride of Isaac before she knew it; God's secret and eternal counsels planned for and calls out the church. (See Ephesians 1:4). Rebekah complemented or completed Isaac; the church complements or completes Christ.
4. Rebekah responded on the basis of the testimony of Abraham's servant about his master and his master's son; the church responds to the testimony of God and Jesus Christ. With Rebekah, there was both the testimony and the evidence to back it up; with the church, there is the testimony and the evidence to back it up. Rebekah's response was one of faith; the church responds in faith. See 1 Peter 1:8.
5. Rebekah did not risk losing interest by delaying the journey to her betrothed. A non-Christian should not lose interest through delay, lest the opportunity be gone.

Discuss / Consider

1. Review the blessing given by Rebekah's family (Genesis 24:60) and the one given by God to Abraham (Genesis 22:17).
2. Rebekah responded in faith, sight unseen. Look up 1 Peter 1:8; Hebrews 12:1-2; and 2 Corinthians 5:7. How great is your faith response?
3. Have you ever hindered your children (or other children) in their commitment to the Lord? Have you ever been hindered in your faith walk?

Challenge

1. Don't delay decisions you must make. See 2 Corinthians 6:2.

The Marriage of Isaac and Rebekah
Genesis 24:62-67

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The spiritual picture in Genesis 24 may contain the future rapture of the church.
2. The spiritual picture in Genesis 24 may contain the present state of Israel.

Practical Application

1. Are you following through on your commitment?

Questions

1. Are there miracles in Genesis 24?
2. God was leading people and He was arranging circumstances in this chapter. Give some illustrations.
3. How did Rebekah show a sign of respect and a sign of modesty to Isaac?
4. How does Genesis 24 picture the future rapture of the church?
5. How does Genesis 24 picture the present state of Israel?
6. What are God's future plans for the people of Israel?
7. What was the commitment that Rebekah made?

Abraham's Death, and the Genealogy of Ishmael
Genesis 25:1-18

Background

Doctrinal Points

- 1. A full life before death is the biblical norm for the believer.**
- 2. A full life after death is the biblical hope for the believer.**
- 3. God is faithful to His promises.**
- 4. God is faithful to His program.**

Practical Application

- 1. Are you living in Beer Lahai Roi?**

Questions

1. How many sons did Abraham have - only Isaac and Esau?
2. To whom do the Jews and Arabs trace their roots?
3. From this passage, how do we know that Abraham had a fulfilled and satisfied life?
4. From this passage, how do we know that Abraham had a full life after death?
5. What was included in God's covenant with Abraham?
6. How did God show His faithfulness to His covenant promises?

Answers

1. Abraham had Isaac and Esau and six more sons.
2. The Jews and Arabs trace their roots back to Abraham. The Jews through Isaac, and the Arabs through Ishmael and the six other sons.
3. Read Genesis 25:15. He had a life that was fulfilled and satisfied.
4. Genesis 24:7-8 reveals that “he was gathered to his people.” This phrase is used for the death of Old Testament believers.
5. That he would be a father of many nations.
6. God continued His covenant promises by blessing Isaac, the promised son.

Discuss / Consider

1. Abraham had a full and satisfied life. As believers, we should have a life that is fulfilled and satisfied in Jesus. See John 10:10.

2. As believers, we are promised a full life after death. See John 14:2-3.

3. Do you believe that God is as faithful in His promises to believers today as He was to Abraham and Isaac? Do you believe that God is faithful to His program today, even as in yesteryear?

Challenge

1. Beer Lahai Roi means “well of the living one who sees me.” Are you living in Beer Lahai Roi, waiting on God, conscious of His living presence? Are you aware that God sees and cares for you? Even when circumstances are trying, have you let this truth change your whole outlook on life?

Jacob and Esau are Born
Genesis 25:19-28

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. God's will is accomplished through answered prayer.

2. God's will is revealed through answered prayer.

Practical Application

1. Don't play favorites with your children.

Questions

1. Describe the differences between Jacob and Esau.

2. For what did Isaac pray? Was his prayer answered?

3. Which great nations would come through Isaac and Rebekah's sons?

4. How did God reveal His sovereign will to Isaac and Rebekah?

5. Why did Isaac love Esau? Why did Rebekah love Jacob?

Answers

1. Jacob was a mild man, dwelling in tents. Esau was a hairy man, a hunter.
2. Rebekah, Isaac's wife was barren, so Isaac prayed that she would conceive. The Lord answered his prayer, giving Rebekah two sons.
3. The Jews would come through Jacob; the Arabs would come through Esau.
4. As the children struggled within her, Rebekah inquired of the Lord. He answered by telling her that she would give birth to two nations. Further, He told her that the older would serve the younger.
5. Isaac loved Esau because he loved the venison that he brought to him. Rebekah loved Jacob because he stayed nearer home, and was a milder son.

Discuss / Consider

1. When Isaac prayed and the Lord granted his plea, was this answered prayer or the pre-planned sovereign will of God? How do these work together? See Ephesians 1:11-12.

2. God revealed His sovereign will to Isaac and Rebekah. Are you willing to accept God's will, even when it is not to your liking or choosing?

Challenge

1. Isaac loved Esau; Rebekah loved Jacob. This led to problems in the future. There was bad fall-out. Avoid playing favorites with your children (or, if you are a teacher, aunt or uncle, avoid playing favorites with the children in your life).

Answers

1. a) A position of supremacy in the family.
b) A double portion of the inheritance.
c) The spiritual privileges and responsibilities of the family.
2. Both a privileged and responsible position. Furthermore, in this family, it carried with it the promise of the Messianic line.
3. Because he was a man of the moment, and he was famished. He sold his birthright to Jacob for a single meal.
4. Bread and a dish of stew of lentils.
5. No. God had promised the birthright to Jacob, but he couldn't wait for God to work it out in His way and in His time. Instead, he schemed to take the birthright from Esau.

Discuss / Consider

1. We are warned not to be like Esau, despising the things of God. He despised his birthright, exchanging it for a moment's gratification. Is it possible that you look down on things of the Lord, giving priority to lesser things?

2. Jacob did not despise the things of God, but he went about getting his blessing in the wrong way. All he had to do was to wait on God. Is it possible that you take things into your own hands instead of letting God do His work in His way and in His time?

Challenge

1. Esau was foolish and profane in sacrificing his spiritual blessing for one moment of immediate, momentary physical pleasure. Be sure that your priorities are spiritually sound.

Isaac's Sojourn in the Land of the Philistines
Genesis 26:1-16

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. God keeps His promises in spite of the mistakes of believers.
2. God keeps His promises in spite of the hostilities of unbelievers

Practical Application

1. Don't give the unbeliever an opportunity to rebuke you.
2. Don't copy the sins of your parents.

Questions

1. What did Isaac do, according to his reasoning, to protect his wife from the Philistines? Was it the right thing to do?
2. From whom did Isaac likely learn this?
3. What were some of the promises God made to Abraham and his descendants?
4. Where did God want Abraham, then Isaac to stay? Did they stay there?
5. Did God keep His promises to Isaac in spite of his mistakes?
6. What did the Philistines do to Isaac that would have been considered an act of war?
7. How was Isaac rebuked by an unbeliever?

Answers

1. He lied and said that his wife was his sister. No, it was wrong.
2. His father, Abraham, for he had done the same thing twice. See Genesis 12:11-19 and Genesis 20:2.
3. See what is known as the Abrahamic Covenant in Genesis 12:1-3, 7. These promises included spiritual and material blessings, the promise of the land of Canaan, many descendants, and of the coming Messiah through whom all the earth would be blessed.
4. In the land the Lord had given to them. Abraham, instead, went to Egypt, and Isaac was headed to Egypt, going into the land of the Philistines.
5. Yes. Isaac sowed in the land and reaped one hundredfold, even in time of famine. He continued prospering with many possessions.
6. They stopped up all the wells that his father had dug.
7. Isaac was rebuked by Abimelech, a pagan king, because he lied about his wife, calling her his sister. See Genesis 26:7-11. Abimelech was more honorable than Isaac.

Discuss / Consider

1. God kept His promises to Abraham and Isaac in spite of their mistakes. How has God shown such grace to you in spite of your mistakes?

2. Are you content to dwell in the land where God has placed you, or are you looking to an "Egypt," where the grass looks greener?

3. Do you truly believe that God can keep you? That no one and nothing can stop God's promises of blessing for you? Read Romans 8:31-32 and Romans 8:35.

Challenge

1. Isaac was rebuked by a pagan king, an unbeliever. Have you ever been rebuked by an unbeliever? Don't give an unbeliever such an opportunity.

Isaac Moves Back to Beersheba and Makes a Treaty with Abimelech
Genesis 26:17-35

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. True meekness is not often seen in the believer, but it can be.

2. True forgiveness is not often practiced by the believer, but it can be.

Practical Application

1. You can be an effective witness from the sidelines.

Questions

1. Why didn't the Philistines like it that Isaac was living in their area?
2. What did Isaac do when the Philistines stopped up the wells he had dug, or when they claimed the water?
3. When did the Lord appear to Isaac?
4. What is the difference between the Lord's blessing and the Lord's presence?
5. Define meekness. How did Jesus show meekness? How did Isaac show meekness?
6. How did Isaac show true forgiveness to Abimelech?

Answers

1. They were envious because Isaac was becoming more prosperous and powerful.
2. He did not retaliate or fight, but went on to dig other wells.
3. The night that Isaac returned to Gerar. The Lord did not want Isaac in a strange land.
4. The Lord will bless, even when the believer makes mistakes and does not follow the Lord's direction. But the Lord's presence means that the believer's heart is right with the Lord. Note that this was when Isaac built an altar, a place of worship.
5. Meekness is enduring injury with patience and without resentment, even when you have the means to retaliate. Jesus showed meekness from the cross (see 1 Peter 2:23-24). Isaac showed meekness when he did not fight or retaliate for the wells (see Genesis 26:15-17).
6. Isaac forgave Abimelech and sent him away in peace. He didn't even ask him to apologize or to reimburse him in any way.

Discuss / Consider

1. The Lord Jesus showed meekness. Isaac showed meekness. How do you show meekness?

2. The Lord Jesus showed true forgiveness. Isaac showed forgiveness. How do you show forgiveness? See Proverbs 16:17 and Ephesians 4:32.

Challenge

1. Isaac became an effective witness to the Philistines. How can you be an effective witness by being in the world but not of it? Remember to avoid the extremes, like the disciples who all ran away from the cross and like Peter, who warmed himself at the fires of the world.

Rebekah's Plot to Get the Blessing for Jacob
Genesis 27:1-17

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The will of God should be followed with submission.
2. The will of God should be followed without scheming.

Practical Application

1. Parents, what do you really want for your children?
2. Don't think that mature believers can't make mistakes.

Questions

1. God had communicated to Isaac and Rebekah that the covenant line would be through one of their sons. Which son?
2. How and why did Isaac tried to circumvent the will of God?
3. How did Rebekah scheme to obtain the blessing for Jacob?
4. How did Rebekah manipulate her son, Jacob? What was the fall-out from this manipulation?
5. When and under what circumstances did Rebekah tell Jacob to obey her voice?

Jacob Deceives Isaac and Receives the Patriarchal Blessing
Genesis 27:18-29

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Lying and deceiving have bitter consequences.

2. Lying and deceiving cannot thwart God's purposes.

Practical Application

1. Your first lie will not be your last lie.

2. Watch out that you are not deceived in the area of your weakness.

Questions

1. What was included in the patriarchal blessing?

2. What were some of the results of lying and deceiving in the case of Isaac and his family?

3. Was God's purpose thwarted because of this deceit?

4. What were some of Jacob's lies to his father, Isaac?

5. Illustrate the truth of "Your first lie will not be your last lie" in the case of Jacob.

Answers

1. The birthright and the patriarchal blessing were closely related, including material blessing and the promise of power.
2. There was family friction and fragmentation. Although all members of the family are mentioned here, they are never seen as a family. Jacob had to flee for his life because of Esau's hatred; Isaac was deceived by his wife and his son. Rebekah never saw her favorite son again.
3. No. Jacob was to receive the blessing, and he did, in spite of lying and deceiving on the part of Rebekah and Jacob, in spite of Isaac trying to circumvent the will of God, and in spite of family friction and fragmentation.
4. "I am your first born." "I have done just as you told me." "Eat of my game." the Lord brought it to me."
5. Genesis 27:19-20, 24. Jacob had to lie again to cover up his first lie.

Discuss / Consider

1. Look again at the family friction as a result of lying and deceiving. Has this happened in some families that you know? What were the consequences? Ofttimes, as in the case of this family, parents who play favorites with their children ask for problems.

2. "Your first lie will not be your last lie." It's a never-ending cycle, and usually the lies have to get bigger and bigger. Sometimes, God is even brought into this cycle, as in the case of Jacob, and the character of God is maligned. Have you seen this happen? Have you ever been caught up in something like this

Challenge

1. What are your areas of weakness? Be careful that these areas do not lead to your deception by Satan.

**Esau Discovers that Jacob Received the Blessing;
Isaac Submits to God's Will
Genesis 27:30-46**

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. By faith, Isaac blessed Jacob.

2. Bitterness led Esau to hate Jacob.

Practical Application

1. Beware, tears are not necessarily a sign of repentance.

2. Don't expect happiness if you cheat to get it.

Questions

1. In Genesis 27:40, there was a prediction, "...when you become restless, you shall break the yoke." When did this prediction come true?

2. When Isaac blessed Jacob, it seemed as if it were by default, and not by faith. How do we know it was by faith?

3. Why did Rebekah urge Jacob to leave?

4. What was the bottom line for Esau's hatred toward his brother?

5. When Esau wept, was it a sign of repentance?

Answers

1. During the times of the kings, periodically Edom was able to revolt successfully. The Herods, at the time of Christ were Edomites, so this prediction came true.
2. See Hebrews 11:20. Isaac finally submitted to the will of God.
3. Because of Esau's fury toward his brother. She was afraid of a blood feud.
4. Esau's problems stemmed from a root of bitterness because of Jacob's trickery concerning his birthright and his blessing. Esau could have admitted that it was his foolishness in forfeiting the birthright, and he could have submitted to the will of God in the blessing, but he didn't.
5. No. It was envy rather than repentance. See Hebrews 12:14-17.

Discuss / Consider

1. There is a difference between remorse and repentance. Remorse includes sorrow and a sense of guilt, but not necessarily a change of heart and mind. Repentance includes a change of heart and mind, and a turning from wrong. How did Esau's "remorse" affect the entire family? Do you see this happening today?

2. Rebekah and Jacob both cheated to obtain what they thought would bring them happiness, but it only brought heartache and lasting problems. Do you see this in lives today? How could it be avoided?

Challenge

1. God may let you go through some bitter experiences in life (people taking advantage of you, a lack of recognition, unfair treatment, etc.). These bitter experiences do not have to result in a root of bitterness in you. Realize that God is in control. Are you a bitter Christian? Do you have a root of bitterness that defiles others? See Hebrews 12:15.

Isaac Sends Jacob Away to Find a Suitable Wife
Genesis 28:1-9

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Parents should teach their children the biblical concept of marriage.
2. Parents should teach the biblical concept of God's might.

Practical Application

1. Close the door before the horse is out of the barn.

Questions

1. Why did Isaac send Jacob away to Padan Aram? Why did Rebekah want Isaac to send Jacob away?
2. To whom did God first give the Abrahamic covenant? To whom else was it later confirmed?
3. Why did Isaac advise Jacob not to take a wife from the Canaanites?
4. Who is El Shadai?
5. What did it mean, "Esau tried to close the barn door when it was too late? (Genesis 28:7-8)

Answers

1. Isaac called Jacob and blessed him and told him to take a wife from his mother's brother, so he sent him to Padan Aram. Rebekah's real reason was to get Jacob away from Esau.
2. To Abraham, then to Isaac, and then to Jacob.
3. Spiritual purity was to be maintained in all generations.
4. God Almighty. This is the way God revealed Himself to Abraham. What seems humanly impossible, God can do.
5. Esau was already married to two pagan Hittite women. Two wrongs, polygamy, did not make it right.

Discuss / Consider

1. Parents should teach their children the biblical concept of marriage. See 2 Corinthians 6:14. God wants the best, and not just any two believers. Waiting for God's choice of a mate is necessary for ultimate happiness and service. How would you counsel young people to this end?

2. Jacob obeyed his father and his mother. In some cases, they gave good advice. At other times, their advice was anything but spiritual. Make sure that when your children obey your voice, that it is in line with God's will for their lives.

Challenge

1. God revealed Himself to Abraham as El Shadai. How can you teach your children to experience answered prayer?

Jacob's Dream of the Ladder Between Heaven and Earth
Genesis 28:10-22

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. God's grace is seen in the timing of Jacob's dream.
2. God's grace is seen in the meaning of Jacob's dream.
3. God's grace is seen in the receiving of Jacob's dream.

Practical Application

1. What is your response to the grace of God?

Questions

1. Does Jacob's dream mean that he and others can climb a ladder to Heaven?
2. What was meant by pouring oil on the memorial?
3. How is God's grace seen in the timing of Jacob's dream?
4. How is God's grace seen in the meaning of Jacob's dream?
5. How is God's grace seen in the receiving of Jacob's dream?

Answers

1. Definitely not. Rather, it shows God's grace in creating a bridge between Himself and man, made possible because of Calvary.
2. It was an act of consecration.
3. Jacob had lied, and he hadn't said that he was sorry to his brother, his father, or God. When Jacob least deserved God's favor, God gave it.
4. In spite of Jacob's past, God was willing to have a continued relationship.
5. Jacob's response was unspiritual, not sensitive to God's presence. It was selfish, self-centered, and he bargained with God. But regardless of an immature response, there was no rebuke from God. God's grace does not hinge on human response.

Discuss / Consider

1. Consider the bridge between God and man, what Christ has done. God loves you and gave Christ to die for your sins. Have you accepted the gift of His Son?

2. God loves you as a Christian, and desires communication with you. See 1 Timothy 2:5. What does this mean to you?

Challenge

1. Which is your response to God's grace? "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it," or "How awesome is this place!"

Answers

1. To find a wife from his own people, and to be safe from Esau's wrath.
2. None of these happenings were just coincidence. God was working behind the scenes to make good on His promises.
3. He was crying for joy, happy to have found his family.
4. Yes, he was a believer, albeit an immature believer. As for his character, he was deceitful, cunning, crafty and self-centered.
5. No. Jacob was spiritually ignorant. He was not aware that through these events God was preparing a nation through which the promised Messiah would come.

Discuss / Consider

1. God was working behind the scenes for Jacob, but he was not aware of His working. How aware are you of God's working in your life?

2. Jacob was not a mature believer as evidenced by his character. How mature a believer are you? Does spiritual maturity mark your life?

Challenge

1. Do you really believe Romans 8:28?

Laban Tricks Jacob into Marrying Leah
Genesis 29:15-30

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The School of God has a required course in how to respect the rights of others.

2. The School of God has a required course in how not to deceive others.

Practical Application

1. The people around you may be God's mirror and sandpaper.

Questions

1. What was Laban's plan concerning the marriage of his daughters?

2. Why did God allow this subterfuge?

3. Did Jacob pass the course on respecting the rights of others?

4. How was Jacob, the deceiver, deceived?

5. What does it mean, "The people around you may be God's mirror and sandpaper?"

Answers

1. Laban substituted his older daughter, Leah, for Rachel on Jacob's wedding night. However, it was the custom that the older daughter should be married first.
2. God was letting Jacob learn some things the hard way.
3. No. As a younger man, Jacob had manipulated his brother into selling his birthright, and when he was older he still did not respect his brother or his father when he manipulated to steal the blessing. Now, in the Bedouin culture, Jacob knew that it was wrong to marry the younger before the older sister was married.
4. He was deceived by Laban and the two sisters when he wed Leah without realizing it.
5. The people around you let you see yourself, as in a mirror, and they may be the sandpaper to smooth off your rough edges.

Discuss / Consider

1. Jacob had a hard time passing God's course in respecting the rights of others. Where do you stand in this course?

2. Jacob had a hard time passing God's course in how not to deceive others. Where do you stand in this course? How honest are you with others?

Challenge

1. Do you have trouble submitting to authority? (God's authority, church authority, on the job, in the home) Remember that God's mirrors and sandpaper are found in the people with whom you live and work. Do you have some rough edges that need sanding?

Friction in Jacob's Family
Genesis 29:31 - 30:24

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. God's eternal plans include compassion for individuals.

2. God's eternal plans include discipline for individuals.

Practical Application

1. You can be sure that no one gets all the gifts and talents.

2. Don't assume that what our culture approves is what God approves.

Questions

1. After Jacob left home and arrived in Haran (Padan Aram), his life was divided into three periods. What distinguished these periods?

2. How was God's compassion shown for Leah?

3. Polygamy was practiced by some of the patriarchs, including Jacob. Does this mean that polygamy has God's stamp of approval?

4. Why were the mandrakes so important in this story?

5. For what reasons did God discipline Leah, Rachel and Jacob?

Answers

1. During the first set of seven years, Jacob worked for Laban as a single man; during the second set of seven years, he was married to both Leah and Rachel, and started raising his family of twelve sons and several daughters; during the last set of six years, Jacob became very prosperous.
2. When the Lord saw that Leah was unloved, He opened her womb.
3. No, polygamy then and now is not condoned by God. When man goes against God's standards, there is bad fall-out.
4. In the ancient near east, the mandrake was thought of as an aphrodisiac and was considered a plant of fertility. Since Rachel was barren, she hoped that the mandrakes would work for her.
5. Leah went along with Laban in tricking Jacob. Rachel failed to respect the custom of the older sister marrying first. Jacob had sown deceit and friction. In each case, God disciplined each of the individuals.

Discuss / Consider

1. Discipline is considered God's megaphone. But God has compassion along with discipline. Have you been thankful for God's discipline in your life? See Galatians 6:7.

2. Leah had been brainwashed by the culture of her day, which approved of polygamy and the giving of maids to bear "her" children. Are there ways in which you or Christians around you have been brainwashed by contemporary culture?

Challenge

1. There is a law of compensation that God has built into situations. For example, Rachel was beautiful but barren and Leah was less attractive, but bore children. When you see others with gifts and talents that you do not have, realize that you have been given something special by God.

Answers

1. Laban realized that he had become prosperous because of God's blessing on Jacob, and he didn't want that to come to an end.
2. Even though Laban was an unbeliever, the Lord's blessing on Jacob was seen in Laban's life. "What you had before I came was little." (Genesis 30:30). Laban became more prosperous as a result of Jacob's presence with him.
3. Blessings came to the pagan Pharaoh and Egypt as a result of God's blessing on Joseph's life. See Genesis 41.
4. They are questionable practices of conduct. Jacob did not have to do shenanigans, nor did Abraham and Sarah to obtain the blessing of God on their lives.
5. All Laban cared about was his own advancement and wealth. He changed the contract to suit his purposes, without any concern for Jacob.

Discuss / Consider

1. The blessing of the Lord on the believer's life ripples out to the unbeliever. This divine principle operates as a testimony to the unbeliever. Can you document this in a contemporary situation?

2. If you have people working for you, even around the home, consider what kind of a boss you are. The Christian employer should set a high standard. What kind of a testimony do you have because of your treatment of others?

Challenge

1. Do others see God's hand of blessing on you, and on others because of you? Do others see Christ in you?

Answers

1. Because Jacob became more and more prosperous.
2. Rachel stole the household idols that belonged to her father. Household idols were often hand-held fertility idols and they were also used as title deeds for the property. Thus, her portion would be there when she needed it.
3. God saw what Laban was doing to Jacob. He had changed his wages ten times and substituted Leah for Rachel after Jacob had served seven years for Rachel.
4. God used it to guide Jacob to return to his home. He guided him with circumstances and the unfair dealings of Laban.
5. God was controlling the packaging of genes in the animals; they were neither random nor controlled by man.

Discuss / Consider

1. When you are in a difficult situation, possibly being treated unfairly, do you try to vindicate yourself or do you let God deal with the problem?

2. In retrospect, recall times that God guided you.

Challenge

1. God programmed you to be you, and as such, He has a special purpose for you. Are you seeking His will for your life? Are you using the gifts He has given you for His glory?

Laban Pursues Jacob; God Protects Jacob
Genesis 31:22-35

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. **Believers are guaranteed God's protection when they are doing God's will.**

2. **Believers are not guaranteed smooth sailing when they are doing God's will.**

Practical Application

1. **Be careful about making rash statements.**

Questions

1. When Jacob decided to return home, he didn't tell Laban that he was going. Why?
2. What were the idols and why were they so important?
3. How does God protect those who are doing His will?
4. Since God had told Jacob to return home, was it an easy trip?
5. What rash statement did Jacob make?

Answers

1. Because Jacob was the key to Laban's prosperity, so Laban wouldn't like it if Jacob left.
2. These small, hand-held female doll-like images were thought to bring blessing and fertility. Also, they were used as title deeds to the property.
3. Part of God's protective system is the use of guardian angels. Also, circumstances, dreams and common sense are included.
4. No. Besides the logistics of getting there and the opposition from Laban, there were other challenges common to most journeys.
5. See Genesis 31:32. He said that with whomever Laban found the idols, that person should be put to death. He was unaware that his wife, Rachel, had stolen the idols.

Discuss / Consider

1. If we are promised God's protection when we are doing His will, why do some of His servants suffer accidents, illness, and even martyrdom?

2. When problems, obstacles and criticism by fellow believers occur in your ministry, does that mean that you are out of God's will?

Challenge

1. Have you ever made a rash statement and regretted it? Did you learn a lesson here?

Jacob and Laban make a Covenant
Genesis 31:36-55

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. **The Life of Jacob is a microcosm of the history of Israel.**

2. **The life of Jacob is a microcosm of the Christian life.**

Practical Application

1. **Let's learn to respond without reacting to false accusations.**

Questions

1. Describe the character of Jacob.

2. Why is the Mizpah covenant wrongly called a benediction?

3. By whom did Laban swear?

4. How does Jacob's life reflect the history of Israel?

5. How is Jacob's life a microcosm of the Christian life?

Jacob Prepares to Meet His Brother Esau
Genesis 32:1-21

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. God takes care of His children by the means of guardian angels.
2. God takes care of His children by the means of answered prayer.
3. God takes care of His children by the means of common sense.

Practical Application

1. What does God have to do to get us to pray?

Questions

1. Of which nation did Esau become the father and founder?
2. Why was Jacob afraid of Esau?
3. Discuss the angels in this story.
4. Discuss Jacob's prayer.
5. How did Jacob use common sense in this scenario?

Answers

1. Edom

2. Jacob had manipulated Esau into selling his birthright, and he had duped their father into giving him the patriarchal blessing. When they were about to meet after a span of twenty years, Jacob was afraid when he realized that Esau had a small army with him, and he remembered Esau's threat to kill him.

3. Jacob had seen the angels of God in his dream, and now he sees them again (Genesis 32:1-2). He saw not just a few, but a host of angels.

4. In Genesis 32:9-12, we read about Jacob praying. He was praying out of fear and desperation. This is the first time we read about him praying. He prays a model prayer: he addresses God directly, he prays in humility, he prays specifically, and he prays on the basis of what God has already revealed.

5. Besides praying, Jacob did a few other things before meeting Esau. He divided into two camps, placing others before his immediate family, and he sent presents in successive droves.

Discuss / Consider

1. What is the mission of angels? See Hebrews 1:14 and Matthew 18:10. Do you believe angels are ministering on your behalf today? Can you cite evidences?

2. Jacob used common sense as he prepared to meet Esau. How have you used common sense in potentially dangerous situations?

Challenge

1. It took a life-threatening situation for Jacob to pray. What does God have to do to get you to pray? When are you most apt to pray?

The Wrestling Match Between Jacob and the Angel of the Lord **Genesis 32:22-32**

Background

Doctrinal Points

- 1. Broken before blessed will be Israel's testimony in the future.**

- 2. Broken before blessed should be the believer's testimony in the present.**

Practical Application

- 1. Are we limping forward?**

Questions

1. When Jacob heard that Esau was coming with four hundred men, he was afraid. He did three things. What were they?
2. Why did the Lord touch the socket of Jacob's hip?
3. What is the divine principle seen in this wrestling match?
4. How is this true of the nation Israel?
5. Compare the wrestling of Jacob with how God wrestles us.

Answers

1. He prayed, he divided his company into two camps for security reasons, and he sent a large gift ahead to Esau.
2. So he couldn't run. Jacob was at the end of himself, so all he could do was ask for help. (After all, he was ninety-seven years old at this point).
3. God's people must be broken before they can be blessed.
4. The spiritual revival of Israel is coming (see Romans 11:26-27), but before that spiritual blessing can come, Israel must be broken and turn to her true Messiah, Jesus Christ. See Zechariah 12:10.
5. God wrestled Jacob when he was alone; we need to spend more time alone with God. The wrestling match went on all night; God's wrestling match is not a five-minute match, and sometimes it goes on for years. Jacob had to own up to who he really was (supplanter, deceiver); we need to own up to who we really are. God broke Jacob down in the area of his greatest strength; God may have to touch us in our area of greatest strength. Job was broken, then blessed; it can be the same for us.

Discuss / Consider

1. Review God's wrestling match with Jacob. Now review this match putting yourself in Jacob's place. Have you been broken, then blessed?

2. Jacob, in his dire need was afraid for his own security, but God protected him. When you have been afraid, have you sensed God's protection?

Challenge

1. God wrestles with us to break us of our pride, selfishness and independence. He must bring us to the end of ourselves so we will learn that His strength is made perfect in our weakness. See 2 Corinthians 12:9-10. Have you sensed God's strength in your weakness?

Jacob and Esau Meet Peacefully
Genesis 33:1-20

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Jacob is not Israel.

2. Shechem is not Bethel.

Practical Application

1. Don't rehash past mistakes.

2. Do stand behind your word.

Questions

1. Why was it important that Esau accept Jacob's gift?
2. What did Jacob do as soon as Esau was out of sight?
3. What did Jacob's name become after the wrestling match? What did it mean?
4. What does it mean, "Shechem is not Bethel?"
5. Why did Jacob and Esau have a peaceful reunion instead of a feud?

Answers

1. Because if the gift was accepted by one of the feuding parties, it meant that the feud was over and forgotten.
2. He turned around and went in the other direction. Jacob had lied to Esau about following behind him.
3. Jacob's name was changed to Israel. Jacob's name meant supplanter, grasper, deceiver, but Israel means a prince with God or that God prevails. The name change indicated a change in his life.
4. God had wanted Jacob in Bethel, not Shechem, and Jacob had all kinds of problems as long as he stayed in Shechem.
5. God prevailed in both of their lives. They did not rehash the past; there was both sorrow on Jacob's for what he had done, and forgiveness on the part of Esau.

Discuss / Consider

1. We are like Jacob in our old sinful nature, but when we become Christians, we are given a new nature. Both natures remain with us while we are on this earth. What can we do to enable the new nature to prevail?

2. When Jacob settled in Shechem it was partial obedience, but the Lord wanted him in Bethel. Are you in Shechem or in Bethel?

Challenge

1. Jacob and Esau had a peaceful reunion because they didn't rehash past mistakes. While you are not to sweep them under the rug, you don't have to live them over again and again. How can you conquer this tendency?

Jacob and His Family in Shechem
Genesis 34:1-12

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Concerning the wickedness in this world, the Bible tells it like it is.

2. Concerning the wickedness in this world, let the believer beware.

Practical Application

1. Parents, consider your children when deciding where to live.

2. Teenagers, honor your parents for considering your well being.

Questions

1. What happened to Dinah, the daughter of Leah and Jacob?

2. In this chapter there is graphic evidence of the wickedness in this world. Why would the Lord include this account?

3. What was Jacob's fault in this account?

4. What is the lesson for parents in this story?

5. How should teenagers respond to their parents' guidance and restrictions?

Answers

1. She was raped by Shechem, the son of Hamor, of the Hivite tribe.
2. The Bible does not sweep the wickedness of this world under the rug. It is evidence of the authenticity and inspiration of Scripture. The inspired record does not hide the truth, and sin is neither glamorized nor hidden.
3. He failed to be aware of the dangers of Shechem and the negative effects it could have on his family.
4. They should be aware of the dangers of the world on their family, and consider carefully the place where they should settle.
5. They should be thankful that their parents care for their well-being. Parents know more about the wickedness of the world than teenagers do, or give their parents credit for knowing.

Discuss / Consider

1. Have you had people tell you about the wickedness in the Bible, as if they are saying that it sets a bad example? If so, how did you or how should you respond?

2. The world may seem inviting and friendly, but we are admonished to beware of Satan's tactics and the world's values and attitudes, which are contrary to God's standards. The world is out to undermine God. Give examples of this truth. How can you counteract this wickedness?

Challenge

1. If you are a parent, consider your children when deciding where to live. Also, take seriously your responsibility in guiding them into living for Christ.

2. If you are a young person, be thankful for the guidance of your parents and godly Christians.

The Deceit of Jacob's Sons, and the Massacre at Shechem
Genesis 34:13-31

Background

Doctrinal Points

- 1. Misguided religious zeal results from the lack of spiritual leadership.**
- 2. Misguided religious zeal leads to sin in God's name.**
- 3. Misguided religious zeal ruins the believer's testimony.**

Practical Application

- 1. What will it take to bring revival to your life?**

Questions

1. How often is the name of God mentioned in Genesis 34?
2. What did Jacob think about the wickedness on the part of his sons? What prompted the sons to murder?
3. How was God's name defiled in this happening?
4. How did misguided religious zeal ruin Jacob's testimony in Shechem?
5. When did revival take place in Jacob's life?

Answers

1. Not once.
2. Jacob seemed to be thinking only of himself (note the I and me of Genesis 34:30). His sons were prompted to retaliate because of religious zeal, for their sister had been defiled, a disgraceful thing in Israel.
3. Circumcision was a sign of a holy covenant between God and His people. Here, however, the sign of God's covenant was being used with blasphemy, a cover for murder and pillage.
4. When Jacob moved to Shechem, he built an altar. He may have thought that he and his family would be a testimony to the Shechemites, but instead they became obnoxious to the inhabitants of the land because of their ungodly actions.
5. When he finally returned to Bethel, the place where God wanted him.

Discuss / Consider

1. When Jacob moved to the area of Shechem, he built an altar. But he was in partial obedience, and disastrous things happened to destroy his testimony. Are there times when you have only partially obeyed God? What were the results of partial obedience?

2. Misguided zeal drove the sons of Jacob to take wrong actions with dire consequences, and their testimony was ruined. Have you known instances when a parent failed to guide his/her children in proper religious zeal? Has this ever happened to you?

Challenge

1. It took a wrestling match with God to move Jacob to the place of God's choice for him. Then it took the rape of his daughter and the ruthless acts of his sons to finally bring him back to the place where the Lord wanted him? What will it take to bring revival to your life?

Renewal in Jacob's Life
Genesis 35:1-15

Background

Doctrinal Points

- 1. Severing past entanglements is essential to renewal and blessing.**
- 2. Obeying past commands is essential to renewal and blessing.**
- 3. Remembering past blessings is essential to renewal and blessing**

Practical Application

- 1. You are never too old for renewal.**

Questions

1. In Padan Aram or Haran, Jacob was partially obedient, with one foot in the world. When did he become obedient?
2. What did God say and mean in Genesis 35:1?
3. How many times is God's name mentioned in Genesis 34 and in Genesis 35? Why?
4. What did Jacob do to sever past entanglements?
5. How does remembering past blessings help in renewal?

Answers

1. Jacob returned to Bethel, where God had revealed Himself to him, and promised to protect him and bring him safely home. Bethel is the place associated with the revival that took place in Jacob's life. "Back to Bethel" has come to mean getting your act together with the Lord and obeying Him fully.
2. Reuben, Simeon, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Ephraim and Manasseh (Joseph's sons), Benjamin, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher.
3. When Jacob was returning from Hebron to Bethel Rachel died giving birth to Benjamin. There was incest between Reuben and Bilhah. Reuben did not receive the blessing of the first-born son and he lost his legal status. Joseph had already been sold into Egypt.
4. Rachel named him Ben-Oni, meaning son of my sorrow, but Jacob named him Benjamin, meaning son of my right hand. Through all of the hard times, Jacob was sustained by God.
5. Only in times of sorrow and trials.

Discuss / Consider

1. When Jacob returned to Bethel, it was the high point of his life. However, tragedy after tragedy came upon him, all within about a twelve-year span. As a Christian, do you believe that you should be exempt from tragedy and sorrow?

2. How has God sustained you in times of sorrow? Can you say with Jacob, "Benjamin," rather than "Ben-Oni?"

Challenge

1. Do you look on the human side of sorrow or from God's side? Remember Romans 8:28. Believe Romans 8:28.

Joseph's Dreams
Genesis 37:1-11

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. **God's faithful servants should tell the truth, even though it may hurt others.**

2. **God's faithful servants should tell the truth, even though they may get hurt themselves.**

Practical Application

1. **Teenagers! You can do it since Joseph did.**

Questions

1. Why did Joseph's brothers hate him?
2. Joseph forms a great link between what?
3. Describe Joseph's two dreams and their interpretation.
4. Was Joseph a tattle-tale or was he being responsible when he brought back a bad report about his brothers?
5. What prompted Joseph to reveal his dreams to his family, even though he knew this revelation would hurt him?
6. List some of the parallels between Jesus and Joseph.

Answers

1. They hated him because of his dreams of greatness (and their subservience to him in his dreams). They were also jealous because he was the favored son of their father, Jacob.
2. Between the patriarchs of Israel and the nation of Israel.
3. He dreamed that sheaves, which represented his brothers, bowed down to his sheaf (representing himself). Then he dreamed that the sun and the moon (representing his father and mother) and the stars (representing his brothers), bowed down to him.
4. He was being responsible to report this wickedness. As God's faithful servant, he told the truth, even though his brothers were hurt. In the long-run, it was beneficial to them.
5. He considered these dreams as God's revelations. As such, they must be shared.
6. When Jesus came to Israel, he was hated; Joseph was hated by his own brothers. The people of Israel would not have Jesus reign over them; Joseph's brothers would not accept Joseph's leadership. Joseph's dreams came true, as will the Lord's predictions.

Discuss / Consider

1. Regardless of the cost, are you responsible for reporting wickedness?
2. Using Joseph's life when he was a teenager, how would you counsel a teenager?
3. How do you handle love/hate relationships within your own family?

Challenge

1. Count it a privilege to share the truth from God's word to those in your spheres (family, neighbors, place of work or study), even though you will be hated for it. See John 15:18.

The Brothers Plot to Get Rid of Joseph
Genesis 37:12-25

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The heart of man is incredibly wicked.
2. The heart of God is incredibly gracious.

Practical Application

1. Have you ever been betrayed by your own family?
2. Watch out for the sin of jealousy.

Questions

1. Why did Joseph share his dreams with his family?
2. Why did the brothers go to Shechem?
3. Was Jacob aware of the hatred that Joseph's brothers felt toward Joseph?
4. How does Jeremiah 17:9 apply to this story?
5. Trace the evil hearts of the brothers toward Joseph. To what lengths were they willing to go to show this hatred?
6. How does this portion of Joseph's story relate to the parable in Matthew 21:33-39? To the Lord Jesus?
7. How did God show His grace toward Joseph's brothers?

Answers

1. He was convinced that they were from God, and therefore needed to be told.
2. A few years previously, the brothers had plundered Shechem and had slaughtered all the male inhabitants there. Perhaps they were curious to find out what had taken place since then.
3. No, as demonstrated by the fact that Jacob sent Joseph to search for his brothers.
4. It shows the inherent wickedness in the hearts of Joseph's brothers.
5. The brothers threw Joseph into a pit. They intended to kill him, but when they saw that they could make some money, they sold him into slavery.
6. The story of Joseph, the parable of the vineyard and the crucifixion of Jesus are all about the evil heart of man - his incredible wickedness. The owner of the vineyard, Joseph and Jesus were all hated without cause.
7. He made them the tribes of Israel.

Discuss / Consider

1. Have you ever been betrayed by your brothers, either those in your natural family or your spiritual family? Recall how Joseph behaved toward his brothers when he was betrayed. Are you able to rise above the betrayal and trust God to work out all things in His time?

2. Consider the graciousness of God throughout your life.

Challenge

1. Give God control over every situation in your life, believing that He means to work all things for good. Do not give in to baser emotions, like jealousy or vengeance.

Joseph Sold as a Slave by His Own Brothers
Genesis 37:25-36

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. **“All things work together for good to those who love God.” (Romans 8:28)**

2. **“Whatever a man sows, that will he also reap.” (Galatians 6:7)**

Practical Application

1. **You can rejoice even when your world falls apart.**

Questions

1. Which of the two brothers were not involved in the plot to kill Joseph?
2. Who bought Joseph?
3. Where were they from, and where were they going?
4. Referring to Doctrinal Point # 1, was it good that Joseph’s brothers hated him and sold him into slavery?
5. How is this portion of the Joseph story related to Jesus?
6. How did the brothers reap what they sowed?
7. How did Jacob reap what he had sown?

Answers

1. Reuben, the oldest, and Benjamin, the youngest
2. A band of Ishmaelite or Midianite traders
3. They were coming from Gilead and were on their way to Egypt.
4. No, these things were not good, but God took them and worked them together for good.
5. Neither Joseph nor Jesus were received by their own, both were mistreated, and both were sold for the price of a slave. But God overruled, and put Joseph into a place of prominence. By Jesus' death on the cross, God procured salvation for all of mankind.
6. They reaped the hurt of a guilty conscience. And in the years to come, their descendants would be slaves in Egypt for many years.
7. Jacob had used a killed goat to fool his father, Isaac, into thinking he was Esau. Jacob's sons killed a goat and dipped Joseph's coat into its blood.

Discuss / Consider

1. Do you really believe Romans 8:28? How has it been proven in your life?

2. Do you believe Galatians 6:7? How has it been proven in your life?

Challenge

1. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18. How is this possible? Think of a time in your life when you were tested, and yet able to give thanks. You can be like Joseph, who rose above his circumstances and trusted God, or you can be like Jacob, who refused to be comforted. One focused on God, the other on self. On which one are you focusing (trusting in)?

Judah's Sin with Tamar
Genesis 38:1-30

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The story of Judah with Tamar magnifies the faith of Joseph.

Practical Application

1. Do you keep your promises?

Questions

1. What did the Levirate Law of Marriage state?
2. Who were Judah's three sons, and what happened to them?
3. What is a possible reason for God to interrupt the story of Joseph to tell us about Judah's sin with Tamar?
4. Joseph's faith and moral character is enhanced by the contrast of Judah's lack of faith and character. How is this structural motif used throughout Genesis?
5. When Judah failed to keep his promise to Tamar, what did she do?
6. How does the story of Judah with Tamar magnify the grace of God?
7. How was Judah identified as the one who went into Tamar?

Answers

1. It stated that if a married man died without an heir, his next in line eligible brother was to marry the widow and raise up an heir to his brother's inheritance and carry on his brother's name.
2. Er married Tamar, but the Lord took him because he was wicked. Onan also was taken by the Lord because he did not take his responsibility seriously as Tamar's husband. Shelah, a younger son, was supposed to be given to Tamar as her husband, but wasn't.
3. To show why God allowed the bondage of Israel in Egypt. If God had not brought Israel down into Egypt, Judah's actions would have been repeated many times, and the faith of the fathers would have been contaminated with the idolatry and immorality of the Canaanites. In Egypt, there was little intermarriage because the Egyptians detested the Hebrews. So Egypt was a shelter from contamination.
4. Abel's faith is highlighted by the contrast of Cain's lack of faith; Abraham's faith is contrasted with Lot's lack of faith; Jacob's faith is contrasted with Esau's lack of faith.
5. She took matters into her own hands. Although her desire to preserve the line of Judah was proper, she went about it in the wrong way, by seducing Judah.
6. Through Perez, one of the twins born of the relationship between Judah and Tamar, the Messianic lineage is traced. "Where sin abounded, grace abounded the more." (Romans 5:20). Tamar is one of the four women mentioned in Matthew 1 in the genealogy of Christ.
7. Judah had given Tamar a pledge - his signet and cord and staff.

Discuss / Consider

1. Judah failed to keep his promise to Tamar. What were some of the long-term, negative results of his failure? Recall a time when you failed to keep a promise. Were there negative results?

2. How can sin magnify the grace of God? Review Romans 5:20. Does this mean that we should sin?

Challenge

1. Judah pointed the finger at Tamar for her wrong-doing, but he soon learned that he was the greater sinner. Beware of pointing your finger at others.

Joseph Is Sold as a Slave to Potiphar
Genesis 39:1-6

Background

Doctrinal Points

- 1. God's plan for the believer's life will include unexpected blessings.**

- 2. God's plan for the believer's life may include unexpected detours.**

Practical Application

- 1. If you are a Christian, you should be a better employee.**

- 2. Use your blessings as a witness to unbelievers.**

Questions

1. As an Egyptian official, what would have been some of Potiphar's perquisites and benefits?
2. What made Potiphar take notice of Joseph?
3. How did Potiphar respond to meeting or noticing Joseph?
4. Who was blessed because of Joseph's integrity?
5. How was this like the Midas touch? Is this true for the believer today?
6. What were some of Joseph's detours to his dreams?

**Potiphar's Wife Attempts to Seduce Josep
Genesis 39:1-12**

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The Bible does not teach situation ethics.
2. The Bible does teach situation testing.

Practical Application

1. It's better to flee than fall.
2. Maybe we should thank the Lord that we are ugly.

Questions

1. Why did the Lord bless Potiphar's estate?
2. Joseph resisted temptation. Name two biblical men who failed this test.
3. What was Joseph's most convincing point in passing this test? (See Genesis 39:9)
4. What does situation ethics teach?
5. Why is it wrong to practice situation ethics?
6. Does the Bible teach situation testing?
7. Is it sin to be tempted?

Answers

1. Because of Joseph's faith and faithfulness
2. Judah and King David
3. He refused to sin against God.
4. It teaches that you always do the most helpful and loving thing (from your perspective) in a particular situation.
5. Because it appeals to human reason and does not take God's standards into consideration.
6. Yes. God allowed Joseph to be tested in several areas. In this case, it was in the area of sexual temptation. It was a test of Joseph's faith and faithfulness.
7. No. See James 1:13. Sin occurs when one yields to temptation.

Discuss / Consider

1. Consider the differences between situation ethics and God's ethics. Discuss the results of following situation ethics. Discuss the rewards of following God's ethics.

2. Recall times when you have been tested concerning your faith and faithfulness to God. Recall times when you passed the test, and times when you failed.

Challenge

1. Resolve to flee temptations and to honor the Lord in all situations. Remember that Joseph, handsome and vulnerable, was responsible.

Joseph is Falsely Accused and Sent to Prison
Genesis 39:13-23

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. God's plan for the believer's life may include false accusation.
2. God's plan for the believer's life will include preparation for the future.

Practical Application

1. Don't jump to the conclusion that God is disciplining a Christian who is suffering.
2. Let's be extremely careful because of false accusations.

Questions

1. List some of the abrupt changes in circumstances up to this point in Joseph's life.
2. Describe Joseph's attitude during these abrupt changes in his circumstances. Explain why Joseph had this attitude.
3. How does this lesson show comparisons between Joseph and Jesus?
4. Why did God allow the unfortunate events in Joseph's life?
5. When a Christian suffers, is it because God is disciplining him?

Answers

1. He was thrown into the pit by his brothers. He was falsely accused of rape by Potiphar's wife and imprisoned for this accusation. He was put in charge of the other prisoners. He was made prime minister of Egypt.
2. Joseph maintained a positive attitude because, "The Lord was with Joseph." (Genesis 39:2, 21, 23). Joseph knew that God was working behind the scenes on his behalf despite changing events in his life.
3. They were both falsely accused although both were totally innocent, acting as the perfect servant. Both maintained their faith in God's sovereignty.
4. They were a test of faith and of character. They also enabled Joseph to learn humility and patience. Joseph was being groomed to become prime minister of Egypt. He needed training in the affairs of Egypt and knowledge of the inner politics. Joseph had learned much when he managed Potiphar's estate, but he learned about the inner workings of the government of Egypt by talking to the prisoners about the injustices of the Egyptian society. In addition, Joseph had time for reflection on God while he was in prison.
5. Not necessarily. God can use suffering to discipline wayward Christians, but there are other causes for suffering as well.

Discuss / Consider

1. Have you ever blamed God for adverse circumstances in your life? Did Joseph blame God for his adverse circumstances? Remember to thank God for the opportunity to be tested, and look to Him for strength. See 1 Peter 2:19-20.

2. Why should you be extremely careful to avoid false accusations?

Challenge

1. Consider your responses when circumstances change abruptly. As a believer, keep a positive attitude and trust in the sovereign God. Realize that God has a plan for your life and that He is in control. Read Jeremiah 29:11.

Joseph Interprets the Dreams of the Butler and Baker
Genesis 40:1-23

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. **God's servants should serve in good situations and in bad situations.**

2. **God's servants should share the good news and the bad news.**

Practical Application

1. **Let's not have memories like the butler**

Questions

1. Was it only a coincidence that Pharaoh's butler and baker offended the king of Egypt?

2. What did the butler dream, and what was the interpretation? What did the baker dream, and what was the interpretation?

3. When Joseph interpreted the dreams of the butler and the baker, did he take credit for the interpretations?

4. How are God's servants to serve in bad situations?

5. What is the good news and the bad news that Christians should share today?

Pharaoh's Dreams
Genesis 41:1-24

Background

Doctrinal Points

- 1. Unbelievers cannot understand God's program for the world.**

- 2. Believers can understand God's program for the world.**

Practical Application

- 1. Let's remember that God remembers when others don't remember.**

- 2. Let's remember to give God all the credit.**

Questions

1. What was usual about Pharaoh's dreams, and what was unusual about them?

2. What part did the butler play in restoring Joseph to favor with Pharaoh?

3. Why is it that unbelievers cannot understand God's program for the world?

4. Why can believers understand God's program for the world?

Answers

1. It was normal in Egypt for cows to dip into the Nile River to escape the heat and insects, and then come up and graze in the marsh grass. It was unusual that seven mean, lean, ugly cows completely ate up seven sleek, well-fed cows. The same was true of the dream about the heads of grain. There was nothing unusual about seven plump heads of grain or seven thin heads of grain scorched by the east wind. What was unusual was that the thin ones swallowed up the good ones.

2. Pharaoh was troubled by his dreams, and none of his magicians or wise men could interpret them. It was at this point that the butler finally remembered Joseph and his interpretation of dreams. Joseph was taken from prison and brought before Pharaoh to interpret his dreams.

3. Although God's program is black and white in Scripture, unbelievers are blind because they do not know God. See 1 Corinthians 1:20 and 2:14.

4. God gives wisdom and insight to those who love Him. Christians understand that everything is working toward the return of Christ and His kingdom.

Discuss / Consider

1. How can you know God's ultimate plan for this world?

2. Do you remember that God remembers when others don't remember? Give examples.

Challenge

1. Remember to give God the credit for all that you have received from Him.

Joseph Interprets Pharaoh's Dreams and Becomes Prime Minister of Egypt Genesis 41:25-45

Background

Doctrinal Points

- 1. Joseph's exaltation is a lesson for every Christian to remember.**

- 2. Joseph's exaltation is a picture of the glorification of Christ.**

Practical Application

- 1. Can you handle sudden reversals?**

- 2. Do unbelievers recognize the Spirit of God in us?**

Questions

1. In the story of Joseph, list some of the dreams given by God. Does God give dreams today?
2. Was it wrong for Joseph to marry an Egyptian?
3. What is the lesson for the believer in the "rags to riches" story of Joseph?
4. How is Joseph's exaltation a picture of the glorification of Christ?
5. List some of the reversals in Joseph's life while he was in Egypt. How was Joseph able to handle these reversals?

Answers

1. The two dreams of Joseph (Genesis 37), the dreams of the butler and the baker (Genesis 40), and the two dreams of Pharaoh (Genesis 41). God's primary means of communication today is through His completed word, although of course He is not limited in how he can communicate.

2. No. Joseph married Asenath before the Mosaic Law with its restrictions on marriage.

3. Our sovereign God can change the believer's circumstances overnight if He so chooses. Our position, like Joseph's, is to be humble before Him, and trust and obey Him as Joseph did. See Proverbs 21:1 and 1 Peter 5:6.

4. Like Joseph, the Lord Jesus was the beloved Son of the Father, but He was betrayed by His own people. He suffered while being innocent, but did not open His mouth. Joseph was put over all the land of Egypt, and every knee bowed to him. See Philippians 2:9-11.

5. Joseph had several sudden reversals - from being sold as a slave into Egypt, to being put in charge of Potiphar's household, to being thrown into prison because of a false accusation, to being put in charge of the prisoners, to being elevated to prime minister over all of Egypt. Joseph was able to handle these reversals because he recognized that God was in control and had a plan for his life.

Discuss / Consider

1. Do you really believe that God is in control and has a plan for your life? Do you really believe that God can move on your behalf and change your circumstances?

2. Do unbelievers recognize the Spirit of God in you?

Challenge

1. When sudden reversals come in your life, handle them as Joseph did. Joseph did not give up hope in difficult circumstances, nor was he lifted up with pride when he was elevated. The secret of adjusting to all circumstances is found in Philippians 4:12-13.

Seven Years of Plenty and Seven Years of Famine
Genesis 41:46-57

Background

Doctrinal Points

- 1. Godly believers can wisely plan ahead if they really depend on the Lord's direction.**

- 2. Godly believers can be abundantly fruitful if they really forget past disappointments.**

Practical Application

- 1. Have you come to the right place for bread?**

Questions

1. Approximately how long was Joseph in Egypt before he was elevated to the position of Prime Minister?
2. What was Joseph's first work as Prime Minister?
3. How did Joseph get a double portion of the inheritance?
4. Is it a contradiction to plan ahead and to depend on the Lord's direction at the same time?
5. Why was Joseph fruitful in the land of his affliction?

Answers

1. He was seventeen years old when he was betrayed by his brothers and he was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh. That means he was in Egypt a total of thirteen years before he became Prime Minister of Egypt.
2. He had granaries built in many of the cities all over Egypt. During the seven good years of plenty, 20% of the grain was collected and stored for use during the seven bad years of famine to come.
3. There was no tribe of Joseph in Israel, but Joseph's two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, became two tribes in Israel, replacing Reuben. See 1 Chronicles 5:1.
4. No. They are complementary and go together. If you are really depending on the Lord's direction, you will wisely plan what to do with your time, abilities and money.
5. Because he was faithful to God, and because he forgot past disappointments.

Discuss / Consider

1. Recall incidents when you depended on the Lord's direction, and at the same time you planned ahead.

2. Are you able to forget about past disappointments? Are you able to get rid of a grudge when you've been wronged? If not, place the disappointments and the hurts in the Lord's hands so you can be fruitful. Review Genesis 41:50-52.

Challenge

1. The people cried for bread and were told to go to Joseph. Otherwise, they would have perished. Have you come to Jesus for the living bread? If not, you will perish. See John 6:48. Fulfillment and meaning to life is found in Christ alone.

Joseph's Brothers Come to Egypt During the Famine
Genesis 42:1-21

Background

Doctrinal Points

- 1. God awakens the guilty conscience by arranging circumstances.**
- 2. God awakens the guilty conscience during times of solitude.**
- 3. God awakens the guilty conscience with acts of kindness.**

Practical Application

- 1. Spend some time alone with God.**

Questions

1. Why was it that Joseph recognized his brothers after twenty years apart, but they did not recognize him?
2. How did Joseph treat the brothers who had betrayed him? What were his reasons for such treatment?
3. How does God awaken the guilty conscience?
4. How does God awaken the guilty conscience during times of solitude?
5. What will it be like in hell for the unbeliever?

Answers

1. Joseph had become Egyptianized in appearance, and even spoke to them through an interpreter, but he knew that these were his brothers.
2. At first he treated them roughly to test them, to see if there had been a moral change in their character. Then he treated them kindly, because he loved them.
3. Both by arranging circumstances to test people, and also by acts of kindness.
4. Without distractions there is more time for thinking and remembering.
5. The unbeliever will continually be in solitude, solitary confinement, with a guilty conscience for having rejected the Savior. See Mark 9:42-48.

Discuss / Consider

1. Are you guilty of some unconfessed sin? If so, confess it and get right with God and the person you have wronged.

2. Has God shown you some particular act of kindness that is drawing you back to Him? Are you responding to Him?

Challenge

1. Spend some time alone with God after reading Psalm 139:23-24.

Joseph's Brothers Return to Canaan from Egypt
Genesis 42:22-38

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The Lord is still testing Israel.

2. The Lord is still weeping over Israel.

Practical Application

1. Sometimes we have to use tough love.

2. Don't keep the blinders on.

Questions

1. What makes us believe that Joseph's brothers thought he was dead?

2. When is there a consciousness of God? How did this show with Joseph's brothers?

3. How is the Lord testing Israel now?

4. What blessing will come out of the Tribulation, known as the time of Jacob's Trouble?

5. Joseph wept over his brothers. When did the Lord weep over Jerusalem and the people of Israel? Why did they weep?

Joseph's Brothers Go Down to Egypt Again
Genesis 43:1-14

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. God can use famine to bring about divine decrees.

2. God can use famine to turn around human character.

Practical Application

1. Never say, "Never."

Questions

1. Judah spoke to Jacob, saying, "the man." How does this remind us of Christ?

2. Why did Joseph return the money to his brothers' sacks?

3. What divine decrees were being carried out during the famine?

4. What "famine" will bring Israel and the world to their knees?

5. How did God use famine to turn around Jacob's character?

Answers

1. When Pilate referred to Jesus, he said, "Behold the Man." (John 19:5). The brothers failed to recognize Joseph, and the Jewish people failed to recognize the Lord Jesus for who He was.
2. It was both an act of kindness and a test of their honesty. It also ensured their return to Egypt.
3. One was an aspect of the Abrahamic Covenant. See Genesis 12:3, which ultimately will be fulfilled in Christ. In addition, the nation Israel would be formed in Egypt. God used famine to move Jacob and his family to Egypt. Furthermore, God has decreed that sometime in the future, there will be a spiritual return of Israel to the Lord, as well as the present physical return to the land.
4. The seven-year tribulation period.
5. Jacob wasn't trusting the Lord when he said that all things were against him. (See Genesis 42:36). Later, Jacob trusted in El Shaddai, not in himself. (See Genesis 43:14). Jacob was brought to the end of his own rope; his only hope was to turn to God, lest he perish.

Discuss / Consider

1. Has God used "famine" to bring about a change in your character? How has God disciplined you to bring you closer to Himself?

2. Are you sometimes proud and too self-sufficient, thinking that you do not need God? Remember that He is your only source of hope.

Challenge

1. At the end of Genesis 42, Jacob said that he would never let Benjamin go down into Egypt. But God changed Jacob's mind. Did you ever say, "Never!" in reference to God's leading?

Joseph Tests His Brothers
Genesis 43:15-34

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The fear of God should lead a person to repentance.

2. The grace of God should lead a person to repentance.

Practical Application

1. Let's explain the true God to people who believe in false gods.

Questions

1. When the brothers visited Egypt the first time, Joseph treated them roughly. Why? When they returned a second time, Joseph treated them kindly. Why?

2. Why did Joseph give Benjamin five times as much food as the other brothers?

3. Why were three tables set?

4. Why does the fear of God lead someone to repentance?

5. How does the grace of God lead someone to repentance?

Answers

1. Joseph first tested them to see if they had changed in the twenty years since they sold him into slavery. Second, Joseph loved them.
2. It was a further test to see if the brothers were as jealous of Benjamin as they had been of him (both were sons of Rachael). He wanted to know if they had changed.
3. One was for Joseph, one was for the Egyptians, and the brothers ate at another table. The Egyptians considered it an abomination to eat with the Hebrews.
4. A guilty conscience is awakened. Note how the brothers felt guilty about what they had done to Joseph.
5. In the case of Joseph's brothers, Joseph treated them kindly. This grace affected them and led to their repentance and eventual reconciliation. God treats people kindly today, yet some people despise the goodness of God. See Romans 2:4.

Discuss / Consider

1. Has the fear of God ever worked in your heart to bring you to a point of repentance? Give specific examples.

2. Has the grace of God ever worked in your life to bring you to repentance? Give specific examples.

Challenge

1. There is evidence that Joseph made His God known, even in the midst of the pagan Egyptian gods. See Genesis 43:23. Are you making the true God known, even in the midst of false gods around you?

Answers

1. At first, he treated them roughly. Then he showed kindnesses to them.
2. First, he gave Benjamin five times the amount of food. Then he put the silver cup into his sack so it would appear that he was guilty. Joseph wanted to see if the brothers would betray Benjamin to save themselves.
3. No. They were the ones who massacred and plundered the whole town of Shechem (Genesis 34), and they were the ones who hated and betrayed their brother Joseph (Genesis 37).
4. See Genesis 42:21 and Genesis 44:16. They not only acknowledged their guilt, but they brought God into the picture.
5. This was the supreme test for Joseph's brothers. When the cup which Joseph placed in Benjamin's sack was discovered, would they blame Benjamin to justify themselves? Would they forsake him to save their own lives? They passed the test.

Discuss / Consider

1. Are you sometimes self-righteous? Do you try to justify yourself by your good works? Remember, the brothers had to acknowledge their sin before they could be reconciled to Joseph. When we reject Christ, there can be no fellowship with Him.

2. Only when we are rid of self-righteousness and a guilty conscience can sin be removed. Have you confessed your sin and been cleansed by the blood of Christ?

Challenge

1. Read 1 John 3:16-17. This is the test of the Master's cup at the deepest level. Have you forsaken a brother or sister in Christ to save your own reputation? If so, make it right.

Answers

1. They thought they were dealing with an Egyptian, the Prime Minister of Egypt. In reality, he was their brother Joseph.
2. Judah, not Reuben who was the firstborn. It was Judah who persuaded Jacob to let Benjamin go with them to Egypt. It was Judah who was willing to take the place of Benjamin and become a slave so Benjamin could go free.
3. When Judah offered to take the place of Benjamin so he could go free, we see a parallel between Judah and Christ, who was a willing sacrifice for us.
4. He was the brother who hated Joseph and came up with the plan to sell him for money to the Midianite traders. But now he tells Jacob that he will become surety for Benjamin and that he will bear full responsibility for anything that might happen to him. From disregard for his father and from hatred for his brother Joseph, he now shows love for his father and concern for his brother Benjamin's welfare. God disciplined him with famine and rough treatment. God's discipline let Judah reap what he had sown.
5. God has been disciplining the nation of Israel and will continue to do so until there is a change in it's attitude toward the Lord Jesus Christ. In Judah's impassioned speech, we see a picture of the changed character of the future believing remnant of Israel. See Zechariah 13:9, Isaiah 59:20 and Romans 11:26.

Discuss / Consider

1. What does Hebrews 12:11 say to you? Do you need changes in your own character? Expect discipline from God. If you are undergoing discipline, submit to it, so that your character can be more conformed to Christ.

2. If God can change Joseph's brothers and if God can change Israel, can God change America?

Challenge

1. God is not only in full control of every event, but He accomplishes His good plans and purposes through these events. This was true in Joseph's story. Have confidence in God that He is doing the same in your life today.

Joseph Reveals Himself to His Brothers
Genesis 45:1-15

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Understanding God's providence enables the believer to accept hard times.
2. Understanding God's providence enables the believer to forgive hard people.
3. Joseph's reconciliation with his brothers portrays Christ's future reconciliation with Israel.

Practical Application

1. It's OK for a man to cry.

Questions

1. When was Joseph ready to reveal himself to his brothers?
2. How was Joseph able to accept hard times?
3. What is the doctrine of God's providence?
4. Why was Joseph able to forgive his brothers?
5. How does Joseph's reconciliation with his brothers portray the future reconciliation of Christ with Israel?

Jacob Learns that Joseph is Still Alive
Genesis 45:16-28

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The gospel is more than the forgiveness of sins.

2. The gospel is more than wishful thinking.

Practical Application

1. Don't quarrel along the way.

2. Let's never get too set in our ways.

Questions

1. What was Pharaoh's reaction when he heard that Joseph's brothers had come to Egypt?

2. Did Pharaoh know about the brothers' earlier mistreatment of Joseph?

3. What is the gospel?

4. Joseph provided for his brothers and gave them gifts. What is the spiritual application?

5. What is the basis of the gospel of Jesus Christ?

Answers

1. He was pleased, and in view of five more years of famine yet to come, he invited the whole extended family of Jacob to come to live in Egypt.
2. No. Joseph concealed the matter from the public. The betrayal was between Joseph and his brothers alone.
3. The gospel means good news. And it is more than just forgiveness of sins; it is grace abounding.
4. This is what the Lord does for us. He extends forgiveness and provision, and he freely gives gifts. See Romans 8:31-32. And as Joseph prepared a new home for his family (the best of the land), it reminds us of the place that God is preparing for us. See John 14:2-3.
5. The resurrection of Christ.

Discuss / Consider

1. Did Joseph publicize his brothers' sins? Does God publicize our sins when we stand before the judgment seat of Christ? See 2 Corinthians 5:10.

2. When the brothers responded to Joseph's forgiveness and provision for them, there was reconciliation and fellowship. Recall the story of the prodigal son. What happens when we respond to the forgiveness of Christ?

3. Joseph said to his brothers, "Don't quarrel along the way." (Genesis 45:24). What did this mean? What does this mean to Christians today?

Challenge

1. Avoid getting too set in your ways. Think of Jacob.

Jacob and His Family Join Joseph in Egypt
Genesis 46:1-7

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. God confirms the decisions of His obedient children.

2. God superintends the decisions of His finite children.

Practical Application

1. Remember, the Lord is with us in death as well as in life.

Questions

1. Why didn't Joseph take revenge on his brothers?

2. Why did Jacob hesitate going down to Egypt?

3. What changed Jacob's mind?

4. Did God confirm Jacob's decision to go to Egypt?

5. What does it mean to Israel that God superintends the decisions of His finite children?

Answers

1. He was willing to forgive and forget the past.
2. There were several reasons. He was 130 years old; God had brought him back to Canaan; his grandfather Abraham had gone down to Egypt years before in a time of famine, against God's will (Genesis 12); and Isaac had been warned not to go down to Egypt (Genesis 26).
3. Jacob wanted to be sure that he was in God's will. He did the right thing by going to the Lord, stopping at Beersheba and offering sacrifices.
4. God promises to guide His obedient children. When Jacob sought God's will, God confirmed Jacob's decision. See Genesis 46:3.
5. God had promised to make Israel a great nation. This was the promise of the exodus, that Jacob's descendants would return under God's guidance.

Discuss / Consider

1. Joseph did not take revenge or hold a grudge against his brothers. The Lord is willing to forgive us and reconcile us to Himself. Are you willing to forgive others, even though you have been hated and betrayed?
2. God spoke to Jacob at night. See Genesis 46:2-3; 28:11-16; 31:10-13; and 32:22-31. Has God ever spoken in the quietness of the night? What has He told you?
3. God revealed to Jacob that he was to go to Egypt; He confirmed Jacob's decision. Has God confirmed some of your decisions? How?

Challenge

1. Refer to the practical application. Do you know someone who is going through deep waters now? Do you believe that the Lord cares for us in death as well as in life? Read Hebrews 13:5.

The Descendants of Jacob Who Went Down to Egypt
Genesis 46:8-34

Background

Doctrinal Points

- 1. The believer's blessings are all because of Christ.**

- 2. The believer's blessings are not always obvious.**

Practical Application

- 1. (to the younger believers) Remember to take care of your aging parents.**

- 2. (to the older generation) God can work wonders in your family.**

Questions

1. How many of Jacob's descendants went to Egypt?

2. God exalted Joseph so every knee had to bow before him, and everyone had to come to him for bread. All life and blessing came from Joseph and because of Joseph. Who is our source of life and blessing?

3. The believer's blessings are not always obvious. How does this doctrinal point apply to the small group of Hebrews in Egypt?

4. You may not feel blessed, but if you are a believer you are blessed. How?

Answers

1. Seventy
2. Jesus Christ. See John 6:51 and John 14:6.
3. God had promised Abraham that He would make of him a great nation, and that his descendants would be like the stars of the heavens (Genesis 17:1-8 and 15:5-6). But here was a small group of seventy in Egypt, not yet a nation. The blessings were not always obvious, but in the land of Goshen they would be away from the idolatry and immorality of the Canaanites. Being ostracized by the Egyptians because they were shepherds would preserve them from intermarrying with the pagan Egyptians. Even though they would undergo slavery, they would grow to a nation of about two million people in about 400 years. And this nation and people would outlast all other nations. This nation and people would give birth to the Messiah.
4. For starters, you have been saved from your sins and will live in heaven forever.

Discuss / Consider

1. List some of the parallels between the life of Joseph and the life of Christ, as seen in this portion of Scripture.
2. Discuss one of the following, according to your age grouping.
 - a. For the younger generation: How are you caring for your ageing parents? If not them, then what kindnesses are you showing to those of the older generation?
 - b. For the older generation: Are you praying for a wayward member in your family? What else are you doing to encourage a younger person to know Christ and to serve Him?

Challenge

1. Focus on Christ, and look for the blessings that you have in Him.

Pharaoh Meets Joseph's Family
Genesis 47:1-12

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. God moves the hearts of people for divine purposes.

2. God measures the status of people by divine standards.

Practical Application

1. Let's have a pilgrim mind-set.

2. Are you ashamed of your family?

Questions

1. Why did Joseph bring five of his brothers before Pharaoh as soon as they were in the land of Egypt?
2. What was Pharaoh's response to Joseph's brothers?
3. What was the Abrahamic Covenant?
4. God moves the hearts of people for divine purposes. How did God move in hearts in this story?
5. God measures the status of people by divine standards. How does this principle apply to this portion of scripture?
6. Why do we believe that Jacob had a pilgrim mind-set?

Joseph's Administration During the Famine
Genesis 47:13-31

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The bottom line for the believer is to live and die in faith.

Practical Application

1. Let's put in a good day's work.

Questions

1. What particular actions showed that Joseph was a good administrator for Pharaoh?
2. Why did the Jacob's family continue to live in Egypt even after the famine ended?
3. Relate doctrinal point # 1, Section 1 to the story of Joseph.
4. Relate doctrinal point # 2, Section 2 to Jacob's life.

Answers

1. Both the seven years of plenty when Joseph stored up the grain and the seven years of famine when he distributed the grain demonstrated that he was a good administrator. He did not run a free give-away program, but no one bad mouthed the government; instead, they were thankful. Without proper administration under those circumstances, there could have been riots, and anarchy and starvation, but Joseph administered supplies and provided for the people. He gave the people more than enough to survive, exacting a very low tax.
2. God planned it so. They continued to live in Egypt where they would become a nation. See Genesis 47:27.
3. The story of Joseph is a picture of Christ's reign in the future. In Joseph's time of exaltation in Egypt, all things were gathered together and summed up under Joseph. This is a small glimpse of just one aspect of the eventual reign of Christ.
4. Jacob lived and died in faith, although he had a lot of lessons to learn. He did not want to be buried in Egypt because he believed the promise of God that He would bring his descendants back to the land He had promised to them. Joseph believed the promises of God to the end of his life (dying in faith).

Discuss / Consider

1. Joseph was a busy and successful man. He could have rested on his laurels, but he didn't. See Colossians 3:23. Do you work with all your heart, as if working for the Lord?

2. Are you like Jacob, who lived and died in faith? Are you believing all the promises of God?

Challenge

1. God is looking for worshippers who will worship Him in spirit and in truth. See John 4:23-24. Are you a worshipper or just a believer?

Jacob Adopts Joseph's Sons
Genesis 48:1-11

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. **God controls the unexpected twists and turns of history.**

2. **God controls the unexpected blessings and sorrows of life.**

Practical Application

1. **Let's pass on a legacy of faith.**

Questions

1. Was Jacob ready to die?
2. Why did Jacob officially adopt the sons of Joseph as his own?
3. After the adoption, it would mean that there were thirteen tribes in Israel. Why, then was the land divided up into twelve tribal areas?
4. Why doesn't Jacob mention Reuben and Simeon (Genesis 48:5)?
5. God controls the unexpected twists and turns of history. How did this principle apply to Reuben's sin?
6. How was doctrinal point # 1 demonstrated a few hundred years later?
7. Why did Jacob change the name of Benjamin after Rachael died?

Answers

1. Yes. He was trusting the Lord, and he believed in the promises of God.
2. So they would become tribes in Israel. Instead of a single tribe of Joseph in Israel, there would be two tribes, Ephraim and Manasseh.
3. Because the tribe of Levi had no tribal area. They became the priestly tribe and were situated among the other tribes.
4. The birthright is being removed from Reuben (Jacob's firstborn) and Simeon (Jacob's secondborn), and given to Joseph (the firstborn of Rachael).
5. God overruled in spite of Reuben's sin, and Joseph's sons were given the birthright. See 1 Chronicles 5:1.
6. A large group of Hebrew slaves in Egypt would actually escape and become one of the greatest nations ever to live on the face of this earth. God overruled the Satanic schemes of Pharaoh to kill off all the male Hebrew babies, and preserved a baby named Moses.
7. Jacob recognized that God was in control. He changed the name of Benjamin, "son of my sorrow," to "son of my right hand."

Discuss / Consider

1. Is doctrinal point # 1 true for individuals as well as for nations?

2. Rachael died on the way to Bethlehem. Although we may wonder why, God allowed it to happen and He was in control. We, too, have unexpected sorrows in our lives. Do you believe that God is in control of your unexpected sorrows?

Challenge

1. Jacob passed on the legacy of faith by being God-centered instead of self-centered. Are you concerned about passing on a legacy of faith?

Jacob Blesses Joseph's Sons, Manasseh and Ephraim
Genesis 48:12-22

Background

Doctrinal Points

- 1. God progressively reveals His character to growing Christians.**

- 2. God progressively reveals His program to growing Christians.**

Practical Application

- 1. Have you experienced God's crossed hands of blessing?**

- 2. Let's be like Joseph in reference to our children.**

Questions

1. How did the official transaction of adoption take place in Joseph's day?
2. How did God progressively reveal His character to Jacob?
3. On what is biblical faith based?
4. Many Christians are not aware of God's program. Why?
5. How did Ephraim receive a greater blessing than Manasseh, the firstborn?

Answers

1. In that culture, the position beside the knee was the place of official transaction of the adoption. Also, Joseph bowed with his face to the earth, showing the solemnity of the occasion.
2. Note the way in which Jacob refers to God in Genesis 48:15-16. He recognized God as provider and protector. This differs from his lack of recognition of God after his dream at Bethel - "The Lord was in this place, but I did not know it."
3. Biblical faith is based on what God has revealed. See Hebrews 11:21.
4. Because they are not growing Christians.
5. The right hand of blessing gives the greater blessing, and Joseph positioned his sons as he saw it. But this was not God's way. Jacob crossed his arms, in line with God's will, to give the greater blessing to Ephraim.

Discuss / Consider

1. As Jacob came to a greater intimacy with God, he grew in faith. As Jacob grew in faith, God revealed more of His character to Jacob. Are you growing in faith and learning to know God better? Are you experiencing this progressive in your life?

2. One of our spiritual blessings is the knowledge of God's program for the world. See Ephesians 1:9-10. Are you aware of God's program? Do you know the mystery of His will?

Challenge

1. When Joseph realized what God's will was for his boys, he submitted to it. He looked beyond the potential material success, desiring God's best for them. When you become aware of God's will do you embrace it? Which is first in your life for your children - their status in the world or God's will?

Jacob's Prophecies about Reuben, Simeon and Levi
Genesis 49:1-7

Background

Doctrinal Points

- 1. Uncontrolled lust disqualifies a believer from spiritual leadership.**

- 2. Uncontrolled emotions deprive a believer from spiritual reward.**

Practical Application

- 1. Don't ruin your future for momentary pleasure.**

- 2. Don't associate with hotheads.**

Questions

1. What did Jacob do when he realized that he was about to die?

2. Genesis 49 is a prophetic oracle, but still called a blessing. Why?

3. What are the "last days" of Genesis 49:1?

4. Reuben, as a firstborn son, had a lot going for him. Why did he lose the privilege and responsibility of being the spiritual leader of his family?

5. How did Jacob's sons, Simeon and Levi, demonstrate doctrinal point # 2?

6. What happened to the tribes of Simeon and Levi?

Answers

1. He called his twelve sons together for the patriarchal blessing. This was his final act (Genesis 49:33).
2. In some of Jacob's blessings on his sons, we see less of a blessing and more a prediction of the future for those tribes. It is an oracle/blessing because the tribes continue to live on in the Jewish people and will be part of our Lord's kingdom when He returns to this earth. See Ezekiel 48.
3. What was said of each of the tribes would be fulfilled in the future. This future would stretch until the "last days," so some of what we read here has already been fulfilled, but some will be fulfilled in the future.
4. Because of uncontrolled sexual lust. As a consequence of his sin, Reuben was told that his tribe would not excel. And in fact, no prophet, judge, king or ancient hero came from this tribe.
5. They were cruel, angry and violent when they massacred the whole male population of Shechem.
6. They were deprived of reward. The tribe of Simeon was dispersed in the tribal area of Judah and the tribe of Levi lived in cities scattered throughout all the tribal areas.

Discuss / Consider

1. Read the qualifications for spiritual leadership in the church today in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. Satan will try to attack spiritual leaders in these areas. What can you do to encourage and protect the spiritual leaders in your church?

2. For one uncontrolled moment of sexual pleasure, Reuben removed himself and his descendants from a leadership position in Israel. Was it unfair of God to do this? Are there times when you think that God is unfair in His dealing with your sins?

Challenge

1. Don't ruin your future for momentary pleasure. God considers this a serious matter.

Jacob's Blessing on Judah, Zebulun and Issachar
Genesis 49:8-15

Background

Doctrinal Points

- 1. Blessing and leadership would come from the tribe of Judah.**

- 2. Kings and the Messiah would come from the line of Judah.**

Practical Application

- 1. Will we reach our full potential?**

Questions

1. What is the format of Jacob's patriarchal blessing?
2. How did Jacob group his sons for blessing?
3. Which part of Jacob's blessing went to Judah? Which part went to Joseph?
4. Tying your donkey to a choice vine and washing your clothes in wine as you would in water does not seem to be a great blessing (Genesis 49:11-12). So what does this blessing to Judah mean?
5. What did the scepter symbolize? Who is Shiloh?
6. How did Judah become the line of the Messiah when Saul, the first king of Israel, came from the tribe of Benjamin?

Answers

1. It is in the form of Hebrew poetry. It is the longest poem in the book of Genesis. Because it is Hebrew poetry, there is a lot of figurative language and plays on words.
2. According to the order of his wives, not according to their birth order.
3. Judah was given the responsibility and dominion aspect of the birthright. The inheritance aspect was given to Joseph.
4. It means that grapes and wine would be so plentiful, so plentiful in fact that it wouldn't matter if the donkey ate the grapes. There would be no scarcity of food and drink.
5. The scepter is a symbol of kingship. Shiloh is the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ.
6. The first king of Israel was Saul, from the tribe of Benjamin, but he was removed and replaced by David, of the tribe of Judah. The scepter would remain in the tribe of Judah until the Messiah came.

Discuss / Consider

1. The Targum of Genesis (the ancient Aramaic translation of the Hebrew) translates Shiloh as Messiah. This is an amazing prophecy, and fulfilled in the line of kings, starting with David and culminating in Christ. What could this mean to your Jewish friends?

2. The tribe of Zebulun seemed to take more advantage of its opportunities than did Issachar. Review this section of the tape.

Challenge

1. Are you taking advantage of the many opportunities the Lord gives you to redeem the time? How are you using the abilities He has bestowed upon you? Consider your potential, and don't fall short.

Jacob's Blessings on Dan, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Joseph and Benjamin
Genesis 49:16-27

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Fruitfulness must find its source in God.

2. Faithfulness must find its source in God.

Practical Application

1. What animal would best describe your character?

Questions

1. Why is Genesis 49 a difficult chapter to interpret?

2. What are some of the possible interpretations of the prophesy indicating that Dan shall be a serpent?

3. Joseph was called a fruitful bough with its branches running over the wall, and the blessings of his father excelled. How was this prophecy fulfilled?

4. What was the source of Joseph's fruitfulness and blessing?

5. What does it mean that Joseph's bow remained strong by God?

6. What are the three names of God used in this passage?

Answers

1. Because it is written in Hebrew poetry and it is also prophecy, some of which has been fulfilled and some of which is yet to be fulfilled.
2. It could be that he would hurt others or that he would allow the serpent (Satan) to bring idolatry into Israel, causing it to fall backward. See Judges 18 and 1 Kings 12.
3. It is seen in the great tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh.
4. God Almighty, El Shaddai (Genesis 49:25).
5. There were many arrows shot at Joseph - those of betrayal, hate, temptation, false accusation and imprisonment. But God helped Joseph, as if he took Joseph in his arms and put his hands on the bow, giving it His strength and control.
6. The Mighty God, The Shepherd, and The Stone of Israel (Genesis 49:24).

Discuss / Consider

1. Fruitfulness must find its source in God. Are you trying to be fruitful in self-generated strength or are you depending on the Lord? Do you feel burned out at times? Why? What can you do about it?
2. Faithfulness must find its source in God. Apply the picture of the bow, pulling in your strength and then letting God put His hands over yours.
3. Review the three names of God in Genesis 49:24. How do each of these impact your life?

Challenge

1. Just for today, let the Lord be your strength. Notice the difference.
2. What animal best describes your character? Would your choice be the same as God's for you?

The Death and Burial of Jacob
Genesis 49:28 - 50:14

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The death and burial of a believer can be a testimony to God's truth.

2. The grief and sorrow of a believer is not a denial of God's truth.

Practical Application

1. Facing the future is not always easy.

Questions

1. What was the last act of Jacob's life? What was his last request?

2. Where was the burial site of the patriarchs located?

3. Jacob's embalming was different from the normal Egyptian embalming. What were the differences?

4. What types of people were in Jacob's funeral cortege?

5. How was Jacob's death and burial a testimony to the Egyptians?

6. Is it wrong for a believer to grieve over the death of a loved one? Is grieving a denial of God's truth?

Joseph's Last Days
Genesis 50:12-26

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The caravan to Egypt was not the end of the story.

2. The coffin in Egypt was not the end of the story.

Practical Application

1. Our disappointments are God's appointments.

Questions

1. At the conclusion of this story, how do Joseph's brothers look at him? How does Joseph look at his brothers?

2. How are we like Joseph's brothers? How does Joseph give us a glimpse of Christ?

3. When was the oath (Genesis 50:25) carried out?

4. Does God allow evil, or is it a part of His plan?

5. Support your answer to # 4 with New Testament verses.

6. What does Doctrinal Point # 1 mean?

Answers

1. The brothers were afraid that Joseph might change his mind and take revenge. Joseph had no intention of doing this. He had truly forgiven them.
2. We, like the brothers, doubt and question the Lord's grace. The Lord freely forgives.
3. At the time of the exodus. See Exodus 13:19. See also Joshua 23:42.
4. God does not approve or condone evil or plan it in the sense that He wants it to happen. But because God is sovereign, all-powerful and all-knowing, we have to conclude that whatever evil God allows is part of His overall plan. We must remember that He can work all things together for good for those who love Him.
5. Acts 2:23 and Acts 4:27-28.
6. In Genesis 37, we read about the brothers' hatred and betrayal of Joseph that resulted to Joseph being placed in the caravan to Egypt. But the end of the story is found in Genesis 50:20. Evil was involved on the part of man, but God overruled it and used it for good, keeping many people alive and causing Israel to become a nation.

Discuss / Consider

1. Could you be as forgiving as Joseph was to his brothers? Do you really believe the forgiveness of Christ in your life?
2. How do you handle the doctrine, "Evil is a part of God's plan?"
3. Contrast the empty tomb at the end of the gospels with the coffin in Egypt at the end of Genesis.

Challenge

1. Have you been part of a caravan, where someone treated you badly? Do you believe that God can overrule? Remember, our disappointments are God's appointments. Recall Romans 8:28.