

The Essential 100

A Bible overview plan for 2011-2012

The Essential 100 (E100) is a systematic approach that guides readers through the big picture of the Bible. It is a carefully selected list of short Bible passages—50 from the Old Testament and 50 from the New Testament. The passages are usually one to two chapters in length and can easily be read in 10 minutes or less.

One-page plan: Each testament is broken up into ten, five-week series. We will move from Old to New Testaments every five weeks. My goal is to teach three of the five lessons in every series.

The E100 in Sunday school: We will REAP (read, explain, apply, and personalize) one passage each week and finish a series every five weeks. Each lesson will include a key verse for memorization. At the end of two years, we will have covered the essential 100 passages in the Bible.

Additional information: To learn more about The E100 program and to obtain additional resources, visit e100challenge.com. Our Sunday school website is stuartheights.org/sundayschool.

The Schedule: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

This series is about the patriarchs of the Bible.

| Date | Lesson | Key Verse(s) | Passage | Speaker |
|----------|-------------------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| March 13 | The Call of Abram | Genesis 12:1-3 | Genesis 12:1-20 | Terry Bolden |
| March 20 | God's Covenant with Abram | Genesis 15:5-6 | Genesis 15:1-21 | Tim Archer |
| March 27 | Isaac's Birth and "Sacrifice" | Genesis 22:11-12 | Genesis 21:1-22:19 | David Barber |
| April 3 | Jacob and Esau Compete | Genesis 27:36 | Genesis 27:1-28:22 | Jim Fleming |
| April 10 | Jacob and Esau Reconcile | Genesis 33:4 | Genesis 32:1-33:20 | Jim Fleming |

Sunday school class timeline

8:50: Breakfast ready

9:07: Announcements (let Jim know prior to a Sunday if you have an announcement)

9:10: Lesson

9:40: Prayer requests at each table

9:45: Dismiss

9:50: Room cleared

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: The Call of Abram

Preview: Why me?

During his seventy-five years, Abram had cultivated the habit of listening for God's voice and obeying it. In addition, Abram frequently took time to remember what God had done and to deepen his relationship with him (**Genesis 12:7-8**). Therefore, when God said, "Leave" (**Genesis 12:1**), Abram left even when the destination was unknown. Because Abram spent time seeking God, he was ready for God's call. That is a good example for us to follow, too.

Key thought: God will **use** those who trust and obey Him

Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Genesis 12 (Author = Moses)

When you think of Abraham, what do you think of?

Promises to Abram

1 Now the LORD had said to Abram:

**"Get out of your country,
From your family
And from your father's house,
To a land that I will show you.**

Why **Abram**? Was he more moral? Was he more obedient? Abram is unique in the way he is referred to in Scripture: **James 2:23: the friend of God; 2 Chronicles 20:7: Abraham Your friend forever; Isaiah 41:8: Abraham My friend. Hebrews 11** lays out Abraham's faith—but it did not start out great—it grew. He was not super-human and Scripture shows us many of Abraham's pitfalls. It was a process of grace!

Why the **Jew**? **Deuteronomy 7:6-8** shows that there was no reason listed other than love. There was no action or activity on the part of the Jews, but simply a choice by God.

Why **me**? Why does God choose anyone? There are many things about God and the, 'why,' of it that I do not know nor understand. Do I appreciate it? Yes! Do I understand it? No.

Why **leave**? Why could God not have just blessed Abram where Abram was? **Halley's Bible Handbook (page 95): When God called Abram, he was in a city in Babylonia, named Ur of the Chaldees. Ur was a very advanced city and was believed to have been founded some five hundred years before the time of Abraham. Ur could be compared to a modern city, having libraries, schools, and a system of law. It was a rich city and many valuable treasures have been discovered including elaborate jewelry. The false religion of astrology, which was begun at Babel, was practiced there as it was in all Babylonia. Abraham's father, Terah, according to Joshua 24:2, worshiped idols. Jewish tradition refers to Terah as an idol maker. Ur was an idolatrous city—worshiping many different Gods such as the god of fire, moon, sun, and stars. Sin was the name of the chief idol deity of Ur. Ningal was the wife of the moon-god, Sin, and was worshiped as a mother God in many other cities. Ur was an evil and sinful city as can**

be seen in the worship practices of the moon-goddess, Ningal. We are a product of our environment and God can do great things in spite of our environment, but sometimes the environment has to change. **Every female in the city at some time in her life would have to take her turn in serving as a priestess prostitute in the temples.** God calls him away out of this city.

2 I will make you a great nation; [Abraham during his life took on other kings and their armies (Genesis 14) and won, but never saw the promise of a nation of descendants fulfilled. As to the Jewish people themselves, history shows God has little mercy on those opposing His, ‘chosen people.’]

I will bless you

And make your name great; [God did and we are still talking about Abraham’s greatness and faith **4,000** years later. The three major religions of the world, Christianity, Islam, and Judaism, all revere him. Again, with his descendants, the Jews have seen an inordinate amount of success in every area they endeavor to pursue. A big reason in Hitler’s animosity was the Jewish presence and success in business and finance throughout Europe in the early 1900s.]

And you shall be a blessing. [Abraham was gracious, merciful, giving, and self-sacrificing. Many in his day were blessed by knowing and interacting with him.]

In **Genesis 11**, we see man’s plan; but in **Genesis 12**, God shares His plan. An overwhelming number of commentators list these blessings as both personal (to Abram himself) and familial (transferring to his descendants).

3 I will bless those who bless you,

And I will curse him who curses you; [Abraham certainly saw this in his lifetime—see the examples of **Genesis 14** of the four kings (example of curse) and of Melchizedek (blessing). What about the Jewish people? Look at the nations who have historically opposed them. Would you want to put this promise to the test to see if it still works today? Hint: if you do, focus on the blessing.]

And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” [This is a clear reference giving the promise of the **Messiah** (see **Genesis 15; 22; 26**, for reiteration of all or part of this covenant.) **Galatians 3:8-9: And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, “In you all the nations shall be blessed.” So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.** Wow! Paul calls this part of the Abrahamic Covenant the, ‘gospel,’ equating it to the, ‘good news,’ of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.]

Why Abram?

So what made Abram so special that God would call him? Was it his faithfulness? In **Acts 7:2-4**, Stephen states the call of Abram occurred before he lived in Haran (meaning the Ur of the Chaldees). However, **Genesis 12** occurred in Haran. So, where did Abram get called? In Ur. In addition, **Genesis 11:31-32** says that Abram went to Haran after being called and lived there until Terah died. Abram was not immediately obedient. God has to call him again in **Genesis 12**.

4 So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to him [Acts 7:2-4—the second time?], and Lot went with him [Why did Lot go with him? Abram was supposed to get away from his family, right?]. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. 5 Then Abram took Sarai his wife

and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people whom they had acquired in Haran [God is already prospering him], and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. So they came to the land of Canaan. **6** Abram passed through the land [why?] to the place of Shechem, as far as the terebinth tree of Moreh. And the Canaanites *were* then in the land [So?! Research Canaanite sacrifices to see the horrific practices these people incorporated into their idolatry].

7 Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." [Abraham never owned any **land** in his lifetime, except the burial cave he purchased] **And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him.** **8** And he moved from there to the mountain east of Bethel, and he pitched his tent [He lived in a **tent** his entire life also] *with* Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; there he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD. **9** So Abram journeyed, going on still toward the South.

Abram in Egypt

10 Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to dwell there, for the famine *was* severe in the land. [Why? God did not tell him to go to Egypt. This was disobedience—and Abram came back with Hagar (and ultimately Ishmael).] **11** And it came to pass, when he was close to entering Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife, "Indeed I know that you *are* a woman of beautiful countenance [Sarai is **60** years old]. **12** Therefore it will happen, when the Egyptians see you, that they will say, 'This *is* his wife'; and they will kill me, but they will let you live. **13** Please say you *are* my sister, that it may be well with me for your sake, and that I may live because of you." [Is this an acceptable half-lie?]

14 So it was, when Abram came into Egypt, that the Egyptians saw the woman, that she *was* very beautiful. **15** The princes of Pharaoh also saw her and commended her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken to Pharaoh's house. **16** He treated Abram well for her sake. He had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male and female servants, female donkeys, and camels.

17 But the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife [sin **always** affects others]. **18** And Pharaoh called Abram and said, "What *is* this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she *was* your wife? **19** Why did you say, 'She *is* my sister'? I might have taken her as my wife. Now therefore, here is your wife; take *her* and go your way." **20** So Pharaoh commanded *his* men concerning him; and they sent him away, with his wife and all that he had.

Abram did not start out as a great man of faith—his faith grew—just like ours does.

Apply (What is the point?)

1. Many of God's promises **to** Abraham were never seen **by** Abraham.
2. God's call was because of **grace**, not because Abraham deserved it.
3. God still calls Abrahams today (every day) to a life of faithfulness.

Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Do not live life based on what God has done for me lately.
2. Trust Him at His word, rest in His promises, and obey as if you **love** Him.

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: God's Covenant with Abram

Preview: He feels your pain

God's amazing promise to build a nation had become the source of emotional pain for Abram (Abraham before he was Abraham) and Sarai (Sarah before she was Sarah)—“**You have given me no offspring**” (**Genesis 15:3**). It seemed impossible! God knew Abram needed encouragement so he gave him a peek at the master plan (**Genesis 15:12-18**). That master plan culminated in the birth of the Savior: Jesus.

Key thought: Nothing is impossible with God

Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Genesis 15 (Author = Moses)

Note: Outline and green commentary taken from **David Guzik's Commentaries on the Bible**

A. God speaks to Abram's fears and doubts with a promise.

1 After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward.” [God is addressing several things in Abram's life to prepare him for what is coming next.]

1. (vs. 1) The word of the LORD comes to Abram in a vision.

- a. How does the word of the LORD come to us? The Bible, the Holy Spirit, other believers, etc.
- b. Do not be afraid . . . I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward: Abram had just defeated a much larger army . . . he had reason to be afraid for his security
- c. Your shield . . . your . . . reward: Abram needed a shield because he was expecting to be attacked. He needed reward because he had just forfeited great reward offered from the king of Sodom.
 - i. God will more than make up what Abram has given up for the Lord.
 - ii. God knows how to become the answer to our need. Who knows me better than my Maker?
- d. Do not be afraid: God never tells us, “do not be afraid,” without giving us a reason. The Creator is taking time to encourage His creation.

2 But Abram said, “Lord GOD, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?” **3 Then Abram said, “Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed one born in my house is my heir!”**

2. (vss. 2-3) Abram honestly expresses his doubts.

- a. Lord GOD, what will You give me: God's promise seemed to ring hollow in Abram's ears. God told Abram that Abram would be a great nation, but that was almost 10 years prior.

- i. It is almost as if Abram [**meant**], "Lord, You've given me lots of stuff, and now promise to give me more, and to protect me. . . . I want the son You promised me!" The bloodline was life to people (at that time in history).
 - ii. **Eliezer of Damascus was Abram's chief assistant, his right-hand man. He was a good man, but not a son to Abram.** Had Abram died without a son, Eliezer would have been the recipient of Abram's wealth.
- b. **Look, You have given me no offspring:** Abram was **honest** before the Lord.

4 And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir." 5 Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be."

3. (vss. 4-5) God speaks to Abram's doubts with a promise.

- a. **This one shall not be your heir:** God reminds Abram of the promise **originally** recorded in **Genesis 12:2 and 13:15-16**. God does this because He knows how much we *need* to be reminded.
- b. **One who will come from your own body shall be your heir:** God often states a promise with such certainty, we believe it will be fulfilled right away; but the fulfillment of *this* promise was still 15 years away. An example of our impatience is our computer's boot-up time—and similarly, we get impatient with God.
- c. **From your own body:** It wasn't a **spiritual** descendant who would inherit the promise.
- d. **Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them:** [God] *confirms* [the promise] **with an illustration**. **Revelation 22:16**

6 And he believed in the LORD, and He [the LORD] accounted it to him [Abram] for righteousness.

4. (vs. 6) Abram's **response** [of faith] to God's promise.

- a. **And he believed in the LORD:** When Abram put his **trust** in God, specifically in God's promise
 - i. **Two types of righteousness:** [man's] righteousness we *accomplish* by our own efforts, and [God's] righteousness *accounted* to us by the work of God when we believe. God's righteousness is getting ready to take care of man's lack of righteousness.
- b. **And He accounted it to him for righteousness:** This is one of the clearest expressions in the Bible of the truth of **salvation** by **grace**, through **faith**. This is the first time *believe* . . . *righteousness* is used in the Bible. It is the gospel in the Old Testament. **Romans 4:1-3, 9-10, 19-24**

- c. **He accounted it to him for righteousness: Romans 4:9-10 . . . righteousness was accounted to Abram before he was circumcised (Genesis 17). Faith alone . . . caused God to account Abram as righteous.** This debate over circumcision was a debate that was still raging between Peter and Paul in **Acts** (whether or not circumcision was required for salvation).
 - i. [Justification] **is the chief article from which all other doctrines have flowed. [Luther, cited in Boice]**
- d. **He believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness: The faith making Abram righteous wasn't so much believing in God . . . as it was *believing God*. James 2:19**

B. God speaks to Abram's doubt with a covenant.

7 Then He said to him, "I am the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it."

8 And he said, "Lord GOD, how shall I know that I will inherit it?"

1. (vss. 7-8) Abram's doubts surface again.

b./i-ii. How could Abram ask, "**How shall I know that I will inherit it,**" when God had just accounted him righteous? . . . Remember, Abram had no title deed to the land.

9 So He said to him, "Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." 10 Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, down the middle, and placed each piece opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. 11 And when the vultures came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

2. (vss. 9-11) Abram prepares to make a covenant with God.

- b. **But Abram knew exactly what to do with these animals: he . . . cut them in two . . . and placed each piece opposite the other. . . . God was telling Abram to get a contract ready for signing.**
 - i. **In those days, contracts were made by the sacrificial cutting of animals. . . . Both parties . . . would walk through the animal parts together, repeating the terms of the covenant.**
 - iii. **Symbolism . . . first, this is a covenant so serious it is sealed with blood [just as Jesus Christ sealed His covenant with us with His blood]; second, if I break this covenant, let this same bloodshed be poured out on my animals and me!**
- c. **As Abram waits for the Lord to appear and walk through the carcasses with him (to sign the covenant), God doesn't come right away, but the vultures do.**
 - i. **Abram fully expects God to come down and walk through the animal parts with him, because God had previously appeared to him (Genesis 12:7).**

12 Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, horror *and* great darkness fell upon him. **13** Then He said to Abram: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land *that is* not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. **14** And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. **15** Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. **16** But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites *is* not yet complete."

3. (vss. 12-16) Prologue to the covenant.

- a. At the end of the day, God has still not **appeared** to walk through the animal parts with Abram. Instead, God causes a **deep sleep** to fall upon Abram.
- b. **Know certainly:** Abram wanted concrete proof from God.
 - i. God told him some of the hardship that would befall his descendants.
- c. God tells Abram of the slavery . . . in Egypt (Exodus 1:1-14), yet they would . . . come back to the Promised Land.

17 And it came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark, that behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces. **18** On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying:

"To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates— **19** the Kenites, the Kenezites, the Kadmonites, **20** the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, **21** the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites."

4. (vss. 17-21) The covenant is made.

- a. Abram . . . sees God . . . pass through the animal parts all by **Himself**, while Abram watches.
- b. God represents Himself by two emblems: a smoking oven and a burning torch.
 - i. The **smoking oven** reminds us of the pillar of cloud representing the presence of God (Exodus 13:21-22), the smoke on Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:18), and the cloud of God's Shekinah glory (1 Kings 8:10-12).
 - ii. The **burning torch** reminds us of the pillar of fire representing the presence of God (Exodus 13:21-22), of the burning bush before Moses (Exodus 3:4), and fire from heaven which sometimes consumed sacrifices God was well pleased with (1 Kings 18:38; 1 Chronicles 21:26; 2 Chronicles 7:1).
- c. The **smoking oven and the burning torch** . . . showed this was a **unilateral** covenant. God is putting all of the responsibility for keeping this covenant on Himself. This is a one-sided covenant.

- d. By entering into this contract, there is a sense in which God was saying, "If I don't keep My word, let *Me* be put asunder." God was putting His **Deity** on the line.
- e. By quoting the specific lands Abram's descendants will inherit, God makes it plain this is not a, "pie in the sky," spiritual promise. It is real, and through it, Israel will inherit real land.

Apply (What is the point?)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Personalize (What do I do with that?)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: Isaac's Birth and "Sacrifice"

Preview: Strange but true

God tells Abraham to sacrifice his only son Isaac (**Genesis 22:2**) and Abraham wastes no time obeying. As the tension mounts in front of the altar, Abraham unwittingly prophesies God's plan of salvation when he says, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering." (**Genesis 22:8**). God did provide the lamb for Abraham. He also provided the Lamb, his only son Jesus Christ as the once and for all sacrifice for our sins.

Key thought: Abraham's "sacrifice" foreshadows God's sacrifice of Jesus

Outline

These two chapters are the crossroads of religion, theology, and faith in the Old Testament. Essentially, the birth and destiny of the nation of Israel is outlined here and these chapters lay out the form and format for God's entire redemptive plan for the human race. This whole story is about the nation of Israel.

1. Amazing birth of Isaac (**Genesis 21:1-7**)
 - a. God speaks to Abraham and Sarah – Birth of Isaac (**Genesis 21:1-4**)
 - b. Abraham and Sarah's advanced age (**Genesis 21:5-7**)
2. Hagar and Ishmael Depart (Genesis 21:8-21)
 - a. Isaac comes of age and is weaned (**Genesis 21:8**)
 - b. Abraham listens to Sarah (**Genesis 21:9-12**)
 - c. Promise that Ishmael will have a nation (**Genesis 21:13**)
 - d. God provides and confirms promise to Ishmael (**Genesis 21:14-21**)
3. God calls Abraham to sacrifice Isaac (Genesis 22:1-19)
 - a. God commands Abraham to offer up Isaac (**Genesis 22:1-2**)
 - b. Abraham's faith and obedience to the Divine command (**Genesis 22:3-10**)
 - c. Another sacrifice is provided instead of Isaac (**Genesis 22: 11-14**)
 - d. The covenant with Abraham renewed (**Genesis 22: 15-19**)

Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Genesis 21:1-21; 22:1-19 (Author = Moses)

1. Amazing birth of Isaac (**Genesis 21:1-7**)
 - a. God speaks to Abraham and Sarah – Birth of Isaac (**Genesis 21:1-4**)

Isaac Is Born

1 And the LORD visited Sarah as He had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as He had spoken. 2 For Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him [God foretold the pregnancy]. 3 And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him—whom Sarah bore to him—Isaac [laughing one]. [This was not Abraham's only son. His first son was

Ishmael through Hagar through lack of faith expressed by Abraham.] **4 Then Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him** [a fulfillment of [Genesis 17:9-14](#)].

- b. Abraham and Sarah's advanced age([Genesis 21:5-7](#))

5 Now Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. 6 And Sarah [Sarah was at least 90] **said, "God has made me laugh, and all who hear will laugh with me." 7 She also said, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? For I have borne him a son in his old age."**

2. Hagar and Ishmael Depart ([Genesis 21:8-21](#))
 - a. Isaac comes of age and is weaned ([Genesis 21:8](#))

Hagar and Ishmael Depart

8 So the child grew and was weaned [two-three years old]. **And Abraham made a great feast on the same day that Isaac was weaned** [typically because they had passed a major mortality milestone].

- b. Abraham listens to Sarah ([Genesis 21:9-12](#))

9 And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, scoffing [Ishmael was scoffing Isaac – God used this to prompt the casting out of Hagar]. **10 Therefore she said to Abraham, "Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, namely with Isaac."** [Sarah saw Ishmael for what he represented – lack of faith by Abraham] **11 And the matter was very displeasing in Abraham's sight because of his son.** [Abraham and Sarah are having a fight]

12 But God said to Abraham, "Do not let it be displeasing in your sight because of the lad or because of your bondwoman. Whatever Sarah has said to you, listen to her voice [My lesson in life – God built woman with more antennas than men]; **for in Isaac your seed shall be called.** [God spoke to Abraham and confirmed that Ishmael was to be cast out. It is interesting that God told him to listen to Sarah. God works through our expressions of lack of faith. God uses us despite us.]

- c. Promise that Ishmael will have a nation ([Genesis 21:13](#))

13 Yet I will also make a nation of the son [Ishmael] **of the bondwoman** [Hagar], **because he is your seed."** [God still promises a different nation through Ishmael. God says He will build the nation specifically because he is the seed of Abraham. This becomes the Arab nation.]

- d. God provides and confirms promise to Ishmael ([Genesis 21:14-21](#))

14 So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water; and putting it on her shoulder, he gave it and the boy to Hagar, and sent her away. Then she departed and wandered in the Wilderness of Beersheba. 15 And the water in the skin was used up, and she placed the boy under one of the shrubs. [How awful would this be?] **16 Then she went and sat down across from him at a distance of about a bowshot; for she said to herself, "Let me not see the death of the boy." So she sat opposite him, and lifted her voice and wept.**

17 And God heard the voice of the lad [Not Hagar, but Ishmael]. **Then the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said to her, "What ails you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is. 18 Arise, lift up the lad and hold him with your hand, for I will make him a great nation."**

19 Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water [the angel of God provided the water]. **And she went and filled the skin with water, and gave the lad a drink. 20 So God was with the lad; and he grew and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer. 21 He dwelt in the Wilderness of Paran; and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt** [Ishmael is approximately 16-17 years old. New Testament references: **Galatians 4:29-30**: Ishmael is described as, "**born according to the flesh.**" **Romans 9:7-10**: "**children of the flesh.**" Fortunately for us, God makes things happen out of our mistakes.]

3. God calls Abraham to sacrifice Isaac (**Genesis 22:1-19**)
 - a. God commands Abraham to offer up Isaac (**Genesis 22:1-2**)

Genesis 22

Abraham's Faith Confirmed

1 Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham [learn to expect tests], **and said to him, "Abraham!"**

And he said, "Here I am." [Abraham demonstrates his availability to God]

2 Then He said, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac [reinforcing the legitimacy of Isaac's claim to be the rightful heir of Abraham's bloodline], **whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."** [The command to sacrifice Isaac was contradictory to God's promise of a nation (**Genesis 12:1-3**). Child sacrifice was not a practice of the Jews but it was known in Canaan. However, remember that our testing is our opportunity to show God our faith.]

Taken from Sam Shamoun on answering-islam.org:

Muslims . . . feel that Ishmael was the one offered up by Abraham. . . . Since this idea stems from the Muslim misunderstanding of the phrase "only son," it becomes necessary to explain what this phrase exactly means in relation to Isaac. A careful reading of the Holy Bible shows that the phrase is used to affirm Isaac's unique status, a status based on the following:

- **Isaac the Promised Child:** Isaac was the only promised child of Abraham, a fact which the Quran agrees with (cf. **Genesis 17:15-21**; Surah 11:69-73, 37:112-113, 51:24-30). Ishmael was never a promised child.
- **Miraculous Birth of Isaac:** Isaac was conceived miraculously to a barren mother and a very aged father, with the Quran likewise agreeing (cf. **Genesis 17:15-17**; **18:9-15**; **21:1-7**; **Galatians 4:28-29**; Surah 11:69-73, 51:24-30). Ishmael was conceived normally without the need of any miraculous intervention.

- **Isaac's Descendants: God promised that it would be Isaac's descendants who would inherit the land given to Abraham (Genesis 13:14-18; 15:18-21; 28:13-14). Ishmael had no part in the inheritance and promise given to Isaac through Abraham.**

b. Abraham's faith and obedience to the Divine command (**Genesis 22:3-10**)

3 So Abraham rose early in the morning [Abraham got after obedience immediately] **and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.** [Abraham was immediately and unquestionably obedient. The journey to the Land of Moriah was a three-day trip.] **4 Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off. 5 And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you."** [Abraham left the servants behind. Interestingly, he says, "**Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship.**" Worship was the point.]

6 So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac [meaning Isaac was carrying the wood] **his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together. 7 But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!"**

And he said, "Here I am, my son."

Then he said, "Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"

8 And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide [because just as Abraham was insufficient to provide his own sacrifice, there is nothing we can do to provide for ourselves] **for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering** [foreshadow of the provision of Christ as the offering for sin]. **" So the two of them went together.**

9 Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son [this would have been extremely hard] **and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. 10 And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.** [Abraham was fully committed to doing God's will—he had Isaac all the way to the altar.]

c. Another sacrifice is provided instead of Isaac (**Genesis 22: 11-14**)

11 But [thank God!] **the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!"** [God's miraculous intervention shows God never intended for Abraham to go through with it]

So he said, "Here I am." [Abraham said, "**Here I am**"—a true worshiper holds nothing back. Abraham was all in]

12 And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son [Abraham's intention to sacrifice Isaac was the same in God's eyes as Abraham actually sacrificing Isaac—this proved to God that Abraham was going to do

it], your only son [again, the reinforcement of the legitimacy of Isaac's claim to Abraham's bloodline and inheritance], **from Me."**

13 Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son [God provided a ram—worship involves accepting God's sacrificial substitute]. **14 And Abraham called the name of the place, The-LORD-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, "In the Mount of the LORD it shall be provided."** [The point of this section is not atonement but rather the demonstration of an obedient servant worshipping God in faith at great cost.]

d. The covenant with Abraham renewed ([Genesis 22: 15-19](#))

15 Then the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, 16 and said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son— 17 blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies [this last clause is a new element to the Abrahamic Covenant]. **18 In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed** [through Jesus], **because you have obeyed My voice."** [This promise is a result of ONE act of obedience.] **19 So Abraham returned to his young men, and they rose and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba.** [God essentially gave back Abraham's son Isaac. God confirms his covenant with Abraham—to provide a nation like stars ([Genesis 15:5; 26:4](#)) and as numerous as the sand ([Genesis 32:12](#)).]

Apply (What is the point?) (Bible Knowledge Commentary)

1. Faith obeys completely the Word of God.
2. Faith surrenders the best to God, holding nothing back.
3. Faith waits on the Lord to provide all one's needs. But God does not provide until personal sacrifice has been made.
4. True worship is costly. This was always so for Israel when they brought sacrifices.

Personalize (What do I do with that?)

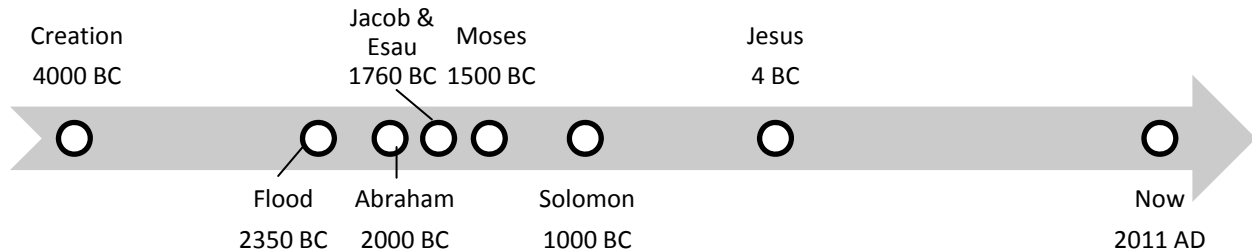
1. Know that this was a test ([Genesis 22:1-2](#))
 - Live in the fact that God knows the plan and you don't—that is acting in faith
 - Questioning the reality of the test is not helpful. Responding obediently to the test is helpful.
 - Testing is an opportunity to show your faith
 - Learn to expect them (do good/get good, do bad/get bad is a false theology)
 - Faith stretching is a permanent condition—Abraham 100 when the sacrifice took place
 - Trials show whether you have faith or religion
2. Know that one act of faith can change the course of human history ([Hebrews 11:8-12, 17-19](#))
 - All nations were blessed
 - Abraham inspired the nation of Israel even to this day—and his faith is always discussed in the context of his actions

- Whether you look at Moses by the Red Sea, David in the cave, Peter by the fire, or Jesus at Calvary, the lesson is the same: We live by promises, not by explanations
3. Know that my faith must have action or it does not exist ([James 2:14-24](#))
- Faith with works = faith that has substance (this is faith that gets up out of the chair)
 - Faith without works = dead
 - Works without faith = empty

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: Jacob and Esau Compete

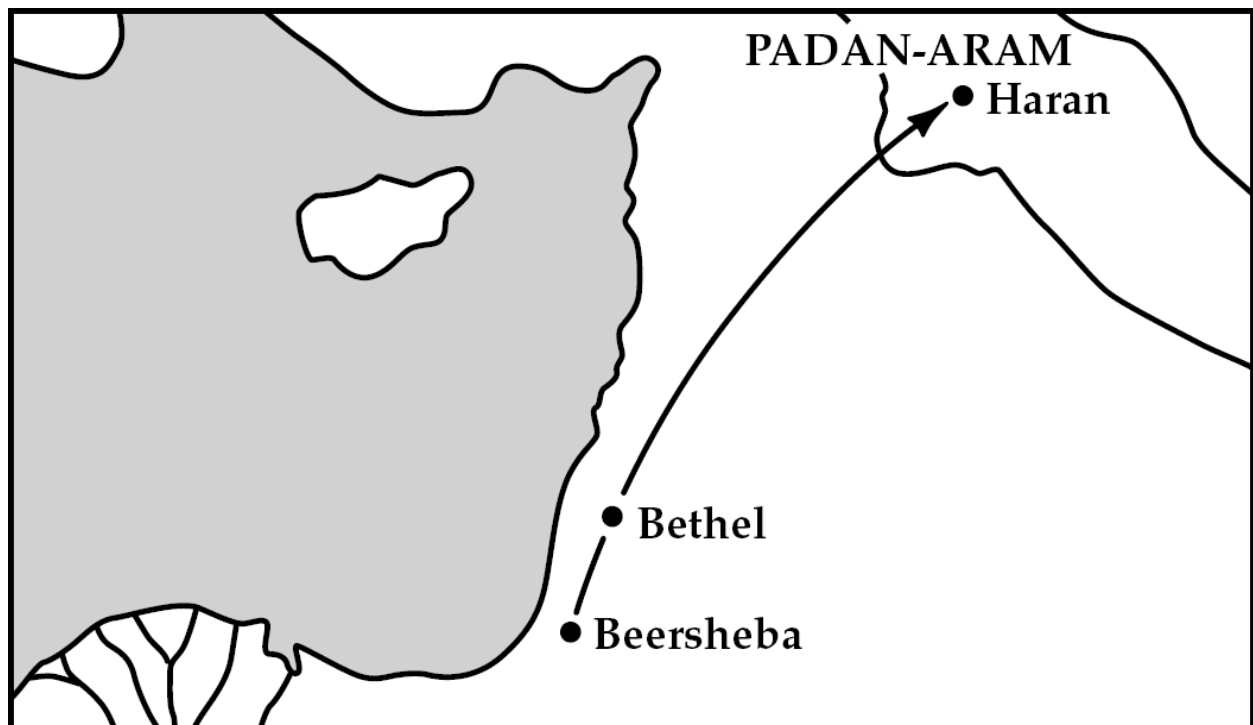
Review

So far, in this series, we have had lessons about the call of Abram, God's covenant with Abram, and Abraham's 'sacrifice' of Isaac. Thanks to Tim Archer, Terry Bolden, and David Barber for teaching the past three weeks. Assuming a literal interpretation of Bible dates, the following timeline is close:



Preview: Analyze this!

Today's lesson takes place over 100 years after the 'sacrifice' of Isaac. Here is a map of the area:



Genesis 27 and part of **Genesis 28** takes place in Beersheba, and the latter part of **Genesis 28** takes place on the route to Haran (present-day Turkey).

LD Commentary: A manipulating mom, a dying father, the youngest son lies but still gets the better end of the deal, and the oldest son gets manipulated out of his blessing, then marries a girl just to get

back at his dad . . . which really doesn't work, because his dad was just reacting to something Rebekah had said, which was actually a lie, just to get her own way and protect Jacob . . . this family is exhausting! It sounds like reality TV. Of course, no family is perfect. God uses broken people from broken families to accomplish His perfect purposes. He has no other choice—it is all He has to work with. He can even use our brokenness to draw us closer to Himself.

Key thoughts: (1) Bible characters were imperfect and (2) we often encounter God in the broken places of our lives

Back-story (Genesis 25:19-28; 26:34-35)

God told Rebekah that Jacob would be the stronger and would rule over his twin brother Esau (**Genesis 25:23b: One people shall be stronger than the other, And the older shall serve the younger**). Isaac (the dad) loves **Esau** (the oldest twin) the most and Rebekah (the mom) loves **Jacob** (the youngest twin) the most. Esau's name means hairy and Jacob's name means supplanter/deceiver. Later in **Genesis 25**, Jacob gets Esau to sell him his birthright (his right to the extra portion of his father's inheritance—the older son's birthright was twice as much property/possessions as the other sons—meaning Esau should have gotten 2/3 and Jacob 1/3—but God had other plans and He had made this clear to Rebekah).

Genesis 26: 34-35: When Esau was forty years old, he took as wives Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite. 35 And they were a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebekah. Summary of **Genesis 26:34-35**: Jacob is single and Esau is a polygamist who married women from the wrong place. There are numerous problems in this family.

Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Genesis 27-28 (Author = Moses)

Isaac Blesses Jacob

1 Now it came to pass, when Isaac [he laughs] was old and his eyes were so dim that he could not see [many times in the Bible, a physical ailment also communicates a **moral issue as well—in this case, no one in this family could 'see' very well], that he called Esau his older son and said to him, "My son." And he [Esau] answered him [Isaac], "Here I am."**

2 Then he [Isaac] said, "Behold now, I am old. I do not know the day of my death [Isaac is either 117 or 137 years old. Jacob and Esau are either 57 or 77 years old. David Guzik: Isaac believes his time has come to die, and this is his way of "settling his affairs," sort of a last will and testament.]. 3 Now therefore, please take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt game for me. 4 And make me savory food [delicacies that could be tasted or relished], such as I love, and bring it to me that I may eat, that my soul may bless you before I die." [This is a clear statement of intent to bless Esau instead of Jacob despite God's clear directions to Rebekah 50+ years before.]

The blessing was the father's way of saying who is in charge of the family once the father dies. Isaac was formally announcing who would lead the family and which one of his sons would receive the Abrahamic covenant. God accomplishes the blessing, but the human father directs it. The blessing is a big deal.

5 Now Rebekah [ensnarer] **was listening** [eavesdropping] **when Isaac spoke to Esau his son. And Esau went to the field to hunt game and to bring it** [Esau was obedient]. **6 So Rebekah spoke to Jacob her son, saying, “Indeed I heard your father speak to Esau your brother, saying, 7 ‘Bring me game and make savory food for me, that I may eat it and bless you in the presence of the LORD before my death.’ 8 Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to what I command you. 9 Go now to the flock and bring me from there two choice kids of the goats, and I will make savory food from them for your father, such as he loves** [pleasing your spouse is good, but we must be very cautious that pleasing does not turn into **deceiving**]. **10 Then you shall take it to your father, that he may eat it, and that he may bless you before his death.”** [This is blatant deception. Remember that children learn what we do, not just what we say. However, sometimes, what we do and what we say is wrong.]

Question: Was it right or wrong of Jacob to obey his mother Rebekah in her attempt to deceive Isaac?
Answer: It was wrong. It is never right to deceive your spouse. Even if she thought she was helping God accomplish what He wanted, it is never right to do wrong to get a chance to do right.

11 And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, “Look, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth-skinned [smooth/slippery—the root word means deceitful because of the slipperiness of speech] **man. 12 Perhaps my father will feel me, and I shall seem to be a deceiver to him; and I shall bring a curse on myself and not a blessing.”** [Jacob’s concern is the punishment, not being righteous]

13 But his mother said to him, “Let your curse be on me, my son [an incredibly foolish statement—up there with, ‘yes, I will cosign that loan for you’]; **only obey my voice, and go, get them** [the goats] **for me.” 14 And he went and got them and brought them to his mother, and his mother made savory food** [note that something that should not have died had to die because of this deception (deception is bloody and causes early death)], **such as his father loved. 15 Then Rebekah took the choice clothes of her elder son Esau, which were with her in the house, and put them on Jacob her younger son. 16 And she put the skins of the kids of the goats on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck** [Eastern goats have long, fine hair, not coarse and rough hair; **Coffman: sometimes used as a substitute for human hair**]. **17 Then she gave the savory food and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob.** [This is willful premeditation to deceive.]

18 So he went to his father and said, “My father.” And he said, “Here I am. Who are you, my son?” 19 Jacob said to his father, “I am Esau your firstborn [lie]; **I have done just as you told me** [lie]; **please arise, sit and eat of my game** [lie], **that your soul may bless me.” 20 But Isaac said to his son, “How is it that you have found it so quickly, my son?”** [Isaac smells a trap] **And he said, “Because the LORD your God** [not, ‘my God’] **brought it to me.”** [lie]

21 Isaac said to Jacob, “Please come near, that I may feel you, my son, whether you are really my son Esau or not.” 22 So Jacob went near to Isaac his father, and he [Isaac] **felt him** [Jacob] **and said, “The voice is Jacob’s voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau.”** [Isaac is in such poor health that he did not notice that the food was domestic and the hair was fake] **23 And he** [Isaac] **did not recognize him** [Jacob], **because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau’s hands; so he** [Isaac] **blessed him** [Jacob].

[Question: Was the outcome what God wanted? **Yes**. Did the means justify the ends? **No**. The deception is complete, and now we get to see all of the impacts of this deception.]

24 Then he said, “Are you really my son Esau?” [Even afterward Isaac is skeptical] **He said, “I am.”** [lie]

25 He said, “Bring *it* near to me, and I will eat of my son’s game, so that my soul may bless you.” So he brought *it* near to him, and he ate; and he brought him wine, and he drank [normal drinking, not ‘drunk’ drinking]. **26 Then his father Isaac said to him, “Come near now and kiss me, my son.” 27 And he came near and kissed him; and he smelled the smell of his clothing, and blessed him** [second blessing] **and said:**

**“Surely, the smell of my son
Is like the smell of a field
Which the LORD has blessed.**

**28 Therefore may God give you
Of the dew of heaven,
Of the fatness of the earth,
And plenty of grain and wine.**

**29 Let peoples serve you,
And nations bow down to you.
Be master over your brethren,** [These two lines are the key]
And let your mother’s sons bow down to you. [they pose a major problem for Esau]
**Cursed *be* everyone who curses you,
And blessed *be* those who bless you!”**

Esau’s Lost Hope

30 Now it happened, as soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, and Jacob had scarcely gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting [have you ever been just seconds late to an important meeting and missed out on something special?]. **31 He also had made savory food, and brought it to his father, and said to his father, “Let my father arise and eat of his son’s game, that your soul may bless me.”** [Esau was obedient]

32 And his father Isaac said to him, “Who *are* you?” So he said, “I *am* your son, your firstborn, Esau.”

33 Then Isaac trembled exceedingly [Isaac was terrified], **and said, “Who? Where *is* the one who hunted game and brought *it* to me? I ate all *of it* before you came, and I have blessed him—and indeed he shall be blessed.” 34 When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with an exceedingly great and bitter cry** [because Esau knew this impacted himself and his family forever], **and said to his father, “Bless me—me also, O my father!”**

35 But he said, “Your brother came with deceit [deceit, treachery] **and has taken away your blessing.”** [This is sad and irreversible. Some mistakes cannot be **undone**: murder, rape] **36 And Esau said, “Is he not rightly named Jacob** [supplanter/deceiver]? **For he has supplanted** [circumvent, take by the heel,

follow at the heel, assail insidiously, overreach] **me these two times. He took away my birthright** [lie—Esau sold his birthright; **Lori Drake: Isn't it amazing how we remember things the way we want to remember them?**], **and now look, he has taken away my blessing!**" And he said, "Have you not reserved a blessing for me?"

37 Then Isaac answered and said to Esau, "Indeed I have made him your master, and all his brethren I have given to him as servants; with grain and wine I have sustained him. What shall I do now for you, my son?" 38 And Esau said to his father, "Have you only one blessing, my father? Bless me—me also, O my father!" And Esau lifted up his voice and wept. 39 Then Isaac his father answered and said to him:

"Behold, your dwelling shall be of the fatness of the earth,

And of the dew of heaven from above. [Isaac told Jacob that God would give Jacob these things, not that he would live off of or from these things]

40 By your sword you shall live,

And you shall serve your brother;

And it shall come to pass, when you become restless [restless from roaming around],

That you shall break [tear away, snatch] **his yoke from your neck** [the back of the neck]." [Hope?]

Jacob Escapes from Esau

41 So Esau hated [hate, bear a grudge, cherish animosity against—sin has awful consequences] **Jacob** [Esau hates Jacob, not Isaac or Rebekah] **because of the blessing with which his father blessed him, and Esau said in his heart, "The days of mourning for my father** [dad's death] **are at hand; then I will kill my brother Jacob."** [Rebekah's deceit turned into Jacob's lie, which turned into Esau's hate, which turned into Esau's murderous plan. We never know the consequences of our deception.]

42 And the words of Esau her older son were told [reported] **to Rebekah** [How? He said them in his heart. What is in your heart has a way of coming out your mouth (**Matthew 12:34b**)]. **So she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said to him, "Surely your brother Esau comforts** [is feeling sorry for] **himself concerning you by intending to kill you. 43 Now therefore, my son, obey my voice: arise, flee to my brother Laban in Haran** [northeast of where they were in Beersheba—approximately 500 miles].

44 And stay with him a few days [this 'few days' turned out to be over **20** years], **until your brother's fury turns away, 45 until your brother's anger turns away from you, and he forgets** [forgets, ceases to care] **what you have done to him** [what? Esau is not going to forget this—how could you forget this?]; **then I will send and bring you from there. Why should I be bereaved also of you both in one day?"**

[**Jamieson, Fausset, Brown Commentary: The nearest of kin would be obliged to avenge the death of Jacob upon his brother.**]

46 And Rebekah said to Isaac, "I am weary [sick-feeling] **of my life because of the daughters of Heth** [the wives of Esau—Heth was the father of the Hittites]; **if Jacob takes a wife of the daughters of Heth, like these who are the daughters of the land, what good will my life be to me?"** [Rebekah has a fake pity-party to manipulate her husband Isaac once again. This is the last time Rebekah is mentioned in

Scripture except for her death—what a way to be remembered! **John Wesley: If we use guile once, we shall be very ready to use it again.**]

Genesis 28

1 Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him [third time], **and charged him, and said to him: “You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan** [the land west of the Jordan]. **2 Arise, go to Padan Aram** [northern Mesopotamia in Aram, a region of Syria], **to the house of Bethuel your mother’s father; and take yourself a wife from there of the daughters of Laban your mother’s brother** [your first cousins].

**3 “May God Almighty bless you,
And make you fruitful and multiply you,
That you may be an assembly of peoples;**

**4 And give you the blessing of Abraham,
To you and your descendants with you,
That you may inherit the land
In which you are a stranger,**

Which God gave to Abraham.” [Most commentators feel that this, ‘third blessing’ was to give Jacob confidence in Isaac’s first two blessings, but this blessing clearly links Jacob to the **Abramic** Covenant]

5 So Isaac sent Jacob away [and we have no clear record that Jacob ever sees his parents again—and Isaac lives to be **180** (he lives the last 43 or 63 years of his life without seeing his son)], **and he went to Padan Aram, to Laban the son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, the mother of Jacob and Esau.**

Esau Marries Mahalath

6 Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him away to Padan Aram to take himself a wife from there, and that as he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying, “You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan,” **7 and that Jacob had obeyed his father and his mother and had gone to Padan Aram.** **8 Also Esau saw that the daughters of Canaan did not please his father Isaac.** **9 So Esau went to Ishmael** [remember him from last week? Ishmael would have been someone Esau could relate to—a firstborn that did not get treated as a firstborn (misery loves company)] **and took Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham’s son, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife in addition to the wives he had** [Esau married his first cousin too, but this was not the, ‘one per customer,’ plan that God designed].

Jacob’s Vow at Bethel

10 Now Jacob went out from Beersheba and went toward Haran. **11 So he came to a certain place and stayed there all night, because the sun had set. And he took one of the stones of that place and put it at his head, and he lay down in that place to sleep.** **12 Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.** [In case you are looking for Jesus in this story, Jesus is the **ladder**—see **John 1:51**]

13 And behold, the LORD stood above it and said: “I am the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. **14 Also your**

descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. [This is similar to the Abrahamic covenant. God confirms the covenant with Jacob and the ladder is in between the two parties while the confirmation occurs—the things being sacrificed were always in between those making the covenant] **15 Behold, I am with you and will keep** [guard, keep watch, protect] **you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you.** [Six, “I” statements—an incredible promise from God. Question: What does Jacob have to do to get this promise? Answer: Nothing (God is going to do everything). God repeats the covenant (Isaac had already given it to Jacob once)—making sure Jacob understands it.]

16 Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, “Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it [not: God was here and I missed it, but rather: God was already here before I got here and I didn’t know about this place].” **17 And he was afraid and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house** [dwelling, not a physical house] **of God, and this is the gate** [entrance] **of heaven!”** [What is Jacob focused on? The **place**. What should have Jacob been focused on? The **Person**. Jacob’s location-based theology of God is similar to many alive today—many think that God only lives in holy places.]

18 Then Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put at his head, set it up as a pillar, and poured oil [a common practice to show something is set apart for a particular function—he is anointing this rock with oil] **on top of it. 19 And he called the name of that place Bethel** [house of God]; **but the name of that city had been Luz** [almond tree—the almond also shows up in the design of the bowls in the Tabernacle] **previously** [48 miles from Beersheba]. **20 Then Jacob made a vow, saying, “If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, 21 so that I come back to my father’s house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God.** [Jacob believes in a *quid pro quo* god.] **22 And this stone which I have set as a pillar shall be God’s house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth** [a tithe—Abraham had tithed before this in **Genesis 14:20**, showing that tithing predated the Law] **to You.**” [Eight “me/I” statements. Jacob feels it necessary to add terms to the covenant—man always wants to alter the simplicity of God’s plans.]

David Guzik: God is gracious enough to not call off the whole deal when He sees such a carnal response from Jacob. Instead, He is willing to be called, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob (Exodus 3:6). . . . Jacob is by no means worthy of this blessing. . . . The amazing thing is that God could bring any good out of all this, and this is an example of a triumph of God’s sovereignty!

Apply (What is the point?)

1. Deceit is harmful and has long-lasting repercussions (we are not finished with the repercussions)
2. The ends do not justify the means (it is never right to do wrong in order to get a chance to do right)
3. God’s plan will not be derailed by man (despite our best efforts to mess it up)

Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Always tell the truth
2. Don’t be a _____ (every human character in this passage was one at some point or another)

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: Jacob and Esau Reconcile

Review

To review last week's passage, Isaac and Rebekah played favorites with their twin sons, Jacob and Esau. This caused many issues, but eventually Isaac blessed the younger brother Jacob (as God had told Rebekah to do). Esau then vowed to kill Jacob and Jacob ran away. We left off last week in **Genesis 28** with God having just extended the Abrahamic Covenant to Jacob. In **Genesis 29-31** (the text that we skip over to get to today's passage), Jacob marries (twice), has kids with four different women, lives with his father-in-law/uncle Laban for about 20 years, and gets filthy rich (Isaac's blessing came true). **Genesis 32** picks up with Jacob and his fortune and family leaving Laban. The text now shifts back to Jacob and Esau.

Preview: True reconciliation

Today's lesson is all about reconciliation—reconciliation with God and reconciliation with man. We see both in Jacob's story. Reconciliation is bringing a relationship (what life is all about) back into harmony. While we read today's passage, you may be reminded of difficult relationships and situations in your life.

Key thought: True reconciliation requires **change**

Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Genesis 32-33 (Author = Moses)

Esau Comes to Meet Jacob

1 So Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him [we are not told why these angels met Jacob]. **2 When Jacob saw them, he said, "This is God's camp." And he called the name of that place Mahanaim** [mock-ha-NIE-em; two camps—Jacob's camp and God's camp].

3 Then Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother in the land of Seir [say-EAR; hairy], **the country of Edom** [in last week's lesson, Isaac 'blessed' Esau by telling him that he would live **by your sword** (**Genesis 27:40**)? **Deuteronomy 2:22** tells us Esau's family went to Seir and drove out the inhabitants by the sword and possessed their land—so Isaac's 'blessing' came true for Esau as well]. **4 And he commanded them, saying, "Speak thus to my lord Esau, 'Thus your servant Jacob says: "I have dwelt with Laban and stayed there until now. 5 I have oxen, donkeys, flocks, and male and female servants; and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find favor [favor, grace, charm] in your sight."'"** [Jacob does several things in this communication—he tells Esau he comes in **peace**, in a roundabout way he tells Esau he's not coming for his stuff, and Jacob tells Esau that Jacob is Esau's servant]

6 Then the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, "We came to your brother Esau, and he also is coming to meet you, and four hundred men are with him." 7 So Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed [distressed so that you are cramped narrowly—which makes sense since the last thing Jacob heard about Esau was that Esau wanted to kill Jacob; there was nothing that the messengers (who directly interacted with Esau) communicated to Jacob that made Jacob feel at ease; **Shakespeare (in Hamlet): Thus conscious does make cowards of us all**; Jacob was initially crippled by his past—God has promised us much in Christ and we are not called to be cowards for Christ, but more than conquerors for Christ]; **and he [Jacob] divided the people that were with him, and the flocks and herds and camels,**

into two companies [groups]. **8** And he said, “If Esau comes to the one company and attacks it, then the other company which is left will escape.” [Jacob’s kneejerk reaction is to use Jacob’s wisdom]

9 Then Jacob said, “O God [His **second** instinct is to go to God. He gets the order reversed, but at least he does go to God (we do the same far too often)] **of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, the LORD who said to me, ‘Return to your country and to your family, and I will deal well with you’: 10** I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies [goodness, kindness, faithfulness] **and of all the truth which You have shown Your servant; for I crossed over this Jordan with my staff [alone], and now I have become two companies. 11** Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, lest he come and attack me *and* the mother with the children. **12** For You said, ‘I will surely treat you well, and make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.’” [This prayer seems to have a different tone than the last prayer that Jacob prayed to God—this one is humble and less demanding]

Jacob has just prayed a great prayer, but what happens next is important. **David Guzik: George Mueller, a great man of faith and prayer, was once asked what was the most important part of prayer. He replied: “The 15 minutes after I have said Amen.”** Do we continue as if we have not talked with God?

13 So he lodged there that same night, and took what came to his hand as a present for Esau his brother: **14** two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, **15** thirty milk [nursing] camels with their colts, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten foals [580 animals—several hundred thousand of dollars in today’s economy; Jacob is filthy rich—we get a feel for how rich he is by the quality/volume of his **gifts**—same for God]. **16** Then he delivered *them* to the hand of his servants, every drove by itself, and said to his servants, “Pass over before me, and put some distance between successive droves [herds].” **17** And he commanded the first one, saying, “When Esau my brother meets you and asks you, saying, ‘To whom do you belong, and where are you going? Whose *are* these in front of you?’ **18** then you shall say, ‘They *are* your servant Jacob’s. It is a present sent to my lord Esau; and behold, he also *is* behind us.’” **19** So he commanded the second, the third, and all who followed the droves, saying, “In this manner you shall speak to Esau when you find him; **20** and also say, ‘Behold, your servant Jacob *is* behind us.’” For he said, “I will appease him with the present that goes before me, and afterward I will see his face; perhaps he will accept me.” **21** So the present went on over before him, but he himself lodged that night in the camp.

Wrestling with God (note the incorrect title heading)

22 And he arose that night and took his two wives, his two female servants, and his eleven sons, and crossed over the ford of Jabbok. **23** He took them, sent them over the brook, and sent over what he had. **24** Then Jacob was left alone [Jacob was undoubtedly nervous about the next day]; and a Man [capital M in the NKJV] **wrestled with him** [note that Jacob did not initiate the wrestling with the Man] **until the breaking of day** [Now, on the surface, this seems weird. However, Jacob is about to go into a potentially dangerous situation and he is still depending on his own wisdom, cunning, and planning. This is not where God wants Jacob, so God intervenes. This Man is widely thought to be a pre-incarnate appearance of **Jesus**. It is important to realize that God does not leave His children alone and that God will wrestle with you where your faith is not in harmony with His wise and holy will.]. **25** Now when He

[Jesus] **saw that He** [Jesus] **did not prevail against him** [Jacob; God sees that God is not winning (really good wrestlers have incredibly good defense—and Jacob was a master at manipulating circumstances to go his way—he was a master wrestler)], **He touched** [word with a wide range of meaning—anything from touch to strike] **the socket of his hip** [God touched Jacob’s hip—and the hips are critical in wrestling]; **and the socket of Jacob’s hip was out of joint** [dislocated, torn, alienated] **as He wrestled with him** [this would have been incredibly painful]. **26 And He** [Jesus] **said, “Let Me go, for the day breaks.”** [Jacob would not let God go—fortunately for us, it is not up to us to hold on to God—He has a much better grip on us than we do on Him]

But he [Jacob] **said, “I will not let You go unless You bless me!”**

David Guzik: Jacob has been reduced to the place where all he can do is hold on to the Lord with everything he has. . . . God is answering Jacob's prayer in Genesis 32:9-12. . . . before Jacob could be delivered from the hand of his brother, he had to be delivered from his own self-will and self-reliance.

27 So He said to him, “What is your name?” [Sounds like Jesus doesn’t it? Asking a question when He’s asked a question]

He said, “Jacob [deceiver—Jacob had to acknowledge who Jacob was before God could use him—and we, like Jacob, must confess the reality of who we are before God].”

28 And He said, “Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel [God prevails (and if God wins, who loses? Jacob loses. Jacob would forever be reminded by his name that God won and Jacob lost.) Again, it sounds like Jesus, though—changing someone’s name]; **for you have struggled** [contended, have power] **with God and with men, and have prevailed.”** [His hip is out of joint and he wins? **David Guzik: When you battle with God, you only win by losing.** This is eerily similar to Jesus’ logic in **Matthew 16:25**—the logic used in the kingdom of God is often backward from what we would expect]

29 Then Jacob asked, saying, “Tell me Your name, I pray.” And He said, “Why is it that you ask about My name?” [Again, another question—so like Jesus (Jesus rarely answered questions that the person asking the question already knew the answer to)] **And He** [Jesus] **blessed him there.**

30 So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel [facing God—Jacob knew who he had met there]: **“For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.” 31 Just as he crossed over Peniel** [same as Peniel, just spelled differently] **the sun rose on him, and he limped on his hip.** [When you meet God you are **never** the same ever again—He will change you—salvation implies and demands a change—you cannot meet the Creator of the Universe and remain the same] **32 Therefore to this day the children of Israel do not eat the muscle that shrank, which is on the hip socket, because He touched the socket of Jacob’s hip in the muscle that shrank.** [This is a custom, not a commandment]

Jacob is reconciled to God. Now we turn to Jacob and Esau’s relationship. **Vertical**, then **horizontal**.

Genesis 33

Jacob and Esau Meet

1 Now Jacob lifted his eyes and looked, and there, Esau was coming, and with him were four hundred men [do not assume that Esau has evil intentions—the statement about 400 men is a statement of fact, not a statement of intent]. **So he divided the children among Leah, Rachel, and the two maidservants.**

2 And he put the maidservants and their children in front, Leah and her children behind, and Rachel and Joseph last. 3 Then he crossed over before them [Jacob is a new man—he is now leading his family instead of hiding behind them (evidence of God’s change in his life). We will continue to see a struggle in Jacob to do what God wants him to do (much like us)] **and bowed himself to the ground seven times** [he would bow, then advance, then bow, then advance, etc.], **until he came near to his brother** [Esau].

4 But Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck [literally, the **back** of his neck—last week, we were looking to jerk a ponytail and this week we are hugging] **and kissed him, and they wept.** [What caused Esau’s change of heart? Rebekah told Jacob that Esau would forget one day. Was she right? I do not think so. I wonder if God did. This was not just forgiveness; this was friendship. There was nothing left for Jacob and Esau to ‘work out.’] **5 And he lifted his eyes and saw the women and children, and said, “Who are these with you?”** [This should have been painful for Esau—the manifestation of the Abrahamic Covenant before his eyes]

So he [Jacob] **said, “The children whom God has graciously given your servant.” 6 Then the maidservants came near, they and their children, and bowed down. 7 And Leah also came near with her children, and they bowed down. Afterward Joseph and Rachel came near, and they bowed down.**

8 Then Esau said, “What do you mean by all this company which I met?”

And he said, “These are to find favor [favor, grace, charm] **in the sight of my lord.”**

9 But Esau said, “I have enough [**much**], **my brother** [not a common insight]; **keep what you have for yourself.”** [Coffman: **The refusal to accept a gift means permanent enmity . . .** [accepting] **the gift was a token of reconciliation and everlasting peace.** The same is true with God’s offer of Jesus: receive the gift and participate in permanent reconciliation, or refuse the gift and participate in permanent enmity.]

10 And Jacob said, “No, please, if I have now found favor in your sight, then receive my present from my hand, inasmuch as I have seen your face as though I had seen the face of God, and you were pleased with me. [Jacob had seen the face of God and he now saw human relationships in a new light]

11 Please, take my blessing that is brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough [**everything**]—even though it is translated the same way as Esau’s words in some Bibles, the Hebrew is different (because you can have many things without God, but you cannot have everything without God—it is only when God prevails in our lives to show us that we cannot do it on our own and that He is all in all that we can say that we have everything].” **So he urged him, and he took it.**

12 Then Esau said, “Let us take our journey; let us go, and I will go before you.” [This is unity]

Skip down to [Genesis 33:19](#)

13 But Jacob said to him, “My lord knows that the children *are* weak, and the flocks and herds which are nursing *are* with me. And if the men should drive them hard one day, all the flock will die. **14** Please let my lord go on ahead before his servant. I will lead on slowly at a pace which the livestock that go before me, and the children, are able to endure, until I come to my lord in Seir.”

15 And Esau said, “Now let me leave with you *some* of the people who *are* with me.”

But he said, “What need is there? Let me find favor in the sight of my lord.” **16** So Esau returned that day on his way to Seir. **17** And Jacob journeyed to Succoth [booths], built himself a house, and made booths [thicket, covert, temporary shelter] for his livestock. Therefore the name of the place is called Succoth.

Jacob Comes to Canaan

18 Then Jacob came safely [peacefully] to the city of Shechem [the future capital of Samaria in the New Testament—see [John 4:6](#)], which *is* in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padan Aram; and he pitched his tent before the city. **19** And he bought the parcel of land, where he had pitched his tent, from the children of Hamor, Shechem’s father, for one hundred pieces of money. **20** Then he erected an altar there and called it El Elohe Israel [the mighty God of [Israel](#)—now, God is the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob].

Apply (What is the point?)

1. God will wrestle with us where our faith is not in harmony with His wise and holy will
2. God can restore ‘impossible-to-restore’ relationships (He is in the reconciling business)

Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Ask God to change [me](#) first
2. Ask God to change the [situation](#) second