

Seven Bible Studies 2017

Law

Jan 2: Genesis 1-3 (Charles Fry)

The most important thing here is to read and ponder the scriptures consistently.

Today's reading includes the grand account of the origin of all things physical, the nature of man in his world, God's original interaction with man, an adversary called "the serpent", sin's origin and its consequences, and the first prophecy of deliverance via the "seed" of the woman..

The creation account in Genesis 1 uses the word "created" very sparingly, highlighting 3 phases of God's creative work, the cosmos, living creatures, and human beings.

Gen 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Gen 1:21 So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing with which the water teems, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

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

About The Law:

1. In the Bible the Law includes the first 5 books of the Bible. These 5 books, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, are also called the Torah (Hebrew) and the Pentateuch (Greek).
2. The Law was written by Moses during the 40 years of the Exodus wanderings (Deuteronomy 31:24, Mark 12:26, Luke 24:27, 44), ending in about 1400 B.C.
3. Moses probably had older written sources passed down from the patriarchs, as well as revelation from God.
4. The Law includes ancient and divine accounts of the creation of the cosmos, human sin, the great flood, God's call and covenant with Abraham, the growth of the nation of Israel, the exodus of Israel from Egypt, the 40 years of wilderness wandering, and the covenant commandments governing that nation of Jacob's descendants.
5. Themes introduced in the Law include the greatness of God the creator, the origin of life on earth, the origin and purpose of marriage and family, the origins of sin and death, redemption and divine blessing, divine judgment, salvation of a remnant, faith and obedience.

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Steven Wright:

Thank you brother Charles Fry! It is my strong conviction that it is in this book of beginnings, that we indeed find the starting point for ALL of the principles, doctrines, and truths contained in scripture, set forth. In order for us to arrive at the proper destination, we here must set and direct our feet upon the proper path; start at the right place - end at the right place.

Steven Wright:

Two discussion points: brother Charles Fry, could you give us your thoughts and suggestions for, 1. Those who say that chapter two gives an account of a different/subsequent creation? And, 2. does our current understanding of snakes, cloud our understanding of the serpent in Chapter 3?

Replies:

Charles Fry:

1) Two accounts in Genesis 1:1-2:4 and 2:5-25 (really 2:5-5:1), but two accounts of one and the same creation. The only possible source for Genesis 1:1-2:4 is divine revelation, God had to tell the story. Adam, the Man, however, knew something about Genesis 2:5-5:1. The breakpoint in 2:4 and 5:1 is the word "generations" in KJV or "account" in NIV. One account from the divine perspective, one account focused on the human element, both inspired by God for inclusion by Moses in the Law. Jesus spoke of "the beginning" and referenced Genesis 1:27 and 2:24 in his comments on marriage in Matthew 19:4-5, and attributed the words of 2:24 to the creator.

2) I appreciate that the NIV and KJV translate Genesis 3:1 so as to differentiate "the serpent" from "any beast of the field" or "any of the wild animals" that the Lord God had made. This is not "a snake", it is "the serpent." It is not "any beast of the field", despite the word "serpent" also being used of ordinary wild creatures. This singular entity is "more subtle" or crafty than "any of the wild animals." Not one of them, not having their kind of mind or their kind of purpose. Several Old Testament poetic and prophetic references to a serpent God defeated, to Rahab, to Leviathan, to a dragon are allusions to this serpent. Paul of course identified this creature with Satan (2 Corinthians 11:3, 14) as did John (Revelation 12:9, 20:2). He is a potent, clever, and merciless adversary.

Steve Wright:

Indeed! Excellent! There may be some who have never encountered such ideas and questions, just thought I would bring them up. Thank you very much for your very helpful responses!

Lori Watt:

Charles Fry so when God cursed the serpent in 3:14, He was cursing Satan to crawl on his belly and eat dust? I have been confused about the snake/serpent/Satan entity-- thank you for your explanation in the above post... that helps!

Charles Fry:

Yes, Lori, the curse was on the tempter, not upon snakes. While we see an analogy in the form of the snake, snakes don't "eat dust." Satan, on the other hand, was cast down. When the Lord asked Satan in Job 1-2 where he had been, the answer was "roaming throughout the earth... going back and forth on the earth." His wings had been clipped, in a manner of speaking, limits imposed. He became "the god of this world." The seed of the woman crushing the serpent's head in Gen 3:15 is certainly a prophecy of Jesus, born of woman, defeating Satan through death (Heb 2:14-15). I'm oversimplifying here for brevity, but hopefully it makes sense.

Lori Watt:

Yes, and thank you!! I could never understand why snakes were cursed for something Satan had done. :-)

Richard and Jeannie Owens:

Charles Fry: Sorry, but we would like for you to expound more on Satan eating dust (is this that he is feeding on man who was made from dust?) and (2) do we know when he

was cast from heaven? It appears that he still had access to heaven in Job. Jesus definitely defeated Satan at His death. We would like more elucidation.

Charles Fry:

Richard and Jeannie Owens, regarding going on the belly and eating dust, consider this excerpt about the citizens of God's kingdom from Isaiah 49:23:

"They will bow down before you with their faces to the ground; they will lick the dust at your feet." (NIV)

The idea of the "great" people of the earth, kings and queens, being down on their faces (therefore with their belly to the ground) and licking dust at the feet of the redeemed, conveys the same idea as the humiliation of the serpent in the curse of Genesis 3. His head was once in the heights, he was proud and powerful, but because of his deadly lies he was humiliated, bound to the realm of mortality and decay, dust and ultimate failure.

When was Satan cast down from heaven? Depending on what exactly we mean, there might be more than one answer. In some way Satan was cast down to earth at the time of the curse. Jesus referenced Satan falling like lightning in Luke 10:18-20, which may be a figure of speech, urging his disciples to be realistic about what they had accomplished in their preaching tour, but it may be a reference to the fall of Satan when he sinned in the Garden and was cursed to be earth bound (consider also John 8:44). If we read Isaiah 14:12-15 as not only a prophecy about the king of Babylon but also figurative language reflecting Satan's fall, we might understand reference to be about Satan's fall at the beginning. However, it seems more likely to me that the "cast down" in that passage refers to a later event in human history, which is echoed in Revelation 12:7-17. Satan began his heavenly war in the Garden of Eden, as far as our reference points are concerned, and the battle was waged unsuccessfully against Michael and the forces of heaven. Defeat came through "the blood of the Lamb" and "the word of their testimony." So, for our reference in history, Satan fell at the beginning, but was cast down through the blood of Jesus, and faith in him. That is further affirmed by the reference to his rage and warfare against those who "hold to the testimony of Jesus" in v.17. Note that he is referred to as "the accuser of our brothers" in v.10, a role we see in Job 1-2, and Zechariah 3:1. I would understand that his access to the assembly of the sons of God and opportunity to accuse God's people has been curtailed, by the blood of Jesus (consider Romans 8:33-34 in context). Jesus said in a short parable that he came to bind Satan (Matthew 12:29). He did that by overcoming him through death (Hebrews 2:14-15). Ultimately, Satan will be "cast down" one more time, into the lake of fire, Revelation 20:10, when the Lord returns in judgment.

Consider, if you care to read more, the mid section of the article I have posted here: <http://livwat.com/otherlw/angelsar.html>

Richard and Jeannie Owens:

Charles, did you not wish to discuss the second part of the question?

Charles Fry:

Richard and Jeannie Owens I accidentally posted the reply before it was finished. Now it is finished. :)

Richard and Jeannie Owens:

Charles Fry Thanks for spending so much time with your explanation, Charles. We appreciate it.

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thank you, Charles Fry & Butch O'Neal for leading Monday discussions in The Law. This was a very thorough introduction. I look forward to absorbing it more & reading chapters in Genesis later today, Lord willing. In the meantime we're enjoying brothers & sisters at the inge's. 😊

Comment:

Steven Wright:

And, thank you Butch O'Neal!

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

This mornings post was all Charles Fry! Next week will be my effort. Let us pray for each others efforts in this study.

Comment:

Linda Whitworth Davis:

I wish I could share an audio of the discussion today's reading brought between grandfather, Darl D. Davis and grandson, Andrew Wagner. Good stuff!

Comment:

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, Charles Fry! A great introduction! I am already working on next Monday's post!

Comment:

Marc Hermon:

Mosquitos, Angels and Unicorns?

Small children ask the best questions. When were all of these created?

Mosquitos: Probably day 5 or maybe day 6. "fowl" is from Hebrew "owph" which means winged creature and in Lev. 11:20 seems to include insects. They just didn't become "annoying" or what God might call "not good" until the fall when sin entered into the world where they most likely stopped receiving sustenance from plants and began the process of feeding on blood and carrying various diseases that entered the world through the sin of man. This is similar to there being vegetation (Good) before the fall of man and then thorns (Not Good) becoming part of the vegetation.

Angels: Ex 20:11 says everything was created in 6 days. Col 1:16 says that the invisible things in heaven and principalities were created by God. Job 38:4 says, however, that the "sons of God" rejoiced during creation, so it sounds like very early on in the creation week. My vote is for Gen 1:1 included in the heavens part of that verse.

Unicorns: This is the only one that I'm sure of! Ps. 92:10 KJV says, "But my horn shalt thou exalt like the horn of an unicorn: I shall be anointed with fresh oil." The other references point to the strength of the unicorn especially in Num 23 and 24 referring to God bringing his people out of Egypt. Although other versions translate this as a "wild ox" I think science can actually help us out here. There is a critically endangered animal with the scientific name "diceros bicornis" commonly called the black rhino. It is called "bicornis" because it has two horns. The Indian rhinoceros however only has one horn and is called "Rhinoceros Unicornis" Regardless

of the translation the unicorn was definitely created on day 6! Any other type of unicorn you think you might have seen was probably created...in your own mind. :)

Replies:

Charles Fry:

On unicorns... I've read articles about various one horned animals, both modern (the Indian rhinoceros) and extinct. However, particularly because of Deuteronomy 33:17, I think the consensus of translators, that the wild ox, perhaps the aurochs, was in mind is most likely where the KJV has "unicorn." While the animal re'em was unfamiliar to the English scholars who translated the KJV, and for that matter probably unfamiliar to the Greek Jews of Alexandria who translated the Septuagint, the language in Deuteronomy 33:17, in the parallelism of Hebrew poetry, suggests that the animal was bovine, and that it had more than one horn.

17 In majesty he is like a firstborn bull;
his horns are the horns of a wild ox.
With them he will gore the nations,
even those at the ends of the earth.
Such are the ten thousands of Ephraim;
such are the thousands of Manasseh.”

Marc Hermon:

The closer you could move back in time before the flood and before the fall of man I'm sure the more amazing creation would seem. Fossils show beaver like creatures that were 7 ft long and mosquitos themselves were at least 3 times bigger than they are now. Everything was bigger and more robust even though the world seems to primarily focus on the "terrible lizards". It's hard to fathom what creation was really like in light of our current context of what we see left after 6000 years of degradation.

Marc Hermon:

I'm also thinking about the complete and utter disdain some scientists would have if reading these posts. ;)

Charles Fry:

The continued inquiries of science suggest that the world, living things, and the whole cosmos are more remarkable (and wonderful) than we have ever imagined. The early earth must indeed have been even more spectacular in ways the world subject to millennia of sin, decay, violence, abuse, and periodic catastrophic events no longer is. Birth pangs, subjected in hope.

Wendy Range:

I think you would enjoy touring the Ark Experience in Kentucky. While all is very admittedly speculation, it was enjoyable to see the types of animals that could all fit in the ark, and read the theories from the Biblical worldview. The Creation Museum has a room that talks about ideas about mosquitoes, disease, etc. I took pictures of a lot of displays to think about later. I think your explanation of mosquito creation seems right.

Comment:

Marc Hermon:

One further thought. Mankind has confused the classifications of God's creation. Evolutionists claim that fish could eventually become fowl or that animals could eventually become man. More recently, people have believed that men can become women or women can become men. However, I have also heard Christians say that their loved ones have died and become angels. Although I understand this comes out of sorrow or a way to comfort someone it does not make it true. We need to all be content with what God has given us and how he has

created us. As He told Paul his grace is sufficient for us. Change is definitely part of our future but we will leave that up to God. "Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3:2).

Replies:

Charles Fry:

The distinctiveness of mankind is strongly emphasized in Genesis 1, with the use of that word "create." The living creatures are set apart from what came before, including plants, and the human beings are set apart from what preceded. Likewise in chapter 2, the story of presenting the animals to Adam for naming communicated to Adam, and all his descendants, "Adam, you are not an animal." The distinctiveness of the sexes is likewise emphasized in the both creation chapters, and the account of sin's entrance into the world in chapter 3, though humanity has tried many times before, and now in our time, to obfuscate the particulars of being male and female, man and woman.

Doug Twaddell:

I have always appreciated the concept of "kinds." Each reproducing part of creating (plant, animal and man)

Doug Twaddell:

Sorry, I am going to try again when I can type on my computer instead of my phone. 😊

Doug Twaddell:

Ok, I am on my computer. Tough going on the phone. I have always appreciated the concept of "kinds." We are told that each reproducing part of creation (plants, animals and humans) reproduces "after its own kind." Two fish cannot produce a lizard. Two lizards cannot produce an ape. Two apes cannot produce a human. Even though they make attempts to show this process, scientists cannot come up with any real proof. The fact that two things have similarities does not mean that that one came from the other. It just means that the creator saw no reason to make everything absolute and completely different.

Doug Twaddell:

Another truth about the difference between man and animals is from 2:7. God breathed into man the breath of life and he became a living being (soul). There is no record of this happening to any other part of creation. This is a distinction of purpose, character, free will and a part that goes back to God after the physical death. God goes to great lengths to help us understand that even though there are similarities between humans and the animal kingdom, man is not "related to" nor did we "descend from" animals.

Comment:

Charles Fry:

One thing I find intriguing in Genesis 1-3 is the emphasis on food and eating. The creation included what was good for food, and the good fruit was a gift to the created pair of humans. The garden was a scene that included every tree good for fruit eating. Both the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and the tree of life had edible fruit on them. The great lie involved urging to eat what God had not given, in fact had forbidden. The curse of the ground was in regard to food and labor. The exile from the garden was particularly to prevent eating the fruit of the tree of life. These references set the stage for the role of eating in fellowship, sharing sacred experiences, nourishing ourselves literally and spiritually, and the experiences of cravings, lust, greed, as well as the positives of sufficiency, satisfaction, thankfulness, and pleasure in good things.

Replies:

Ginger Hermon:

The great lie followed pattern for cravings of sin. (I John 2:16) "When the woman saw that the tree was good for food (lust of flesh) and pleasing to the eye (lust of eye) and also desirable for gaining wisdom (pride of life), she took and ate it."

Comment:

Kathy Tutterow:

Good stuff....commenting so will see notifications when comments are added.

Comment:

Steven Wright:

Amen brethren! Marc Hermon, I think your points about mosquitoes and thorns are well taken, How about this though? <https://www.google.com/search?q=medicinal+plants+with+thorns&biw=1280&bih=615&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwia9Zuu4aTRAhVmx1QKHRpYCBcQsAQIlg> then, there is this fella . . .when viewed from the side . . .<https://www.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.baslibrary.org%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2Fstyles%2Fxlarge%2Fpublic%2Fbsba100506700l.jpg%3Fitok%3DRNWmnAWt&imgrefurl=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.baslibrary.org%2Fbiblical-archaeology-review%2F7%2F1%2F1&docid=V1lrHD1wuPP4zM&tbnid=dOvITkwJkVlg9M%3A&vet=1&w=376&h=500&bih=615&biw=1280&q=Could%20the%20ibex%20be%20a%20contender%20for%20the%20unicorn%3F&ved=0ahUKEwjegvqO4qTRAhXLv1QKHUoeD38QMwhFKClwlg&iact=mrc&uact=8>

Replies:

Steven Wright:

Because there are indeed toxic plants, I would equate these to the mosquito analogy. But I would take the strength of the (Genesis 3:17 - 19) issue to apply to the complexities and difficulties in the context of Adam's work regarding the plants. Plants which are invasive and compete with plants that you NEED for your food are "bad" in that sense! Certainly poisonous plants are "bad!" But the context seems to point to the increased labor involved in the production of food for sustaining human life. Point being: some plants are bad in that they are a nuisance, others are bad because they could kill you or make you very sick. But those plants that are "mildly bad" (those which are not toxic, but they do get in our way), can also be used as food and medicine. In fact, even some very toxic plants, can yield compounds which can serve man's health! Also, consider how the behavior of animals was changed! Animals which today prey on other animals, must be in several ways now different from their vegetarian predecessors. Comparatively, which would seem "Bad" to our sensibilities? A lion ripping flesh from a Gnu which is bawling with all it's might, while its entrails are being ripped out? Or a lion lazily and placidly grazing amidst the herd of Gnu that have no fear of him because there is no need? And, yet, predators are needed to keep the plant eaters in check. When a species disappears for what ever reason, something else fills the void. There are parasitic plants and animals too! But even these serve a purpose in the way everything works by God's marvelous design. I do not recall God calling anything that he made "Bad" even after the fall of man. It would seem to me that he had built into the creation, ability to serve and sustain us, even in our damaged state. The creation is now much changed! Different than the original yes, but all to the glory of God! Try to rope a Leviathan! You could be badly injured, indeed, if you lived through the experience, you would not "Forget the battle" (Job 41:1,8). Is that "Bad?" God seems to me to be exulting in his creation when he talks to Job! He seems to have a different perspective

than us! I hope this does not seem like a "rant, " just speaking about perspective that is all! If God, through the mouth of a prophet, can deliver a message with dual and even multiple meanings (immediate, long range and ultimate fulfillment - i.e Isaiah 7:14), then I believe he can make everything which was originally simply "Good" still "Good in its time" (Ecclesiastes 3:11)

Steven Wright:

I enjoyed writing this so much that I decided to save it as a document. Guess what? Word would not let me save it with the title: "Bad!" Hmmm! Thank you computer for giving weight to my point!

Linda Whitworth Davis:

Steven Wright my father-in-law, Glen Davis, used the complain about Adam & Eve after a day of clearing brush and thorny locust from his pastures.

Comment:

Lori Watt:

Really interesting comments! Thanks, all!

Comment:

Wendy Range:

"Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished." (2:1) That's it! I like the finality and clarity of this verse.

Comment:

Jamie Ingle:

Gen 2:19 I have always wondered what it would have looked like to watch all the animals coming to Adam and him naming them.

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Considering "The Law," one extremely obvious but important correlation from our reading today is Day 7. God had finished creation. He ceased work on Day 7. Likewise, The Law of Moses taught there was to be no work on the 7th day. (Exodus 20:8-11: Sabbath day instructions)

Comment:

Nick Hermon:

Besides Genesis 1, one of my favorite verses to use when discussing the different "kinds" of bodies God created is actually in the New Testament:

1 Corinthians 15:38-40

38 But God gives it a body as he has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body. 39 Not all flesh is the same: People have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another. 40 There are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another.

Replies:

Steven Wright:

Me too Nick!

Jan 9: Genesis 4-7 (Butch O'Neal)

The reading for Monday, January 9, 2017

The Law

Genesis, chapters 4-7

Chapter 4 is an account of 'firsts' if you will.

(A) The first man born of woman "with the help of the LORD" [vs 1]

(B) The first sacrifices, at least recorded here, one acceptable, one not acceptable. Could this one be the first 'sign' of idolatry?[vs 3-4]

(C) First demonstration of anger which would result in the [vs 5]

(D) first murder. [vs 8]

I like GOD's analogy of sin. As if it were alive! [vs 7]

And that blood is life. [vs 10]

Now Cain was banished and he went out from the presence of the LORD. [vs 11-16]

Cain lay with his wife and began his own lineage. [vs 17-22]

Eve gave birth to Seth, "God has granted me another child in place of Abel, since Cain killed him." [vs 25]

And men began to call on [or to proclaim] the name of the LORD.

I like that Eve honors GOD for the birth of her children.

Chapter 5 is an account of generations.

We see 10 generations, in about 1580 years, from Adam to Noah.

And all began to multiply. We can only imagine the number of the population at the time of Noah.

Chapter 6

The sons of God (descendants of Seth?) married the daughters of men. (descendants of Cain?) [vs 1-2]

Now God saw that every inclination of man's heart was only evil all the time and HE was grieved that HE had made man, and HE purposed to wipe out mankind from the face of the earth. [vs 5-7]

But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD. [vs 8]

Now God would have Noah build an ark to HIS exact specifications and to put two of every kind of creature, along with food for all, in it.

Noah, his three sons, and all four wives were to enter it and be saved as God would then flood the earth, wiping out all living things.

Noah did EVERYTHING just as God commanded. [vs 22]

Chapter 7

We see God telling Noah to also take with him 7 (or 7 pairs) of every kind of clean animal. [vs 1-2]

And Noah did ALL that the LORD had commanded him. [vs 5]

When everybody and everything that God had commanded was in the ark, God shut them in. [vs 13-16]

And the waters flooded the earth for a hundred and fifty days.

[vs 24]

We can see examples of faith in Abel's sacrifice, in Eve's births, and certainly in Noah's obedience to God's commands.

It took about a hundred years to build the ark and who knows the amount of ridicule that Noah and his sons endured while they were building that ark in the desert?

What will happen next?

Well, we can certainly begin to see that some kind of rules or law will be needed in the near future.

Comments or questions on this reading are welcome, and remember, the most important thing here is to read and ponder the scriptures consistently.

Comment:

Kevin Crittenden:

Thank you, Butch! In every generation, wicked and perverse though it may be, God is able to find steadfast men.

Comment:

Steven Wright:

Thank you Butch O'Neal! Great summaries I will chip in more later! For now, "Two Brothers at Worship " eh Marc Hermon?

Comment:

Charles Fry:

Thank you, Butch! Time well spent!

Comment:

Kevin Crittenden:

Do you think that the flood is God's first attempt to eradicate sin? Was he hoping that Noah, as a righteous man, would beget a righteous nation more pleasing to the Lord? I don't think that the wickedness of the world pre-flood was worse than the wickedness of today's world. If God, being omniscient, knew that, then what really was the purpose of the flood?

Replies:

Marc Hermon:

The more I read, the more I feel that almost every story happened for the purpose of pointing us to Christ. In today's reading the thing that made me think the most of this was Lamech's "prophecy" about his son Noah,

"And he called his name Noah, saying, This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the LORD hath cursed."

While it is true that Noah means "rest" and that another son would mean someone else to carry the load for the family, I think there is a deeper spiritual meaning as Noah as another antitype of Christ.

Peter describes Noah as a "preacher of righteousness" who would provide salvation to people through the water. And even more poignant is that Christ himself in Luke 17 says,

"But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation. And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all."

Through Noah's righteousness a remnant of people were saved through which the Savior would eventually come (as Charles Fry said) at the right time. And so Lamech's prophecy of comfort will come true as we escape the curse of this world and enter the everlasting "rest (Noah)".

Butch O'Neal:
Thank you, Marc!

Ginger Hermon:

Marc mentions this above but I had a message typed out already so I'm going to post anyways! :-) I also believe the purpose of the flood was to foreshadow baptism. Just as the Flood represented death for sinful humanity and Noah's Ark provided safe passage and salvation for Noah and his family, so Baptism in water represents death to sin, burial with Christ & resurrection of newness in life (Rom 6:3-5) During these events, water brings forth the destruction of something old, re-creates something new & saves! 1 Peter 3, "God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him."

Comment:

Charles Fry:

1. No. God always had one and only one plan to deal with sin, determined before the beginning of time. Remember 2 Timothy 1:9-10, Revelation 13:8, Galatians 4:4, Romans 5:5-6, Hebrews 13:20-21, Hebrews 1:1-3, Titus 1:1-3.

2. No, God knew very well that mankind after the flood was not going to be different than mankind before the flood. When Noah came out of the ark and presented sacrifices of thanksgiving we have God's thoughts noted:

Gen 8:21 The Lord smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: "Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done."

3. The wickedness of the pre-flood world may or may not have been worse than our current world. God, however, determined that a worldwide cataclysmic flood was a one time event. Jesus observed that the time of his 2nd coming would be like the days of Noah (Matthew 24:37-38), in which people thought everything was normal and then were swept away in sudden judgment. Isaiah compared God's restraint in dealing with mankind after Noah with the restraint God showed in judging Israel (Isaiah 54:9-10).

I do note the language of Genesis describing those days of Noah:

Gen 6:5 ...that every inclination of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil all the time.

Gen 6:11 the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence.

Gen 6:12 all the people on earth had corrupted their ways

Gen 6:13 the earth is filled with violence because of them.

This is not only a quantitative observation, but qualitative. Godliness, righteousness, had almost disappeared from the earth. The "salt" and "light" was barely there, to borrow from Jesus description of his followers. God did a harsh reset, not so much to prevent sin as to preserve righteousness, slowing the progression of evil and giving the "right time" a possibility of occurring.

Suppose we lived in a world in which Da Vinci, Galileo, Newton, Curie, Einstein, and other notable mathematicians, physicists, botanists, chemists, astronomers, etc. had lifespans of about 1,000 years and spoke a common language or at least similar dialects of a single language. Da Vinci and Galileo could still be alive in our generation, just really in midlife. What if such brilliant, curious inquirers lived 1,000 years, and Newton not only facetiously stood on the shoulders of giants but actually was in the same club with Galileo and Da Vinci, and then along come young Edison and Einstein, etc. How quickly would men begin to push the boundaries of

nature, of physics, of technology, of manipulation of life, in such circumstances? What if the names weren't Newton and Einstein, but Lamech and Jabal and Jubal and Tubal-Cain? What sort of downward spiral would a rapidly growing unrestrained amoral population of humans precipitate (consider Romans 1:18ff)? What sort of violence, against one another, against nature, against God, against moral restraint, might have prevailed and filled the earth?

4. Already alluded to above, the purpose of the flood was to reset the world, to curtail the flourishing wickedness and violence that was overwhelmingly preponderant and give righteousness a chance to survive until "just the right time". The flood, like the Law, was not a final solution, but a step in the progression leading to redemption when the time had fully come. Peter indicated that the good news of future redemption was preached to those people before they died in the flood (1 Peter 3:19-20, 4:6, 2 Peter 2:5).

Replies:

Kevin Crittenden:

Thanks, Charles! Certainly mankind is actively searching for ways to extend our lifespans again but without actively searching for moral purpose.

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, Charles! Certainly a clear picture!

Comment:

Marc Hermon:

I can't get past Gen. 6:8 without singing,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U4cZqI16pzY>

Replies:

Charles Fry:

Yes, the first mention of God's grace (favor) in the Bible, a consistent part of the whole theme of redemption. I might have chosen the Statler Brothers version of the song, though. 😊

Marc Hermon:

I was going to but I'm more "old school"

Charles Fry:

Probably a good thing.

Do you all sing the children's song, "N O A H... Noah brave and good was told by God to build an ark..."?

Lori Watt:

I don't remember ever hearing this song before. Sounds like one that could easily get stuck in my head. Bless your little pea-pickin' heart. :-)

Marc Hermon:

Charles Fry <http://www.pleasanthillchurchofchrist.org/songbook.php>

Butch O'Neal:

Marc Hermon I think I may have seen that performance on TV many years ago. My mom loved T.E. Ford.

Charles Fry:

There is another, much more raucous, performance of the old "spiritual" by Tennessee Ernie on Youtube as well. Not sure whether it is more or less old school.

Comment:

Charles Fry:

No one knows for sure what the "gopher" wood referenced in Genesis 6:14 is, but many researchers today think the ancient Greek translation got it right when they rendered it "squared lumber." Not a particular species of tree, but lumber prepared for construction. (NETS) 14 Therefore make yourself an ark of squared lumber; you shall make the ark with nests and shall bituminize it within and without with bitumen.

Replies:

Steven Wright:

So method of construction not species of wood eh?

Charles Fry:

Steven Wright, yes, worked lumber rather than wood from a particular type of tree. On the other hand, those who guess at some particular species of tree have mistakenly presumed it would be some tree common in the Middle East, which is altogether assumption.

Steven Wright:

Right. Topography as well as distribution changed. Good point Charles Fry!

Comment:

Joanne Caffie:

What was the purpose of Cain's great great great grandson making the statement in 4:23-24?

Replies:

Marc Hermon:

It seems weird to me too. I think it might just be evidence of how bad things were getting. He's killed these people and doesn't seem like there is any remorse. In fact, he seems to be sending a warning that God protected Cain with 7 times vengeance and God should protect him with 77 times vengeance. Basically, saying don't mess with me or God will mess with you. On top of that he's already a practicing polygamist apparently. Another thing that I've found interesting is the similar names in Cain's lineage compared to Seth's lineage. I'm not sure what to make of that but it is interesting that the "good" Lamech, Noah's father lived 777 years. I don't know what any of that means but I thought I would throw out some interesting 7's in honor of our Bible study. :)

Charles Fry:

I think there is a purposeful contrast between all the "accomplishments" in technology and "culture" between Cain's lineage and that of Seth/Enosh, which are summarized in the observation that in that time men "began to call on the name of the Lord." Among the accomplishments of Cain's lineage we can include polygamy and the justification of revenge. That business about Lamech helps set the backdrop for the violence referenced in chapter 6, and the name of the daughter mentioned, "pleasant" or "lovely" also helps set the stage for the mixing to come, with the attractive daughters of men.

Charles Fry:

Also the statement justifying manslaughter or murder, along with the fruit of Cain's lineage, set the stage for the mandate in chapter 9 for capital punishment for murderers.

Joanne Caffie:

The light is beginning to come thru the tunnel. 🥰

Butch O'Neal:

Lamech's statement in 4:23-24 seems to imply that since he killed in retaliation rather than in cold blood, that he would not be under the same curse as Cain, and therefore should be protected, or avenged, even more than Cain would be.

Joanne Caffie:

But wouldn't he think that retaliation is more justifiable than cold blood and therefore a lesser sentence (if any at all) should be imposed rather than magnified?

Butch O'Neal:

When Cain was banished from the presence of God, he feared that someone may find and kill him. (We have to remember that people were living some 900+ years) So Cain may have felt that eventually there would come someone seeking vengeance for Abel...? In any event God addressed Cain's fear with: "Not so [very well]; if anyone kills Cain, he will suffer vengeance seven times over." (vs 15) Lamech must have known this, [at the mark on Cain] thus prompting his statement in vs 23-24. I would imagine that he knew that killing someone for any reason was wrong, so he sought to justify his deed. He felt that if someone killed Cain, and that person would have to suffer vengeance seven times over, then, if someone killed him (Lamech) then that person should suffer vengeance seventy-seven times over. This, of course, was Lamech's own idea. There is no indication in the Scripture that God agreed with Lamech, that I know of. Now, when we get to Numbers 35, we will learn about the 'avenger of blood' under the 'Law of Moses,' which did not yet exist at the time of Lamech.

Comment:

Denise Waits:

Any thoughts on the "sons of God and daughters of man", or the Nephilim?

Comment:

Charles Fry:

I totally agree with Butch's suggestion that "sons of God" in this passage refers to the descendants of Seth/Enosh in 4:26 who "began to call on the name of the Lord," and that the "daughters of men" refers to the descendants of Cain. The mixing of these folks after generations of separation produced "mighty men" or "nephilim". Some would say the "sons of God" refers to angels. However, not only is there nothing in scripture to suggest that spiritual beings, such as angels or demons, can breed with humans, that notion contradicts what Jesus said about the nature of angels in Matthew 22:30. Genesis 6:4 is very specific that the nephilim were men, mighty men, and men of renown, but men. Later in the land of Canaan there were Rephaim, Anakites, and a few other names of clans that were considered nephilim. Size and stature to be powerful warriors.

Comment:

Charles Fry:

<http://charlesfry.blogspot.com/2015/09/giants-in-bible-goliath-philistine.html>

Replies:

Ginger Hermon:

Thanks for the blog, Charles. I've been educated. I wasn't aware of the discrepancy between 2nd century B.C. Greek translation of the Old Testament & the Septuagint. We just taught in VBS this past summer that Goliath was 9 feet tall.

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thank you, Butch O'Neal! What a blessing it is to study God's Word with you. I sincerely appreciate your thoughts above and everyone's comments, questions & responses. As I read passages today I was drawn to the following verses: Gen 6:6, "The Lord was grieved that He had made man on the earth, and His heart was filled with pain." Gen 4:7, "Sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it."

Jan 16: Genesis 8-11 (Butch O'Neal)

The reading for Monday, January 16, 2017

The Law

Genesis, chapters 8-11

In last weeks reading we had left Noah and his three sons and all of their wives on the ark, along with at least a pair of every kind of animal, bird, and insect of God's creation. And the waters had flooded the earth for a hundred and fifty days. About 5 months.

Chapter 8

We see that God did not 'forget' Noah. (vs 1)

Not that God would, or could, forget Noah, but the idea seems to be: Now that the flood waters had accomplished God's purpose, the 'process of freeing' all the occupants from the ark, in which they had been saved, would begin.

Now we see that when God sent a wind over the earth, the waters receded. All sources of water had been closed/shut up, and the waters had gone down at the end of the hundred and fifty days. (vs 2-3) Now, soon the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat, while the waters continued to recede. And about 73 days later the tops of the mountains became visible. (vs 4-5)

Now we see that after 40 days, (would that be after the ark settled?) Noah sent out a raven that seemed to have not returned, then a dove which did return, then another 7 days later that returned with an olive leaf. Then another 7 days later which did not return.

Now Noah knew that the waters had receded. (vs 6-12)

Now if we consider chapter 7:11-12 and 8:13-14, we will see that

1 year and 10 days had passed from the day that the flood started and the day that the earth was completely dry.

(A long time to be in that ark, and with the task, it would seem, of feeding and caring for all of the living creatures. It seems that by the time that all were fed, that it would be time to begin the next feeding. I am musing that this might have been a real test of Noah's patience. I can only imagine such possible circumstances.)

And only then did God tell Noah to come out of the ark with all of his family and every living creature that was with him.

God wanted His creatures to begin to multiply and increase in number. And so all forms of life came out of the ark. (vs 15-19)

It seems that the first thing that Noah did after he came out of the ark, was to build an altar to the LORD. then he sacrificed some of the clean animals and clean birds on it. And the LORD,

after smelling the pleasing aroma, vowed to never again to curse the ground because of man. Even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood. (vs 20-21)

And God promised: "As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease." (vs 22)

Chapter 9

God blessed Noah and his sons and commanded them to be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth, and He gave them all living creatures. (vs 1-2) Verse 3 is the first record in Scripture of man being allowed to eat meat. But not meat that has its lifeblood still in it. (vs 4)

This verse causes me to consider vs 10, chapter 4. "Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground." Abel's physical self was dead! It also makes me to think of the account in the gospel of the Roman soldiers thrusting a sword into the side of our already physically dead Lord and Savior and causing a release of water and blood as our Lord hung on the cross. (John 19:34)

Was not this the same blood sufficient to cleanse the sins of the world?

verse 5-6 demands an accounting of each animal, and each man for the life of his fellow man. "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man." I believe these verses to be the first 'rule' or law that God had set for man. Further, I believe this law to be in effect for all of time, because that God has made man in His own image is true for all time.

Again the command to be fruitful and increase in number. (vs 7)

Verses 9-17 covers the first covenant that God makes with man. God first spoke of this covenant in chapter 6:18 and now He establishes it. No more floods to destroy all life on earth. A rainbow in the clouds to remind us of God's everlasting covenant promise. This covenant is between God and all life on earth.

Verses 18-19 tells us Noah's 3 sons, from whom came the people who scattered over the earth.

Verses 20-29 covers the account of Ham walking in on his father when Noah was drunk and naked, resulting in Noah cursing Canaan, Ham's son, to be the slave of Shem and Japheth. Also, the death of Noah at the age of 950 years.

Chapter 10

This chapter is the account of the Table of Nations.

It tells us of the sons of Noah's 3 sons, the Japhethites, the Hamites, and the Semites (Shem's).

Now concerning the sons of Japheth, verse 5 tells us: (From these the maritime peoples spread out into their territories by their clans within their nations, each with its own language.) (We want to recall this verse a little later.)

Now all these sons would become nations that would spread out over the earth.

Verse 31 tells us: These are the sons of Shem by their clans and languages, in their territories and nations. (We will recall this.)

Chapter 11

Now, the first part of this chapter has to do men settling and purposing to build a city with a tower that reaches to the heavens,

so to make a name for themselves, and not be scattered all over the earth.

Now this is not being fruitful, increasing in number, and filling the earth. (Ch. 9:1)

Now at this time the whole world had one language. (vs 1)

What about verses 5 and 31 in chapter 10? Was this recorded after the time of the incidents of chapter 11?

So the LORD confused their language and scattered them all over the earth. And that is why it is called Babel. (Hebrew for confused?)

Verses 10-27 covers 9 Generations from Shem to Abram, Nahor and Haran. And Haran became the father of Lot.

Now Terah took his son and daughter-in-law, Abram and Sarai, along with his grandson Lot, and settled in Haran.

Terah died in Haran at the age of 205.

Comments or questions on this reading are welcome, and remember, the important thing here is to read and ponder the scriptures consistently. (I hope I haven't pondered too much here)

Comment:

Kevin Crittenden:

Thank you, Butch! Your musings on how the animals were fed made me think of God feeding manna to the people; perhaps He fed the animals. Possibly some of the animals went into hibernation so didn't need to be fed. And I don't even want to think about how the mosquitoes got fed. Anyway, Noah and companions accomplished the deed with the help and Grace of God. Matt 19:26 Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.

Steven Wright:

Mosquitoes still today, make use of plant juices, water, and liquids in feces of animals, besides siphoning blood. I think these other means must have been how it was done before Genesis 9.

Ginger Hermon:

While discussing passages this evening w/Marc and Nick I realized I had never pondered that animals had eaten only vegetation prior to the flood. Aha moment for me.

Comment:

Kevin Crittenden:

Gen 11:6-7 The Lord said, "If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. 7 Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other."

I was wondering about the "nothing will be impossible for them" and question what that might be which would upset God. Then it occurred to me that by being so successful, they would no longer feel the need for a relationship with God and become arrogant and prideful. I further realize that in our current society with its obsession with technology, we often have the same mindset - that with time, we will solve all problems. "Man is the measure of all things."

Secondly, who is the "us" in "Come, let us go down. . ." ? Some heavenly council of decision-makers?

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

Verse 6 may be a reference to 'as one' we are much more effective than we are when not working together.!? Verse 7, I would suggest considering chapter 18:1-2 for more insight.

Marc Hermon:

I would assume the same "Let us" mentioned in Gen. 1:26. God is a triune "us".

Charles Fry:

Notice how the phrase "let us" in in v3-4 three times, and then God's "let us" trumps man's arrogance in v.7.

That expression that "nothing will be impossible", actually nothing that they "purpose" (or "propose") to do, which speaks to again human will apart from God, apart from moral restraint. Some of the trends of our current technologies, not only in the areas of nuclear power and information technology, but even more so genetic manipulation, make me wonder if we aren't building toward another catastrophic intervention, perhaps the final one.

It is noteworthy that the names of Noah's descendants in Genesis 10 add up to 70 forefathers of the nations. The Jews saw significance in that, connected to the 70 descendants of Jacob that entered Egypt (Genesis 46:27, Exodus 1:5, Deuteronomy 10:22) with Moses's statement in Deuteronomy 32:8 where the Hebrew has "sons of Israel" and the Greek has "sons of God." The rabbis taught both of these, that the sons of Israel were to be light to the nations, and that the Lord assigned 70 angels to represent the 70 nations (see the angels and princes mentioned in Daniel 7-12).

Steven Wright:

God knew that the worst thing for man would be for man to trust only in himself - so he forced compliance with the dispersal directive which they now were completely contradicting. (Gen. 11:4c) ". . .lest we be dispersed (cf. Isaiah 5:20)

Ginger Hermon:

Unrestrained rebellion against God. :-(The city and tower of Babel were built by people who were rebelling against God, by directly contradicting His command to "Be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth." The purpose of building the tower was to "make a name for themselves", and to prevent them from being "dispersed over the face of the whole earth." (Genesis 11:4) By building a city to not be dispersed, and a tower to make a name for themselves, the people of Babel were defying God. At the end of time the curse of Babel, the division (peleg) of peoples, the separation of nations, and the confusion of tongues will end forever; and the wisdom and love of our great God, even in His judgments, will be understood in a new way by those who have put their trust in Him!

Steven Wright:

Very well spoken sister Ginger Hermon!

Comment:

Charles Fry:

No doubt Noah and family had plenty of work to keep them occupied during that year in the ark, but the design of the ark was surely set up to facilitate the chores of food distribution and waste cleanup. Most animals do have a capacity to exist in a state of torpor, reduced metabolic rate, which would perhaps have been facilitated by general darkness of the ark below the top floor, and the cool that probably prevailed during that year on the waters. <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Torpor>

Replies:

Kevin Crittenden:

I saw this a lot at work. :-)

Charles Fry:

Apparently NASA thinks it might be worth encouraging.

Steven Wright:

Yes, I too can see Torpor, as a factor, brother Charles Fry! I have thought about that a lot.

Michael Rogers:

Why do we have to try to find some "logical or physical" explanation to all miracles? God created all things and by Him we exist, there is no logical or physical explanation for any of that. Those who believe God and His word have faith. All the "logical" explanations in the world won't convince an atheist.

Steven Wright:

The logical and physical exist by miracle and THAT is the explanation! God is over all, Amen!

Steven Wright:

(Genesis 6:21) does mention good for Noah and his family as well as for the animals. Another thing not mentioned is reproduction.

Charles Fry:

I've seen efforts to explain away the miraculous, such as when folks try to say that there might have been a flood and an ark, but that it was a local event, perhaps in Mesopotamia, perhaps on the shore of the Black Sea. Those kinds of naturalistic explanations reduce the miraculous to mythology, with only a hint of historical reality. That isn't what we have in the Bible, and I haven't seen anyone here suggest anything like that. The Bible consists of true stories of real people and real events, historically connected and often verifiable. The miracles are not measurable or repeatable in a "scientific" way, but they make sense and are not illogical. We remember Peter's instructions:

1 Peter 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; (NKJV)

This isn't an instruction to believe without reason, it is an instruction to know and be able to defend a reasonable faith. We have to have a reason for our hope in order to be able to defend our faith to those who ask. Biblical faith is always grounded in what really happened, what God and humans really did.

Remember when Peter spoke to the crowd at Pentecost? We know he didn't just say, "believe it." He presented three important lines of evidence so that they could believe what he was saying. He presented evidence from the prophets, he presented eye witness testimony, and he presented the evidence of what they saw and heard, the sound of wind, the appearance of tongues like fire, and the speaking in various native languages, and he affirmed the physical reality of the empty tomb within easy walking distance. When Paul preached to the Jews he presented similar evidence, from the scriptures, from the miraculous, and from eye witnesses (as in Acts 13:16-40). When Paul preached to gentiles who didn't have the scriptures, he presented evidence from the natural world and from their own history and philosophers (Acts 17:22-31). All of this was reasonable, and intended to inform and persuade. And sometimes reasonable presentation of evidence coupled with devout Christian behavior does in fact persuade atheists.

Steven Wright:

Amen brother Charles!

Comment:

Marc Hermon:

Principle of Uniformitarianism - "The Present is the Key to the Past"

"Uniformitarianism is a geological doctrine. It states that current geologic processes, occurring at the same rates observed today, in the same manner, account for all of Earth's geological features. Thus, it assumes that geological processes are essentially unchanged today from those of the unobservable past, and that there have been no cataclysmic events in earth's history. As present processes are thought to explain all past events, the Uniformitarian slogan is, "the present is the key to the past."

2 Peter 3:3-7

"Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men."

I take this as a prophecy being fulfilled in our times, that there are people who are WILLINGLY IGNORANT of two facts in the Word of God: Creation and the Flood. People who do not acknowledge God's world changing events in the past will not be prepared for His next one.

Comment:

Charles Fry:

The flood catastrophe, with both "the windows of heaven" opened and "the fountains of the great deep" broken up utterly changed the earth, including in some sense mitigating the curse on the ground (Gen 3:17-19, 5:29, 8:21). The "world that then was... perished." The relationship between humans and animals fundamentally changed in Genesis 8. The lifespan of humans dramatically declined after the flood, and apparently precipitously again after the Tower incident (assuming 10:25 and 11:17-19 occurred in conjunction with 11:8, which seems very likely). The history of our earth and solar system is perhaps much more punctuated by world shaking events that modern man has wanted to believe.

Comment:

Charles Fry:

At this point we have read through the first 6 sections of Genesis, and started section 7, with the breaks at 2:4, 5:1, 6:9, 10:1, 11:10 and 11:27, The first five sections, through 11:9, were about God dealing with mankind, and in section 6 the focus shifts to God and the family of Abraham.

It is noteworthy too that Abram left Ur of the Chaldees, to go to Aram and then to Canaan (11:31). The next time Chaldea is mentioned (Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon) is in the prophets, Isaiah and Jeremiah, and 2 Kings 24ff, where the Chaldeans are the oppressors of the Judah and take Jews captive to Babylon. Part of the message is that if God could bring a family out of the Chaldees and make a nation of them in Abram's day, he could do it again, saving the remnant and making it glorious, after the Babylonian captivity.

Comment:

Steven Wright:

Hello all! And thank you Butch O'Neal for another nice summary! very well put together! As to your question regarding (10:5 - 31), yes I believe we can put the dispersion of the familial clans of mankind, subsequent to the Tower of Babel context in Chapter 11. the most precise time marker it would seem to me is the birth and naming of Peleg mentioned in (10:25 and, 11:16 - 18). the meaning of his name given in (10:25) "division" is given in the context of the forced

dispersal in conjunction with the work stopping on the tower. other contextual clues to notice would be the use of the terms. "Nations, families (clans), languages and lands" repeated throughout chapter 10. I was struck with the use of the word "families in (8:19) this morning as I read from my ESV. It is actually the same word in the Hebrew "Miyn" that we find translated as "kind" in (Gen. 1). this word means, "to portion out, or sort" "species." It is Strongs # 4327. In the KJV of Gen. 10, we find the word "families" (the alternate for "Kind" used in the ESV in Gen. 8:19), but here it is a different word. It is "Mishpachah" Strongs #4940. it means, "A family i.e. circle of relations. Fig. a class (of persons) [as in "classification" S.L.W.] a species of animals [or the human species] - but designating family group S.L.W.) or sort (of things); by extens. a tribe or people: - family, Kindred [related to the word "kind" S.L.W.] I take this word to be a combination of the word "Miyn" (above) with the root "Shaphah" (see Strongs #'s 8142 and 8198) - by extension "Shiphchah" with the idea of "branching" that is, spreading out, - a "family tree" if you will.

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, Steven Wright

Charles Fry:

It is also very plausible that the dividing of the earth at that time, around the time Peleg was born, was not only the confusion of languages, which was huge, but may have been accompanied by catastrophic seismic/hydrological events. The earth itself may have literally had some dividing at that time.

Steven Wright:

"The great earthquake?" Charles Fry? Hmmm? Ok!

Comment:

Kevin Crittenden:

"If God could . . ." strikes me as a funny (weird) clause. God can make children of Abraham out of stones. It goes along with being Omnipotent. "If God could . . ." places God inside boundaries, a limitation on who He is. We, as humans, seem always try to define His powers and what He can do and usually (and by "usually", I mean "always") fail. We (I) have a great need to understand our world and there is nothing wrong about that - God gave us a curious mind, as you have said, and I believe it is a gift that we are expected to use to do His Will. I also suspect that we are to use this gift in "loving one another" rather than "trying to define God and what He might or might not be able to do."

Replies:

Charles Fry:

Not intending to question or limit God's ability, but trying to say, there is an inferred message all through the Bible, to doubters and despairing people, especially in the Babylonian Captivity generation, don't despair, what God has done before he can (and will) do again.

Kevin Crittenden:

Oh I knew you weren't intending any limitations.

Comment:

Marc Hermon:

Hey, Nick Hermon, your study topic is "History", and yet Butch O'Neal just covered 2000 years in three posts! Better step up your game! :)

Replies:

Kevin Crittenden:
No pressure there, right?

Comment:

Steven Wright:
I also like to talk about what in population genetics speak is called "the Founder Effect" related to (Genesis 10 and 11). Then as now, certain genetic markers would have been expressed variously in different family groups. these would onl become more expressive (Phenotypically as well as genotypically)

Comment:

Steven Wright:
with the isolation that ensued.

Replies:

Kevin Crittenden:
In true phenotypical fashion.

Comment:

Charles Fry:
The confusion of languages was a huge big deal, resulting in chaos and distrust and the scattering of peoples. Despite great efforts on the part of anthropologists/linguists to explain the origin of language in evolutionary terms, there is no common or credible explanation apart from design. Highly respected anthropologist Noam Chomsky observed decades ago that language seems to be innate in man. The apparent existence of "families" of languages completely distinct from each other seems to affirm the Babel and defy explanation from any other source.

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:
Thank you for your excellent instruction, Butch O'Neal! I feel like an educated student thanks to you & all my good brothers. :-) Very engaging study. I love reading Genesis.

Jan 23: Genesis 12-15 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, January 23, 2017
The Law Genesis, chapters 12-15

Chapter 12

We have come to God's calling of Abram. God tells Abram to leave his country, his people, and everything familiar to him. And to go to a land that the LORD will show him.

It seems that Abram does not even know where God wants him to go. And Abram left, with his wife, Sarai, his nephew, Lot, and all that he possessed.

This is a great show of faith! However, before Abram left, God told him these words:

"I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you;
I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.
I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse;
and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." [vs 2-3]

So Abram headed toward Canaan and arrived there, and the LORD told Abram: "To your offspring [or seed] I will give this land." [vs 7]

So Abram built an altar there to the LORD, who had appeared to him. (This is significant to me, as this is the first account of God

'appearing' to anyone since the time that 'men began to call on the name of the LORD.' Ch. 4:26)

From there Abram moved on and pitched his tent somewhere between Bethel and Ai, and built another altar to the LORD and

'called on the name of the LORD.'

Thus far, Abram is doing everything right, but he winds up in a land toward the Negev where there is a severe famine, and so he went to live in Egypt for awhile, where he feared for his life if the Egyptians knew that Sarai was his wife, so he had her say that she was his sister. Now the Pharaoh had Sarai brought to his palace and gave Abram livestock, men and women servants, camels,

and treated him well because of Sarai.

Now the LORD inflicted serious diseases on Pharaoh and his household and caused Pharaoh to send Abram and Sarai away.

Abram, to me seems to have lost faith in the LORD being able to save him in these circumstances. But God did save Abram!

After all, God had made this great promise to Abram.

What was Abram thinking? We can learn a great lesson here.

Have faith in the LORD even in the most dire circumstances!

Chapter 13

Now we have Abram going up to the Negev, with his wife, lot, and everything he had. He had become wealthy in livestock and silver and gold. From the Negev, he came to the place where his tent had been earlier and where he had first built an altar.

There Abram called on the name of the LORD.

Lot also had flocks and herds and tents, and the land could not support both he and Abram if they stayed together, so Abram told Lot to 'pick a side' from where they stood and that land would be Lots, and Abram would take the other side.

Lot chose the plain of Jordan which included Sodom and Gomorrah. Abram lived in the land of Canaan. Then the LORD told

Abram that HE would give him all the land that he could see, and to his offspring forever, and only if the dust could be counted, then Abram's offspring could also be counted.(Too many to count.)

Abram moved near the great trees of Mamre at Hebron,

Where he built an altar to the LORD.

Chapter 14

Now a war was breaking out between four kings of Shinar, Ellasar, Elam, and Goiim, against five kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Bela. Now when the five kings fled, the four kings seized all the goods, food, and possessions of Sodom and Gomorrah, including Abram's nephew Lot.

When Abram learned of this, he went out with 318 men and defeated the four kings and rescued Lot and the possessions and all the other people.

Now Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of God Most High, brought out bread and wine. And he blessed Abram:

"Blessed be Abram by God Most High,

Creator of heaven and earth.

And blessed be God Most High,

who delivered your enemies into your hand." [vs 19b-20]

Abram gave him a tenth of everything, and gave all that was left to the king of Sodom, except what belonged to the men who went with him.

Chapter 15

Now the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision:

"Do not be afraid, Abram.
I am your shield, your very great reward." [vs 1]

Now Abram was concerned because he had no children.
(evidence of the impatience of man)
Abram feared that another in his household would become his heir
but the LORD reaffirmed his promise to Abram.
His heir would come from his own body.

Abram fell into a deep sleep and a thick and dreadful darkness
came over him, and the LORD told him that his descendants would
become strangers in a country not their own, and would be enslaved and mistreated for four
hundred years.
And Abram would go to his fathers in peace.

On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram and said:
"To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates--
the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, Amorites,
Canaanites,
Girgashites, and Jebusites." [vs 18-21]
We know that God has never broken a covenant, nor will HE!
Abram has built 3 altars unto God in these 4 chapters.

Comment:

Steven Wright:
Thanks Butch! The four part promise!

Comment:

Steven Wright:
As I read the text earlier this morning, I was struck with the thought of how Lot became a man
of great means by way of his association with Abraham. although we know that Lot was a
righteous man (2 Peter 2:7-8) English Standard Version (ESV)

7 and if he rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked 8
(for as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous
soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard);
even the unrighteous reap benefits by association and/or proximity with the righteous, whether
they realize that or not! Also, after God used language as the means of enforcing his will that
human beings migrate and spread out over the whole earth, he continues to use economic
motivation as a means to this end. Lot and Abram combined had grown to big to stay together.
they were wise and considerate, responsible and conservation minded, in the use of the land
and its resources. Staying together would mean the depletion of those resources due to
overgrazing, so they had to separate. This also would become a means for god to receive the
glory for the continued increase of Abram, since he would then have to make use of the lesser
resource - rich land. And of course, the next chapter has the giving of the four part promise to
Abram. God was not going to share the particulars of this with Lot. it was time now for God to
be able to deal with Abram in a more direct way.

Replies:

Ginger Hermon:

Thanks for referencing 2 Peter, Steven. From Lot's example of being rescued we must trust the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials & to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgement. "For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope."

Comment:

Janet Gordon Gentry:

Do we know if all of the land He gave Abram is still belonging to Abram's descendants?

Replies:

Steven Wright:

No it is not Janet. Even though Joshua affirmed that the Lord came through with everything HE promised, the Israelites had still not driven out all of the inhabitants of Canaan. The Israelites were in all of the territories, but it was only later under David and Solomon, that they successfully and briefly held all those lands. Their right to this promise was of course forfeited later because of their idololatriy. They lost their land. After 70 A.D. they lost their nation. Now God's people are the citizens of the Kingdom of Christ!

Charles Fry:

I agree with Steven, God kept his oath and did give the promised land to them, however their refusal to keep his covenant (coming up in 17:9) resulted in consequences that included exile and captivity and dispersion. Even so, and knowing that a new covenant was put into effect by Christ for all humanity, I still would not want to be in the role of an oppressor or opponent of Abraham's descendants according to the flesh. God punished every nation that oppressed Israel, even when the oppression was a rod of divine judgment. Assyria was God's rod against Israel in Isaiah 10:5, but the prophet says "woe to Assyria, the rod of my anger," and then v12 says that once Assyria has been used to discipline Jerusalem, Assyria and her king would be punished. Considering historical outcomes, I think it unwise for a nation's policies to be antisemitic or anti-Israel to this day.

Steven Wright:

Agreed, Charles Fry!

Comment:

Charles Fry:

A couple of years ago I really came to appreciate the powerful story of Genesis 14-15, and the continuity from 14 into 15.

Abraham has been revealed as a man of peace, certainly not a warrior. He avoided conflict with Pharaoh, he avoided conflict with Lot. But he had to go to war to rescue Lot. This was a disruptive and disturbing experience to say the least. God provided counsel and encouragement to Abraham afterward in the person of Melchizedek (King of Righteousness), King of Salem (Salem = peace) and priest of God. After Melchizedek blessed Abram we see that Abram was profoundly affected by their encounter when Abram echoes the language of the king, speaking of "God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth," (14:19,22).

God was certainly evoking Abram's fresh memory of those recent events of conflict and negotiation when he said, "I am your shield, your very great reward" in 15:1 in the lead up to the

promise of great posterity. His shield, as Melchizedek had noted, had preserved Abram through the battle, and God himself was Abram's great reward, transcending the tithe given to Melchizedek and the plunder restored to the king of Sodom.

Reading of God symbolically passing between the animal pieces, it is good to remember Jeremiah 34:18-20 for this ritual as a seal to a covenant, rather like saying, "may this be done to me if I don't keep my promise." God pledged his life to the fulfillment of the covenant.

Replies:

Wendy Range:

15:1 reminded me of how as a parent, we frequently have to reassure our children when they perceive a new experience as frightening. We tell them there is nothing to fear, usually adding that we will be right there the whole time. They can still be paralyzed by fear or even refuse us in disbelief. It is good to think of our Father during uncertain times and situations, remembering He is our "shield and great reward", a mighty protector who loves us.

Comment:

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, Charles Fry!

Comment:

Charles Fry:

And thank you, Butch O'Neal! Your time and effort and words of encouragement are appreciated.

Comment:

Marc Hermon:

It's interesting that God didn't allow Abraham to just go ahead and possess the land immediately but that it would be to his descendants. It seems that the reason is the long suffering of God that the Canaanites had not yet reached a threshold of evil that they could not return from. So Abraham always remained a sojourner looking for a city whose builder and maker is God. A great example of faith and an attitude we should have as we sojourn for this short time on the Earth.

Replies:

Ginger Hermon:

Hebrews 11: By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God....All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth. People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

Joanne Caffie:

Great point Marc as the long suffering of God seems to still exist today for us until the coming of Christ.

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thank you, Butch O'Neal! I cherish studying scripture with you and count it a blessing to search it daily with so many wise brothers & sisters-in-Christ. Very edifying! Abram is the "father of all who believe" (Rom. 4:11). In Genesis 15:6 we read the first specific reference to faith in God's promises. It also teaches that the Lord responds to a man's faith by crediting righteousness to him (Heb. 11:8)

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, Ginger Hermon!

Jan 30: Genesis 16-19 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, January 30 2017

The Law

Genesis 16-19

We are at the account of Hagar and Ishmael.

Chapter 16

Now God had already told Abram that: "I will make you into a great nation" and "all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

(chapter 12:2-3)

But Sarai was becoming impatient to have a child and she perceived that the LORD had kept her from having children. (vs 2)

It is interesting to me that she would think in those terms.

Nevertheless, Sarai purposed to have Abram sleep with her maidservant, in hopes of building a family through her. (Hagar)

So, Hagar conceived and Sarai became jealous because Hagar was despising her now that she was pregnant.

It should be noted here that to be able to bear children in these times was most important to all women. We can also see that when we veer from God's plan, things do not go well.

Now Sarai mistreated Hagar and Hagar fled from her.

The angel of the LORD found her near a spring in the desert and persuaded her to go back and submit to Sarai.

The angel of the LORD told Hagar that he would make her descendants to numerous to count, and that she would have son,

and that his name would be Ishmael. (which means 'God hears)

Hagar gave this name to the LORD who had spoke to her:

"You are the God who sees me, I have now seen [the back of the One who sees me.]"

That is why the well is called Beer Lahai Roi.

The name means: well of the Living One who sees me.

So Hagar bore Abram a son when he was 86 years old

Chapter 17

When Abram was 99 years old the LORD appeared to him and said,

"I am God Almighty [in Hebrew, El Shaddai] walk before me and be blameless.

God told Abram, as He confirmed His covenant with Abram,

You will be the father of many nations, instead of Abram,

[exalted father] you will be Abraham [father of many],

he would be very fruitful.

And their covenant would be everlasting. vs 7

God introduced Abraham to the covenant of circumcision.
Every male would be circumcised. This would be for generations to come.
(This rite, cutting around, was appointed by God to be the special badge of his chosen people, an abiding sign of their consecration to him. It was established as a national ordinance. vs 10)
Now, since the sacrifice of our LORD Jesus Christ, when we are buried with Him in the waters of baptism, we become circumcised by Christ. An abiding sign of our consecration to Him. [Col 2:9-12]

Now any male who had not been circumcised in the flesh would be cut off from his people, for he has broken God's covenant.

God told Abraham that Sarai [perhaps contentious] would now be Sarah [a princess] and that she would bear Abraham a son and he would be called Isaac [he laughs] because Abraham laughed when God told him this. He was already 100 years old and Sarah was 90.

And so Abraham was circumcised at the age of 99, Ishmael was 13.

And every male in Abraham's household was circumcised with him.

Chapter 18

Now Abraham looked up from the entrance of his tent and saw three men standing nearby. He 'recognized' them as from God, vs3, and he wanted to get them water to drink, and to wash their feet, and have them rest under a tree while he and Sarah prepared them something to eat. They agreed.

While they ate, they where Sarah was. Abraham said, "In the tent."

Then the LORD said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son."

Sarah heard and she laughed to herself because she and her husband were so old already. The LORD said, "Why did Sarah laugh, is anything too hard for the LORD?"

Sarah was afraid and lied and said that she did not laugh.

Now when the men got up to leave, they looked toward Sodom and the LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?"
The LORD had purposed to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah because of their great sin.

Abraham was concerned that God would destroy the righteous with the wicked. I'm persuaded that he was thinking of his nephew, Lot, and Lot's family. "Will you Sodom if 50 righteous people are there? No? How about 45? No? 40? No? 30? No? 20? No? 10?"

The Lord answered, "For the sake of ten, I will not destroy it."

Then the LORD left, and Abraham returned home.

Chapter 19

Now, when the two angels arrived in Sodom, Lot persuaded them to come and stay in the safety of his house, but before they went to bed, the men of the city surrounded the house and demanded that the two 'men' be sent out to them so they could rape them.

This is a very depressing story and it continues with Lot offering his very own daughters, who were virgins, to this brutal crowd rather than his two guests.

Thankfully the crowd refused and moved to break down the door to Lot's house, but the two angels struck the crowd blind and told Lot that they were sent to destroy this city, because the outcry to the LORD was too great, and that Lot should gather his family and flee.

Lot's sons-in-law thought he was joking and they stayed behind.

Lot took only his two daughters and his wife. (not even ten people.)

The angels said to flee and don't look back! But Lot's wife did look back and she was turned into a pillar of salt.

How terrible the penalty when one doesn't obey the LORD.
So God destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah!

Now Lot and his two daughters had settled in the mountains and the daughters wanted their line of descendants to continue, so they got Lot to drink wine, and the older one laid with him. The next night they gave Lot wine again and the younger one laid with him. Out of these unions was born a son to the older daughter named Moab [sounds like: from father] He is the father of the Moabites today. The younger daughter also had a son and he was named Ben Ammi [son of my people] and he is the father of the Ammonites of today.

Questions and comments on this reading selection are welcome. Charles reminds us that the most important thing here is to read and ponder the Scriptures consistently.

Comment:

Steven Wright:

Thank you Butch O'Neal! Quite a lot to talk about from today's reading! From me, for now, these: 1st, what Sarah did, giving Hagar to Abram in ch. 17, was all legal and acceptable, according to Man's law in those days. Not saying it was good law, or very emotionally and spiritually smart; not saying it pleased God either, just saying, it was not a concept Sarah came up with outta the blue. 2nd, "the LORD" still standing before Abram while the men, move on to the rest of their mission (18:22), I believe this was Melech YaHoWaH, the Angel of The LORD, a pre-incarnate manifestation of Christ. The only member of the Godhead to ever appear in bodily form to men.

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, Steven Wright! I am blessed by your knowledge.

Steven Wright:

Thank you for your work here brother! And, I especially like being able to read your comments right away on your day!

Comment:

Charles Fry:

Thanks, Butch, and Steven, for your thoughts and encouragement. These chapters are rich in examples of human weakness, God's faithfulness and mercy, the hard need for judgment, and God's deliverance of his people.

Hagar was greatly impressed to know that Abraham's God noticed and cared about her!

I do have a different perception on the phrase "angel of the Lord", and in particular I think Christ, the Word, was manifested once, and will come once more. The expression "angel of the Lord" is found 68 times in the English Bible. If we compare the Septuagint (Greek) Old Testament that was in common use in the days when the New Testament was written in Greek, we find that Luke's description of Gabriel in Luke 1:11 is the same words as the description of the angel in Genesis 16:7. The "angel of the Lord" who spoke to Hagar, and to Moses, and to Balaam, and to Zecharias, and to Mary, and to Joseph, and many others, who struck Sodom and Herod, the same language describes them all, before Jesus was born, specifically identified as Gabriel, after the death of Jesus, the Lord sent his angel to do his work. Jesus himself on the other hand is described as being God's revelator specifically in contrast to the

angels, specifically in his incarnation (Hebrews 1:1-4ff). The angel of the Lord in Zech 3:1-2 did exactly what Michael did in Jude 9. I conclude that "the angel of the Lord" was an angel, not always the same angel, sent by the Lord, Yahweh, to be his representative, the medium through which he spoke and acted.

Notice in Genesis 18-19 the three "men" come to Abraham. v2. "They said" in v5, 9. "The Lord said" in v.13, "I" in v.14, "He said" in v.15. All three "men" apparently rose to go in v16 and the Lord ruminates in v19, "I". Then in v20-21 "I will go down" to Sodom. So the "men" went, but "the Lord" continued to talk to Abraham, v.22ff, until "the Lord" went his way in v.33. We come into 19 and the "men" are now spoken of as "angels." and as "men" v1, 10. In 19:13 the angels said "we will destroy this place" and "the Lord has sent us to destroy it" but remember the Lord had said, "I will go down" in 18:21 and "If I find" in the conversation with Abraham. So the angels who said "the Lord sent us to destroy" Sodom in v13 also said "the Lord will destroy this city" in v.14. Then when Lot is talking to the angels/men, "Lot said to them" in v18, but it is "he said to" Lot in v21 and "I have favored you" and "I will not" destroy Zoar and "I cannot do anything until you arrive there" in v22. It is "the Lord" who rained fire and brimstone in v24. So the one who lingered with Abraham spoke as the Lord, and the two who went to Sodom spoke as the Lord. What the angels do is what the Lord does, they are his messengers, all three of them in this story. The Lord is going down to Sodom at the same time he is conversing with Abraham. The angels are angels but they also speak in the first person singular as the Lord, the three, the one, the two.

<http://livwat.com/otherlw/angleoflord.html>

Replies:

Joanne Caffie:

I have so been seeking an explanation of this context. Thanks to both of you (Steven and Charles)

Butch O'Neal:

Ditto....what Joanne said!

Comment:

Steven Wright:

Thank you brother Charles Fry! I must selfishly confess that I was hoping to flush you out! For years I have heard OF your explanation of this, but never have I actually seen it or heard it! Very thorough, and sensible and reasonable! I am re-submitting the subject to a re-consideration! Again, thank you! You are in fact the only person to date to have really and actually dealt with my question. I really appreciate that! Read the link too folks! Very good!

Comment:

Charles Fry:

LOL. You did spur me on, Steven>

Heb 10:24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.

Prov 27:17 As iron sharpens iron,
so one man sharpens another.
NIV

Comment:

Steven Wright:

Amen brother!

Comment:

Marc Hermon:

2 Peter 2 calls Lot just and righteous and so we don't want to take that testimony away from him, but the environment that he kept his family surrounded by clearly had devastating effects. Lot's wife didn't survive the destruction and his daughters took forms of sexual immorality with them.

Malachi 2:15 says the "Lord seeks righteous offspring". Lot clearly did not offer that to the Lord. The Moabites and the Ammonites would not fall into this category with the exception of Ruth who rejected her people to follow God.

In stark contrast we read why God chose Abraham in 18:19. "For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just, so that the LORD will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him."

Abraham raised righteous offspring to the Lord culminating in the ultimate "Seed" ...the Christ.

Let this desire be constantly in the hearts of every Christian father.

Replies:

Charles Fry:

Environment matters! Since Lot went from being a nomadic herdsman in Abraham's company to being a city dweller who sat in the gate, he must have invested in Sodom, perhaps so much that he felt he couldn't leave it behind. But then he had to.

Marc Hermon:

The reading said "he hesitated" before the men of God literally took hold and dragged them away. Likewise Lot's wife clearly was holding on to it also. On the other hand Abraham continued to be a "sojourner looking for a city whose builder and maker was God"

Comment:

Joanne Caffie:

My question, Butch, in this story it kinda reads like Lot may have had at least 4 daughters; 2 that had not known man and 2 that were married to his son-in-laws. Another story could tell that Lot's daughters were married to his son-in-laws but their marriages had not been consummated (which seems unlikely). Which scenario do you think best fits this story?

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

Joanne, I had heard a lesson from Charles at our home congregation on this subject at one time, and his explanation below convicted me then, as now.

Comment:

Marc Hermon:

Betrothed was much stricter than our "engaged". It was a longer process and much more binding. Mary was "espoused" to Joseph and was even traveling with him to Bethlehem to be counted but he did not take her as his wife until the angel told him to do so and even then he "knew her not" until after the Messiah was born.

Comment:

Joanne Caffie:

But the scriptures tell us that Mary and Joseph were "espoused". In Genesis it says "son-in-laws" which tells me that the marriage has already taken place.

Replies:

Charles Fry:

Joanne, the binding marriage contract makes it legitimate to refer to the espoused men as sons-in-law before the marriage had been consummated. Most interpreters have understood this story that way, that Lot had only two daughters, who were legally bound to two men of Sodom. Your thought that Lot had other daughters, already married, is possible, but I've always understood the story as explained in this note from the NET Bible: (NET Bible Notes - Full Notes) 14 a sn The language has to be interpreted in the light of the context and the social customs. The men are called "sons-in-law" (literally "the takers of his daughters"), but the daughters had not yet had sex with a man. It is better to translate the phrase "who were going to marry his daughters." Since formal marriage contracts were binding, the husbands-to-be could already be called sons-in-law."

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Stop scaring the children! So many times I hear brothers &/or sisters claim we live in the worst of times. I don't understand that statement when I consider Genesis. I cannot imagine living in a time where "every inclination of the thoughts of man's heart was evil" (6:5) or live in sodomy where "sin was so grievous" (18:20). No matter what condition we live in, these examples do remind us to look ahead & be ready for Christ's 2nd coming. "Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all. It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed. On that day no one who is on the roof of his house, with his goods inside, should go down to get them. Likewise, no one in the field should go back for anything. Remember Lot's wife! Whoever tries to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it." (Luke 17:30-33)

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thank you, Butch O'Neal & everyone else. I imagine if we were in person we'd engage in discussion all night long. I thank God for each of you & for the Word! <3

Comment:

Joanne Caffie:

All night long Ginger.... ALL night long 🥰🥰🥰

Feb 6: Genesis 20-23 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, February 6, 2017

The Law

Genesis 20-23

Chapter 20

Now Abraham had moved to Gerar, and there, he said of his wife, "She is my sister."

Then Abimelech, king of Gerar, sent for and 'took' Sarah.

Now, God said to Abimelech, in a dream, "You are as good as dead for the woman you have taken; she is a married woman."

Now the king had not gone near Sarah, and so he plead his case before God: "Lord, will you destroy an innocent nation?"

He said, "She is my sister," she said, "He is my brother."

"I have done this with a clear conscience and clean hands."

Now, God allowed that He kept Abimelech from sinning against Him, but he was to return Sarah, and he would live, (after Abraham prayed for him) but if he did not return Sarah, he and all of his would die.

The next morning Abimelech and all his officials, in fear, confronted Abraham as to why he would put the king in such a position. vs 8-10

Abraham explained that he felt that he would be killed for his wife because she was so beautiful, and that she really was his sister.

He and her had the same father, but different mothers.

And when they left their father's household, she could show her love for her husband by saying of him, "He is my brother." vs 11-13

So the king returned Sarah to Abraham, and gave to him also, sheep and cattle and male and female slaves, and told him that he could live wherever he liked, in the land. He also vindicated Sarah for any

'offense' that might be against her before the others. vs 14-16

Then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, and opened up the wombs of his wife and slave girls that He had closed because of Sarah.

Note: Abraham and Sarah had done this same thing at least once before, (chapter 12:10-17) Abraham apparently thought that this was a good idea.

Chapter 21

God kept His promise to Sarah, and she became pregnant and bore Abraham a son, whom he named Isaac, [he laughs] and Abraham circumcised him when he was eight days old, according to God's command.

Abraham was a hundred years old.

Sarah was happy, "God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me. Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him

a son in his old age." vs 1-7

On the day Isaac was weaned Abraham held a great feast.

Sarah saw that Ishmael was mocking, so she told Abraham to get rid of Hagar and her son, "that slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with my son Isaac."

Abraham was distressed. Ishmael was his son, but God told him not to be so distressed, that his seed/offspring would be reckoned through Isaac, but He would also make Ishmael a great nation,

for he was Abraham's offspring. vs 8-13

So the next morning Hagar was sent off with Ishmael and some food and a skin of water, and she wandered the desert.

She thought the boy would die after their water was consumed, but God heard them crying and he told Hagar not to be afraid,

(I have found these encouraging words to 'not be afraid' about 87 times in the NIV translation. God never wants us to be afraid.)

that He would make Ishmael into a great nation. Then God gave them water and He stayed with the boy as he grew up.

He lived in the desert and became an archer. His mother got him a wife from Egypt. vs 14-21
Now, at that time Abimelech wanted to make a treaty with Abraham, and he knew that God was with Abraham in everything that Abraham did, but Abraham had a complaint about a well he had dug.

Abimelech's servants had seized it and so Abraham gave the king sheep and cattle and set apart seven ewe lambs as a witness that Abraham had dug the well. The place was called Beersheba, maybe 'the well of seven or well of the oath' because the two swore an oath there. Abraham planted a tamarisk tree there, and there he called on the name of the LORD, the Eternal God. Abraham stayed in the land of the Philistines a long time. vs 22-32

Chapter 22

Some time later God tested Abraham. He told him to take his only son, Isaac, Whom Abraham loved, and to sacrifice him as a burnt offering on a mountain that God would tell him about.

The next morning he set out for that place with Isaac, two servants, and enough wood for the burnt offering. Isaac carried the wood, Abraham carried the fire and knife, and Isaac asked where the lamb was.

"God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son."

This test was a sign or shadow, if you will, of the blessed sacrifice of God's only son, Jesus Christ, whom He loved, to pay the penalty for the sins of man.

When they reached the place, Abraham built an altar, arranged the wood, bound and laid Isaac on it, and took the knife to slay him.

But the angel of the LORD called out, "Abraham! Abraham!"

"Do not lay a hand on the boy. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son."

Now Abraham saw a ram stuck in a thicket and sacrificed it instead of his son, and he called that place 'the LORD will provide.'

The angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time and swore to him, that because he had not withheld his only son, and had obeyed God, that He would bless him, and through his seed/offspring all nations on earth would be blessed.

Then Abraham went to Beersheba and he stayed there. vs 1-19

Some time later Abraham was told that his brother's wife had bore Nahor eight children, and his concubine bore four also.

Chapter 23

Sarah died at the age of a hundred and twenty-seven at Hebron, in the land of Canaan, and Abraham went to mourn and weep over her. When he asked the Hittites [the sons of Heth] to sell him some property for a burial site, they told him to bury his dead in the choicest of their tombs as they held him in high regard.

Abraham wanted to purchase the property and so they agreed on a price for Ephron's field and the cave that was in it, and these were deeded to Abraham and he buried Sarah in the cave.

Now remember that the most important thing here is to read and ponder the Scriptures consistently.

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Charles Fry:
Moriah:

Genesis 22:2 (NIV)

2 Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you."

2 Chronicles 3:1 (NIV)

1 Then Solomon began to build the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the Lord had appeared to his father David. It was on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite, the place provided by David.

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, Charles! I wasn't aware of this significance. I found the following in 'New Unger's Bible Dictionary': "The land of Moriah" is named (Genesis 22:2) as the place where Abraham went to offer up Isaac. It is thought to be the same as "Mount Moriah," one of the hills of Jerusalem on which Solomon built the Temple, on the spot once occupied by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite (2 Chronicles 3:1). The Jews themselves believe that the altar of burnt offerings in the Temple stood upon the very site of the altar on which Abraham intended to offer up his son.

Comment:

Steven Wright:
Good morning! And, thank you for this vibrant summary brother!

Comment:

Kevin Crittenden:
Thank you, Butch! A wonderful summary!

Comment:

Marc Hermon:
Gen. 22:16 "I swear by Myself"

Heb. 6:17-18 "Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be greatly encouraged."

Comment:

Kevin Crittenden:
God had already told Abraham: Gen 17:19: "Then God said, "Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him."
So Abraham had this assurance from God that his son, Isaac, would be the father of many nations BEFORE the test in Gen 22. So what was Abraham thinking as he took Isaac up to Moriah? Probably that God wouldn't make Abraham go through with this; that God would provide another sacrifice. It is possible that Abraham's trust in God's promise gave him the confidence that Isaac would not need to be sacrificed. And maybe it is that trust in God's covenant which was reckoned to Abraham as righteousness.

Comment:

Charles Fry:

Yes, Hebrews references God's previous explicit promises to Abraham about Isaac as part of his faith, his conclusion that he could trust God with the life of his son and obey him.

Hebrews 11:17-19 (NIV)

17 By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had embraced the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, 18 even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." 19 Abraham reasoned that God could even raise the dead, and so in a manner of speaking he did receive Isaac back from death.

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thank you, Butch O'Neal, for helping me read and ponder the Scripture this evening! I cherish chapter 22 and the O.T. type (shadow) Abraham/Isaac provides of God the Father/God the Son. Here is a chart that I have kept. There are additional comparisons which could be added but it's a pretty good summary. Another set of verses which we may consider is James 2:20 - 24, "You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness, and he was called God's friend. You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone."

Isaac had a miraculous conception. When he was conceived his mother was an old woman and his father was an old man.	Jesus was conceived in miraculous fashion. His mother was a virgin and he was conceived by the Holy Spirit.
Isaac was an only son, who was greatly loved.	Jesus was an only son who was greatly loved.
Isaac had to be sacrificed.	Jesus had to be sacrificed.
Abraham took Isaac to a hill or a mountain to sacrifice his son.	Jesus traveled to a hill or a mountain to be sacrificed.
Abraham tells his companions that where they are going his companions could not follow.	Jesus tells his followers that where he is going they cannot follow.
Abraham also told his companions that "they" would return to them. So even though Isaac was going to his death, he still said that Isaac would be returning.	Jesus also told his companions that even though he was going to his death, he would still return to them.
The duration of time when Abraham thought that he was going to kill his only son was three days.	The duration of time that Jesus was in the grave was three days.
Isaac carried the wood up the hill that he would be sacrificed on.	Jesus carried the wood up the hill that he would be sacrificed on.
Isaac submitted to his father's will	Jesus submitted to his father's will
Isaac was laid on top of the wood that he had carried and was bound.	Jesus was laid on top of the wood that he had carried and was bound.
Abraham proved how much he loved God by not withholding his only son from him.	God proved how much he loved us by not withholding his only son from us.
Abraham had faith that God would end up providing the burnt offering, he didn't know how, but he had faith.	Just as the story of Abraham predicted, God did provide the burnt offering. He provided his own Son.
This took place in the small mountain range of Moriah. Moriah is the place where Jerusalem would later be built.	Jesus was sacrificed in the same location, quite possibly, on the same large hill.
Genesis says that to this day the name of the mountain is, "on the mount of the lord it shall be provided."	God did provide at that same place.
Because of what Abraham did God said he would indeed bless him with descendents from all the nations of the earth.	Jesus dying at this same place, in the same way, opened up God to all the nations of the earth!

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, Ginger, for the chart and your encouragement. I have only seen this chart, or one like it, once before. This time I downloaded it!

Feb 13: Genesis 24-27 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, February 13, 2017

THE LAW

Genesis 24-27

The most important thing here is to read and ponder the scriptures consistently.

Chapter 24

Here we find Abraham old, well advanced in years, blessed in every way by the LORD, and wanting his chief servant to travel to Abraham's own country to get a wife for Isaac.

He had his servant swear on oath, by the LORD, that he would not get Isaac a Canaanite wife. "Put your hand under my thigh," he said.

(In taking an oath it was an ancient custom to put the hand under the thigh. Abraham required it from his servant, ie, not to take a wife

for Isaac from the Canaanite daughters, [Gen 24:2-9] And Jacob required it from Joseph when he bound him by oath to bury him in

Canaan. [Gen 47:29-31] This custom, the so-called bodily oath, was, no doubt, connected with the significance of the hips as the part from which the posterity issued [Gen 46:26, marg.] and the seat of vital power. The early Jewish commentators supposed it to be especially connected with the rite of circumcision.)

The above info taken from New Unger's Bible Dictionary.

Abraham did not want his servant to take Isaac back to his country even if the girl chosen, by the angel, would not return with the servant, to the point that he would be released from the oath.

So, the servant traveled, with many gifts, to the town of Nahor, and when he stopped to water the ten camels, he prayed to the LORD to show him the right girl. And before he finished praying,

there came Rebekah! She gave him water and she watered the camels, answering the servant's prayer. He then put a nose ring and two bracelets on Rebekah and asked whose daughter was she.

She replied that she was the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Nahor.

(Abraham's brother, Gen 11:26)

The servant then praised the LORD for HIS kindness in leading him to his master's relatives.

Then Rebekah ran home to tell her mother's household of these things, and her brother, Laban, went out to the spring and found the servant and brought him home.

"Come, you who are blessed by the LORD," he said

And so, there at Bethuel's house, the servant explained everything.

Bethuel and Laban, on hearing everything said, "This is from the LORD," and, "Take Rebekah and go, and let her become the wife of your master's son, as the LORD has directed."

And they sent Rebekah, with her nurse and her maids on her way, with Abraham's servant and his men. But first, they blessed her:

"Our sister, may you increase to thousands upon thousands;
may your offspring possess the gates of their enemies."

When they returned, Isaac took Rebekah into the tent of his mother Sarah, and he married her, and he loved her, and he was comforted after his mother's death.

Chapter 25

Abraham married Keturah and she bore him six children.

Abraham gave gifts to the sons of his concubines and sent them away to the east, and he left everything he owned to Isaac.

Abraham breathed his last at the age of a hundred and seventy-five.

Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron. He was buried with his wife Sarah.

God blessed Isaac after Abraham's death.

Now Ishmael had twelve sons, these were tribal rulers who settled in the area from Havilah to Shur, near the border of Egypt, as you go toward Asshur. And they lived in hostility toward each other.

Ishmael breathed his last at the age of a hundred and thirty-seven, and he was gathered to his people.

Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah, and he prayed to the LORD on behalf of her because she was barren.

The LORD answered his prayer and Rebekah became pregnant.

The LORD said to her:

"Two nations are in your womb,
and two peoples from within you will be separated;
one people will be stronger than the other,
and the older will serve the younger." (recall blessing in 24:60)

She gave birth to twin boys, the first, Esau, then Jacob, and Isaac was sixty years old.

When they grew up, Esau sold his birthright to Jacob for some of Jacob's stew. So then, Esau despised his birthright.

Chapter 26

Now because of a famine in the land, Isaac went to Abimelech, king of the Philistines in Gerar. The LORD told him to stay there for a while and HE would give him and his descendants all of these lands

and confirmed the oath HE swore to Abraham, (chapter 12:2-3) so Isaac stayed in Gerar.

Now Isaac told the men of that place that Rebekah was his sister because he thought they might kill him for his wife because she was beautiful. After a long time, Abimelech discovered the truth and ordered that no one molest Isaac or his wife under threat of death.

Isaac became rich in that land and Abimelech told him to move away, "you have become too powerful for us."

So Isaac moved to the valley and reopened the wells that his father had dug and the Philistines had stopped up. Isaac dug more wells but there were disputes with the herdsmen of Gerar over the water, so Isaac moved on and dug another well and no one quarreled over it.

He said, "Now the LORD has given us room and we will flourish in the land."

Isaac went up to Beersheba and that night the LORD appeared to him and confirmed HIS oath with Abraham.

Isaac built an altar there and called on the name of the LORD.
There he pitched his tent and his servants dug a well.
Now it appears that Abimelech feared the LORD and wanted to make a peace treaty with Isaac. He knew that Isaac was blessed by the LORD. Isaac made a feast, and they ate and drank.

In the morning they swore an oath to each other and Abimelech left in peace.

Now when Esau was forty, he married Judith daughter of Berri the Hittite, and also Basemath daughter of Elon the Hittite.

They were a source of grief to Isaac and Rebekah.

Chapter 27

Now Isaac was old and could no longer see and he called for Esau to go and hunt some wild game, and to prepare a meal for Isaac so Isaac could give Esau his blessing before he died.

Now Rebekah was listening and she prepared two goats and had Jacob take it to his father so that Jacob would get the blessing.

Rebekah dressed Jacob with Esau's clothes and covered his smooth skin with the goatskins so Isaac would think he was Esau.

And so Isaac was deceived and Jacob got the blessing of the firstborn:

"Ah, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field that the LORD has blessed.

May God give you of heaven's dew and of earth's richness-- an abundance of grain and new wine.

May nations serve you and peoples bow down to you.

Be lord over your brothers,
and may the sons of your mother bow down to you.

May those who curse you be cursed
and those who bless you be blessed."

Now Esau returned, prepared some of his game, took it into Isaac, and learned that Jacob had deceived Isaac and gotten Esau's blessing. Esau did get the second blessing:

"Your dwelling will be away from the earth's richness,
away from the dew of heaven above.

You will live by the sword and you will serve your brother.

But when you grow restless,
you will throw his yoke from off your neck."

Esau planned to kill Jacob, and so Rebekah sent Jacob to live with her brother, Laban, and to stay there until Esau was no longer angry. Then she would send word for Jacob to return.

Then Rebekah said to Isaac,

"I'm disgusted with living because of these Hittite women.

If Jacob takes a wife from among the women of this land,
from Hittite women like these, my life will not be worth living."

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Steven Wright:

Either Isaac's sensitivity to touch was greatly diminished in his old age or Esau was a very hairy person! One thing for sure Esau never "got it" spiritually; he just could not seem to put those things together!

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

Yes....I've always 'felt' that goatskin might have been a bit much.

Steven Wright:

I think Esau was quite capricious though!

Steven Wright:

Getting a wife for Isaac is one of my favorite stories in the Bible!

Kevin Crittenden:

I agree! Maybe we should follow this particular Biblical precept and choose spouses for our children. Arranged marriages are done in other countries, I've had students who were married this way and all of them are happy as compared to our current 50% divorce rate here.

Ginger Hermon:

Kevin Crittenden -Rick Sparks claimed Marc & my marriage was arranged by elders at Pleasant Hill church of Christ. ;-) I believe it's worked out pretty well & to God's glory.

<3

Comment:

Kevin Crittenden:

Do you think the disgust with the Hittite women that Rebekah felt was because of their devotion to idols?

Replies:

Steven Wright:

yes I think so!

Charles Fry:

There probably were a number of issues that went along with the religious heritage. Different ideas about how to dress, about proper decorum and language, about discipline, family values, child rearing, work ethic, and more. Perhaps a substantially different worldview and expectations overall.

Comment:

Kimra Grantham Robinson:

I think the arranged marriages work mostly because they have that mindset and often no other option. I know of arranged marriages that were dismal failures once the couple moved to the West.

Replies:

Steven Wright:

The most impressive thing about this story for me, has always been, how everyone from start to finish is seeking God's guidance, and putting the important spiritual concerns first. THAT, is why it works! In this family, Isaac and Rebecca's marriage was the only one that was arranged. It was also the only one that was completely monogamous!

AND, because everyone sought the LORD from the start, God blessed them with "love at first sight" and throughout their marriage (24:62 -67)

Kevin Crittenden:
Yup, God knows how to pick 'em!

Charles Fry:
Not that their marriage was without struggle, as in their different favors toward the twins.

Comment:

Kevin Crittenden:
So I'm not seeing any consequence from God for either Abraham claiming that his wife was his sister (actually half-true) or Isaac claiming the same thing. Yet they are deemed righteous. Does this mean that a righteous man can tell such lies? Or were they not considered righteous until later in life?

Replies:

Kimra Grantham Robinson:
There's no affirmation of his actions either. I think the reprimand from the king may have made Abraham realize his sin.

Charles Fry:
I do see consequences for the lies of Abraham and Isaac regarding their wives. These stories ought to be seen as very negative about lying, and especially lying to people who have done you no harm and treated you well, lies told because of personal fear or suspicion.

In Genesis 12:10ff Abram went to Egypt as a "refugee" from famine, and was welcomed and treated well. Because of his own insecurity he created an abominable situation for himself and Sarai. Wonder how they both felt when she was inducted into the Pharaoh's palace as a potential member of his harem? Compounding the problem, Pharaoh enriched Abram on account of his "sister." When God protected Abram and Sarai from their own foolishness, and effectively rebuked the Egyptians for their heavy handed presumption, Pharaoh rightly asked, "What have you done to me?" (Gen 12:18 NIV). That confrontation, which resulted in Abram being run out of Egypt, was a very real consequence. Additional consequences included the subsequent separation of Lot and his people and herds from Abram and his group, plus the bonus of having an Egyptian handmaiden named Hagar in the company for additional adventures..

In Genesis 20, Abraham again obfuscated about his relationship to Sarah (and I'm pretty sure humorous irony is intended to be part of this story, given the bracketing of the promise of Isaac's birth, and then Isaac's birth, and the comments about the respective ages of Abraham and Sarah). Why was Abimelech (probably more a title than a personal name) attracted to Sarah? More likely because he wanted an alliance with Abraham than anything else, but whatever his personal motivation, God warned him off and again Abraham is asked, "What have you done to us?" (Gen 20:9). Once again we are shown that Abraham has wronged people who meant him no harm, that his fear has motivated a lie which was a harm to his neighbors and hosts. When Abimelech again approached Abraham, the episode is still hanging over their heads as Abimelech requests an honest deal from Abraham, reminding him they had welcomed him.

Gen 21:23 "Now swear to me here before God that you will not deal falsely with me or my children or my descendants. Show to me and the country where you are living as an alien the same kindness I have shown to you."

Clearly Abraham deserves this rebuke, this reminder of bad behavior and unkindness when he lied. Distrust and broken relationships are normal consequences of lying, and Abraham experienced them at both ends of the story of his sojourn.

Sadly, Isaac, like many sons, picked up on some of his father's weaknesses as well as his strengths. Decades later, Isaac pulls much the same stunt with another Abimelech in the same area of Gerar. The sacred writer clearly wants us to remember and connect this episode with Abraham's previous folly in Egypt (26:1-2). Despite God's assurance in 26:2-5, Isaac has fears of these people nearby much like Abraham had shown, and lies about his wife. This Abimelech perhaps was less bold or capricious than his predecessor, but he clearly had an eye on Isaac and his "sister" and noticed the behavior when they behaved as lovers rather than siblings. When he confronted Isaac (again, an unhappy consequence of the lie) again the question is "What is this you have done to us?" (Gen 26:10). Abimelech didn't immediately run him out of town, he issued a hands off order, but what developed because of them living in that territory but being distrusted and separate was envy and hostility and mounting aggression until Abimelech did order Isaac to move on (v16). Nevertheless, the quarreling and hostility continued, apparently to the point of disturbance that God needed to again reassure Isaac of his safety (26:23). Once again, when the local residents who had initially accepted Isaac approach and ask for a treaty there is the previous distrust, we didn't hurt you, you treated us badly, promise you won't do us any harm, in 26:28-29. Isaac did welcome them, did show them hospitality, did come to peace with them. Too bad they had to initiate the process when he had all the promises of God on his side.

Anyway, I suggest there were lots of bad consequences from Abraham's and Isaac's lies, brought out in the text for our consideration, just like there are bad consequences for ourselves, for people around us, for relationships, for respect, and so forth, whenever a lie is told.

Kevin Crittenden:

Thank you, Charles! It's comforting to know that there were consequences then as there always are now for our actions when we trust more in ourselves than in God. It is also comforting to know that these men were beloved of God in spite of their momentary lapses. Of course this doesn't mean that we can comfortably sin and scratch our worldly itches, knowing that we can repent later and be forgiven.

But how good, how perfect, does a person need to be to be deemed righteous? And, even as I wrote that question, I realized it's not a good question at all. By even asking that question, I'm looking for the boundary line (to here you may go and no further). This is not the correct attitude. It is best not to wonder if we are righteous; let God sort that out, and just do our best to live according to His will.

Between you and me and the wall, I still have issues of control and letting go and submission and pharisaicalism (is that a word?)

Marc Hermon:

My seven year old asked me how many good things he has to do to cancel out his mistakes so he can go to heaven. I told him the only people that don't get to go to heaven are the people that don't care enough to think about that question. And eventually, you realize that the answer to the question is that God gives us grace to make-up the shortfall in our lists.

Joanne Caffie:

An eye opener for me is that Abraham was still around when this took place (chpt 26) so I'm wondering if he had a little sit-down with his son of the consequences such a lie could bring

Charles Fry:

Ditto for me on the issues and the struggle, except I'll limit my list to things I can spell. And though you and I are unique, Kevin, we are not altogether unique. It is good we are credited with righteousness beyond the "filthy rags" of our own efforts.

Comment:

Joanne Caffie:

Chpt 25:1-2

Was Ketura considered a concubine or was it that Abraham had others besides her after Sarah's death?

Replies:

Kevin Crittenden:

Since Abraham's sons with Keturah were not privy to any inheritance from Abraham when he died - everything went to Isaac - it suggests that Abraham viewed both Keturah and Hagar as concubines. My NIV translation, though, says "Abraham had taken another wife, whose name was Keturah."

Charles Fry:

Keturah must have been a concubine, a servant wife, as Hagar had been. The word for wife in Gen 25:1 is also the word for woman, and translators use either wife or woman based on context. The indication is that Abraham sent Keturah's sons away before he died to avoid conflict over the inheritance, as he had previously sent away Hagar's son, so, "the sons of the concubines" as mentioned in v.6.

Butch O'Neal:

1 Chronicles 1:32 refers to Keturah as Abraham's concubine. Genesis 25:1 refers to this same woman as a wife. NIV Concubine translates to: 'secondary' or 'inferior' wife. According to New Unger's Bible Dictionary.

Joanne Caffie:

I can relate to her being Abraham's concubine and to the similarities to Isaac's situation but that word was plural with no reference going back to Hagar. So I guess I was wondering if Abraham (at this time) had more than 1 wife.

Charles Fry:

There is no evidence that Abraham had more wives and concubines than the three named, the free woman, Sarah, and the concubines, Hagar and Keturah. What Abraham did with the sons of the servant women is a practice documented in ancient records from the patriarchal era. The real emphasis in the opening verses of Gen 25 isn't Keturah, it is the sons of Abraham, progenitors of tribes the Israelites had to deal with. The list of sons (note that Ishmael is brought back to our attention in v9) is presented as complete, both here and in the Chronicles passage Butch referenced. Abraham lived a long time after Sarah's death, long enough to have a second family, but cautious enough to avoid complications for Isaac.

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thank you, Butch O'Neal & everyone else. Engaging study. I am wondering about Esau "despising his birthright." In Hebrews 12 it says he was godless. He despised his birthright by valuing food for his stomach more than his birthright. In Philippians 3:19 it states destruction comes from a deep self-centeredness and setting minds on earthly things. Because Esau only regretted his loss, and didn't repent of his sin, he was rejected. Compromising spiritual blessings for temporary ease in this world deprives us of God's blessing. Worldly sorrow brings death; godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation.

Replies:

Joanne Caffie:

Amen Ginger, AMEN!

Feb 20: Genesis 28-31 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, February 20, 2017

THE LAW

Genesis 28-31

The most important thing here is to read and ponder the Scriptures consistently.

Chapter 28

Now Isaac called for Jacob, blessed him, and commanded him: "Do not marry a Canaanite woman." Isaac told Jacob to go to his mother's father's house and take a wife from the daughters of Laban, his mother's brother. In this blessing, Isaac seemed to pray that God Almighty would bless Jacob to make him fruitful, increase his numbers, and give to him the blessing given to Abraham, so that Jacob could have the land that God gave Abraham. So Jacob went

to Paddan Aram to Laban, son of Bethuel, brother of Rebekah, mother of Jacob and Esau. Now when Esau learned that Jacob obeyed Isaac and did not marry a Canaanite woman he realized how much Canaanite women displeased his father, he married Mahalath, daughter of Ismael, son of Abraham.

Now Jacob set out for Haran and stopped at a certain place for the night, setting a stone under his head and went to sleep.

He dreamed of a stairway reaching from earth to heaven with the angels of God ascending and descending on it. Above it stood

the LORD, and he said: "I am the LORD, the God of your father

Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and

to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land.

I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

When Jacob awoke, his thoughts were: "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I was not aware of it." And in fear: "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven." He set up the stone he had slept on as a pillar and poured oil on top of it. He called that place Bethel, (house of God) though it used to be called Luz. (almond tree)

Jacob made a vow, if God would be with him, watch over him, feed him, clothe him, and return him safely to his father's house, then the

LORD would be his God. And the pillar he had set up would be God's house, and he would return back a tenth of all God gave him.

Chapter 29

Jacob arrived in Paddan Aram, the land of the eastern peoples, where he saw a well in the field with flocks of sheep lying near it, for that is where they were watered. When all the flocks were there, the large that covered the well's mouth would be rolled away and the sheep would be watered, then the shepherds would return the stone to its place. As Jacob inquired of the shepherds about Laban, here came Rachel with her father's sheep. The shepherds wanted to wait for the rest of the flocks before moving the stone, but Jacob was on a mission of urgency, so he rolled the stone away and he watered his uncle's sheep. He had told Rachel that he was a relative and he kissed her and began to weep aloud.

Rachel ran to tell her father of these things. Laban hurried out to meet Jacob and said: "You are my own flesh and blood."

Now Laban had two daughters, Leah, and Rachel, the youngest.

It was agreed that Jacob would work seven years in return for Rachel, for she was beautiful and Leah, not so much.

Now after seven years Laban gave Jacob Leah, not Rachel, which was not known to Jacob until the next morning when Jacob asked Laban why he had deceived him. (just desserts?) Laban replied that it was not the custom to marry off the younger daughters first and so Laban would wait one week before he would give Rachel to Jacob. Jacob would work another seven years for Laban.

The LORD opened Leah's womb because she was not loved.

Rachel was barren.

In time, Leah gave birth to four sons, Reuben, (he has seen my misery, see, a son) then Simeon, (one who hears) then Levi, (attached..?) then Judah, (praise..?)

Chapter 30

Now Rachel wanted children, she was jealous of her sister, so she gave Jacob her maidservant, Bilhah, so that she could build a family through Bilhah. Bilhah bore a son and Rachel felt vindicated and named him Dan, (he has vindicated) Then Bilhah bore a second son and Rachel said, "I have had a struggle with my sister and won," so she named him Naphtali, (my struggle).

Now Leah had given Jacob her maidservant, Zilpah, and Zilpah bore Jacob a son. Leah said, "What good fortune!", or "A troop is coming!" So she named him Gad. (good fortune, or a troop)

Zilpah bore a second son, Leah said, "How happy I am!" So she named him Asher, (happy) Jacob lay again with Leah and God

listened to her and she bore a fifth son and she said, "God has rewarded me for giving my maidservant to my husband." So she

named him Issachar. (reward...?) Leah bore a sixth son and she said, "My husband will treat me with honor." So she named him

Zebulun. (probably means honor) Later she gave birth to a daughter and named her Dinah. (justice)

Now God remembered Rachel and opened her womb and she gave birth to a son and said, "God has taken away my disgrace." So she

named him Joseph, (may he add) and said, "May the LORD add to me another son."

Now Jacob wanted to go home with his wives and children, but Laban wanted him to stay, so they worked out a plan that would allow Jacob to keep the spotted and speckled goats and dark-colored lambs in turn for tending Laban's flocks, but it appears

that Jacob resorted to a little trickery regarding the mating of the animals which caused Jacob's flocks the stronger and Laban's the weaker.

Chapter 31

Now Laban's sons had accused Jacob of taking what their father owned but the LORD told Jacob to "go back to the land of your fathers and your relatives and I will be with you."

Now after Jacob had explained to Leah and Rachel why God had given Laban's stock to him, they wondered if they still had any inheritance of their father's estate, and they reasoned that what Jacob had gained from Laban, belonged also to them and their children, so they encouraged Jacob to do what God had told him.

Now, more accusations of deceit when Jacob left for his homeland with his wives and children, and accusations of theft of Laban's gods after Laban had caught up with Jacob.

Now Laban searched Jacob's tents for his gods which Rachel had taken but he could not find them because Rachel tricked him.

Jacob was angry that Laban had "hunted him down" and told Laban that Laban had mistreated him for twenty years and if it wasn't for his God, the God of Abraham, and the Fear of Isaac, that Laban would have sent him off with nothing.

Laban said, your wives are my daughters, their children are my children, the flocks, my flocks, but what can I do about it?

(God had told Laban not to say anything, good or bad, to Jacob.)

So they made a covenant. They set up a stone as a pillar and took some stones and piled them in a heap, and ate by the heap.

Laban called it Jegar Sahadutha, (witness heap, Aramaic) Jacob called it Galeed, (witness heap, Hebrew) The heap was also called Mizpah, (watchtower) and they agreed that neither would cross over to the other's side of the heap to harm each other.

Jacob took an oath in the name of the Fear of his father Isaac and offered a sacrifice there.

In the morning Laban kissed his grandchildren and his daughters and blessed them. Then he left and returned home.

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Steven Wright:

Thank you Butch! This section has always been a favorite of mine. Several points that I will report in on later in the day!

Comment:

Steven Wright:

Ok, some thoughts! First, regarding (28:3, 4) Isaac was pronouncing blessings upon his son Jacob. here are some note of mine on the topic; I will try it in parts here, as it is lengthy: (part one) • The Lost Work of Blessing

- o Namaste
- o Salam
- o Shalom
- o Charis
- ☐ How does the apostle Paul begin all of his letters?
- o Taanshi

- o Osiyo
- o Aloha

- o The society we find ourselves living in, is a deeply secular one.

- o How are “blessings” (and I do mean spoken ones – more in a bit) viewed in such a society?

☐ Merely as polite speech

- This is not the view expressed in the Bible.

o A question: putting aside that the New Testament reveals that the Gospel of Jesus Christ was to go out to the Gentiles as well – and much of the New testament deals with that perspective – if you had to boil it down to one culture of people to which, and from which the perspective of the Bible came, what would that culture be? A; The Hebrew

☐ For the Hebrews (then and now), speaking a blessing to a person, assumed that God is an active player in the universe, that human words spoken in such a way, are spoken to God and release God’s power for doing good.

- Where did they get this perspective? From God and His word.

☐ I dare say that was and is the Greek perspective as well.

☐ In fact, is the perspective of every culture that abides from ancient times.

☐ It is the cultural mindset of indigenous people of North America.

☐ But unfortunately, it is a concept and practice which has been murdered by the modern world.

Comment:

Steven Wright:

(part two) o Consider the book of Ruth:

☐ It is a book that is permeated with words of blessing.

- Ten different times in the book, different people or groups, bless one another.

• I think there is a pretty strong suggestion by the author of the book of Ruth, that we should see we are supposed to know something about blessings.

- This is true of the whole Bible.

o The Western/Modern world is perhaps more familiar with the concept of negative blessings, which in reality are actually curses.

☐ A curse is a prayer that something would go wrong.

☐ It uses the power of words to try to destroy.

o A blessing, however, uses the power of words to create.

☐ It is a prayer, a request for God in his mysterious way to bring good into another person's life!

o A blessing (or a curse) assumes that:

☐ (1) words have power.

☐ (2) our world is connected in unseen ways.

• Discouragement so often colors our lives.

o In the face of discouragement, a blessing is an encouragement.

o Jesus often encouraged people before he healed them.

☐ Before he brought the widow of Nain's son back to life, (Luke 7:13), he encouraged her with, "Do not weep."

• A blessing isn't just feel-good words.

o A blessing is not just a way of being polite.

o A blessing is divine energy doing work.

o A blessing is providing a gift to someone, that we, the giver, cannot afford.

o A blessing, bridges the gap between my large desire and my small ability.

o A blessing connects the person blessed with God's largest of desire and greatest of ability.

o A blessing DOES something.

o A blessing is the leading edge of love.

Comment:

Steven Wright:

(Part three) • The how and why of blessing is opaque

o Because of this, it is easy for us to diminish its working by chalking it up to "luck" or "talent."

☐ Because we can't see the cause, we assume that there is none.

• But all of the best things in life are like this:

o Love, hope, etc... ALL unseen!

o So it is with the presence of God

☐ (Psalm 77:19)

Psalm 77:19

English Standard Version (ESV)

19 Your way was through the sea,

your path through the great waters;
yet your footprints were unseen.[a]

Footnotes:

a. Psalm 77:19 Hebrew unknown

• Jesus told Nicodemus and he tells us, that God's activity is like the wind he even demonstrated this to his apostles
John 3:8 English Standard Version (ESV)

8 The wind[a] blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Footnotes:

• John 3:8 The same Greek word means both wind and spirit

John 20:22

And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

- o Spirit/wind and the triune God.
- o Spirit/wind and the triune man.
- o The Native American concept

[?] You breathe your blessing, your prayer into the winds, and the winds take them where you want them to go.

Comment:

Steven Wright:

(part four) • We don't take blessing seriously because in the eighteenth-century

o Became the age of "Enlightenment" which has divided the world into non-real spiritual, and real physical:

[?] If you can't measure something, then it isn't real.

• God might as well be Santa Claus or Frosty the snowman.

• And blessings are then relegated to being nothing more than happy thoughts that we send in someone's direction.

o If there is no God (atheism) or God is distant (deism), then blessings ARE nothing more than meaningless talk.

o But if God IS a sovereign and loving God shaping our lives, then to bless someone is to pray that God's power would come into their lives.

• A suggestion: STOP SAYING "Goodbye"

- o Do you know where that phrase comes from?
- ❓ Before the demise of Christian thought as the prevailing influence of the spoken cultural mindset, we used to bless each other regularly – we would say “God be with you!”
 - This was shortened to the secular “Goodbye”
 - o Or the even shorter, just plain “bye”
 - So, don’t say “goodbye” or, “bye” but say instead, “God be with you!”
 - This is life, not Oprah, we are talking about here; this is the real.
 - o Blessings are not warm words to make someone feel better.
 - o A blessing is asking the real and living God to act, to incarnate.
 - o A blessing is an act of mini-creation.
 - o Think of a blessing as mimicking the Creator, in calling for things for things that are not yet (that’s what “create” means).
 - o It is more than wishing – it is invoking the goodness of God to be made manifest – and to be the instruments in his hands to manifest it.
 - To have the courage to move out boldly in strength and effectiveness, is to know that God’s blessing is real.
 - o In this way, we, and those we bless, and those who bless us, will be able to face the most overwhelming of life’s circumstances.
 - This should be a daily part of our experience no matter where we are or who we are with – but being with the saints wherever and whenever they are assembled together, is the best place for the giving and receiving of blessings.

Replies:

Butch O’Neal:
Thank you, Steve! I needed this!

Steven Wright:
Butch O’Neal typing up a bit on the Mandrakes now.

Steven Wright:
Butch O’Neal May the LORD indeed bless, defend, deliver and protect you brother!

Comment:

Steven Wright:
Now, on to the mandrakes!

Comment:

Steven Wright:
(Genesis 30:14 - 19 - 21) A member of the potato family Solanaceae (which also includes of course the deadly Nightshade). It bears potato-like bluish/violet flowers, which are usually kind of bell- shaped. These flowers are followed by a globe-shaped berry (fruit). the mandrake in

this text is probably Mandragora officinarum, locally referred to as "devil's apples" because of their "love potion" reputation. They are yellow and pulpy, usually about the size of a plum. They are said to have exhilarating aphrodisiac qualities and it is believed in the East that they stimulate fertility in women. it still grows commonly today, especially around the lower ranges of Mount Hermon.

Replies:

Steven Wright:

One thing I have wondered about?since Leah "hires" Jacob for the night with the fee of Reuben's mandrakes being paid to Rachel (In the hopes of boosting her fertility), does this all imply, that the reason Leah had stopped conceiving was due to a lack of sexual attention from Jacob? He was "busy" with the concubines during this interim! Just makes me wonder if Leah was being left neglected in this regard for a time, and that is why she left off from bearing children for a bit? any thoughts? anyone?

Steven Wright:

Regarding chapter 31 and the spotted sheep; there is a variety still today, which supposedly traces its lineage back to these of Jacob's

Steven Wright:

<http://www.jsba.org/history.htm>

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thanks, Butch O'Neal! As always, excellent summary. I really do love the verse in Genesis 29:20 when it states that Jacob served for 7 (14) years to marry Rachel, but they seemed like only a few days because of his love. Thankfully, because of Jacob's love for Rachel and his stronger faith, he helped to purify her character & raise noble sons who had great reverence for the Lord. That's a great love story.

Comment:

Charles Fry:

The stairway to heaven.

Genesis 28:12 (HCSB)

12 And he dreamed: A stairway was set on the ground with its top reaching heaven, and God's angels were going up and down on it.

The Lord at that confirmed the covenant promises to Jacob, as he had done previously with Abraham and Isaac.

John 1:51 (HCSB)

51 Then He said, "I assure you: You will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

Jesus identified himself with the stairway between heaven and earth, the one way to the Father, the one mediator between God and man; and also identified himself with the fulfillment of the covenant blessings God had promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Feb 27: Genesis 32-35 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, January 27, 2017

THE LAW

Genesis 32-35

The most important thing here is to read and ponder the Scriptures consistently.

Chapter 32

Now when Jacob and Laban had parted and went their own way, angels of God met him. When he seen them he said, "This is the camp of God!" He named that place Mahanaim. (two camps)

Jacob sent messengers to tell Esau that he had been staying with Laban until now and that he had cattle, donkeys, sheep, goats, and men and maidservants, and he hoped to find favor in Esau's eyes.

The messengers returned to tell him that Esau was coming to meet him with four hundred men. Jacob was fearful of Esau, so he separated his people and livestock into two groups so that if Esau attacked one, the other could escape. Then Jacob prayed to God to

save him from Esau, and reminded Him of His promise:

"your descendants will be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be counted." He then selected a gift of over 500 animals from his herds

and sent his servants ahead of him with them, with instructions to tell Esau, when he arrived, that they were a gift from Jacob, who is coming behind them. Jacob hoped to pacify and soften his brother

Esau, so that he might be well-received.

That night Jacob sent his family and all of his possessions across the ford of the Jabbok, and he was left alone.

Now a man wrestled with Jacob until daybreak and could not overpower him so the man wrenched Jacob's hip by touching his hip socket, and the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak."

Jacob said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me."

The man asked, "What is your name?" "Jacob," he answered.

The man told him his name would not be Jacob, but Israel, (he struggles with God) because he had struggled with God and men and had overcome. And the man blessed him there.

Jacob called the place Peniel (face of God) "because I saw God face to face and my life was spared." He limped because of his hip.

To this day Israelites do not eat tendons attached to the hip socket.

Chapter 33

So Jacob met Esau and Esau was glad to see him, and Jacob was thankful that Esau seemed pleased with him. Jacob likened seeing Esau's face to seeing the face of God, (remember in 32:30 Jacob said he had seen God 'face to face'. Perhaps he may have been reminded of that encounter.) and Esau accepted Jacob's gift, thereby effectively 'sealing' their friendship.

Esau wanted to travel with Jacob to Seir, (rough, hairy) but Jacob convinced Esau that he would have to travel much slower because of his children and still nursing animals. So Esau went ahead.

Jacob however, went to Succoth (shelters) and built a place for himself and shelters for his livestock. Later, he arrived at Shechem in Canaan and camped. He bought a plot of ground, pitched his tent, and set up an altar. He named it El Elohe Israel.

(God, the God of Israel or mighty is the God of Israel)

Chapter 34

Now Dinah, borne to Jacob by Leah, was out visiting the women of the land when she was seen, taken, and violated by Shechem son of Hamor the Hivite. Shechem loved her and asked

his father to get her for his wife. Hamor pleaded with Jacob to give Dinah to Shechem for his wife, but Jacob's sons were filled with grief and fury by what had been done to their sister. Hamor enticed Jacob by opening the land to them, but the brothers would only give consent if all the males in the land would become circumcised.

(There was deceit in these words) At the urging of Hamor, all of the men agreed and were circumcised. Three days later, while the men were still in pain, Simeon and Levi attacked and killed every male in the city, took Dinah from Shechem's house and the sons of Jacob looted the city, taking with them all of their livestock, their wealth, and their women and children. Jacob was concerned,

"You have brought trouble on me by making me a stench to the Canaanites and Perizzites, the people living in this land."

Jacob feared that his household would be attacked and destroyed.

Simeon and Levi replied, "Should he have treated our sister like a prostitute?"

Chapter 35

God told Jacob to go to Bethel and to settle there and build an altar to God, who appeared to you when you were fleeing from Esau.

So Jacob told his household and all who were with him to get rid of all their foreign gods and to purify themselves, so they could go to Bethel, where Jacob would build an altar to God, who had answered him in his day of distress and who had been with him wherever he had gone. So the foreign gods and the rings in their ears were collected and Jacob buried them under the oak at Shechem.

When they set out, the terror of God fell upon the towns all around them so that no one pursued them. Jacob built an altar where God had revealed Himself to him when he was fleeing Esau.

He called that place El Bethel (God of Bethel)

Rebekah's nurse, Deborah, died and was buried under the oak below Bethel. It was named Allon Bacuth. (oak of weeping)

After Jacob returned from Paddan Aram, God appeared and blessed him and changed his name from Jacob to Israel.

God told him, "I am God Almighty; be fruitful and increase in number." God told him that nations and kings would come from his body, and that he would have the land given to Abraham and Isaac.

And his descendants after him. Then God went up from him.

Jacob set up a stone pillar at that place, and poured out a drink offering and oil on it. Jacob called the place where God had talked to him Bethel. (house of God)

They moved on from Bethel and Rachel began to give birth with great difficulty. As she breathed her last, she named her son Ben-Oni. (son of my trouble) But Jacob named him Benjamin.

(son of my right hand) Rachel was buried on the way to Ephrath, where Jacob set up a pillar which marks her tomb to this day.

Israel moved on and set up a tent, where Reuben went in and slept with Bilhah, Israel's concubine and Israel heard of it.

Jacob had twelve sons: six with Leah, two with Bilhah, two with Zilpah, two with Rachel. These were born in Paddan Aram.

Jacob came home to his father Isaac in Mamre. Isaac lived 180 years and he died, and Esau and Jacob buried him with his people, old and full of years.

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Marc Hermon:

Even Rachel's death in childbirth near Bethlehem is prophetic of the coming Savior.

Jeremiah 31:15 says...This is what the LORD says: "A voice is heard in Ramah, mourning and great weeping, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more."

This of course is used again in Matt. 2:18 as a prophecy of Rachel weeping for the lost children as Herod tried to kill Jesus.

Comment:

Charles Fry:

That correlation between seeing "the face of God" in 33 and 34 has made me suspect that the face of the angel Jacob wrestled with was his own face, reflected in the face of his fraternal twin Esau. Jacob's most persistent "opponent" was his own scheming competitiveness. Also in these chapters Jacob's three eldest sons let him down, jeopardizing his family from within and without.

Hosea 12:3-5

3 In the womb he grasped his brother's heel;
as a man he struggled with God.

4 He struggled with the angel and overcame him;
he wept and begged for his favor.

He found him at Bethel
and talked with him there—

5 the Lord God Almighty,
the Lord is his name!

Replies:

Steven Wright:
Whoa!

Roman Roger Mallari Wanasen:
HMMMM let me think abt that manong Charles....

Ginger Hermon:
Charles Fry- You definitely stirred me to read this over again. Thanks for bringing to attention Hosea.

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thank you, Butch O'Neal! It's a great blessing to study with you & everyone else. After reading these passages I was thinking about how important names are and the deep meaning for each in the Bible. The Lord acknowledged Jacob as His servant and changed his name. Here the nation of Israel got her name and her characterization: people who struggle with God (Israel) and with men (Jacob) and have overcome. You mentioned this above but I've just been ruminating it. (Steven - I'm still using this word from your instruction after the 2 week mtg in 2014 :-))

Comment:

Steven Wright:

I am praying Ginger, that you "cud" keep up the practice, as it is very good for you!

Mar 6: Genesis 36-39 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, March 6, 2017

THE LAW

Genesis 36-39

The most important thing here is to read and ponder the Scriptures consistently.

Chapter 36

Now Esau took three Canaanite wives who bore him five sons in Canaan. Adah bore Eliphaz, Basemath bore Reuel, and Oholibamah bore Jeush, Jalam, and Korah.

Esau moved all of his family, household, goods and livestock some distance from Jacob, as both men had possessions too great for the land to support them all. So Esau (Edom) settled in the hill country of Seir. Now Eliphaz had six sons: Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam, Kenaz, and Amalak. Reuel had four sons: Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah.

Chief@ 'cupbearer', 'officer', 'priest', 'minister'. etc. Also head of Edomite divisions. "leader of a thousand" (New Unger's Bible Dictionary)

These were the chiefs among Esau's descendants:

All six of Eliphaz' sons. All four of Reuel's sons. And the three sons of Oholibamah.

Verses 20-30: The sons, wives, and chiefs of Esau the Horite.

Kings who reigned in Edom before any Israelite king:

Bela son of Beor, Jobab son of Zerah, Husham, Hadad, Samlah, Shaul, Baal-Hanan, and Hadad.

These were the chiefs descended from Esau:

Timna, Alvah, Jetheth, Oholibama, Elah, Pinon, Kenaz, Teman, Mibzar, Magdiel, and Iram. These were the chiefs of Edom.

Chapter 37

Now Joseph was a young man of seventeen years, the eleventh son of Jacob, who tended flocks with his brothers. His brothers hated him because Jacob loved him more. Now Joseph had dreams

that suggested that he would someday rule over his brothers and his parents, and when he shared them, his brothers sought to get rid of him. So they plotted to kill him, but instead, sold him to a band

of Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt. Meanwhile, the brothers had slaughtered a goat and soaked the ornamented robe, that Jacob had made for Joseph, in its blood, and told Jacob that they had

found it, and thereby deceived their father into concluding that his eleventh son had been killed by a wild animal.

Meanwhile the Midianites (Ishmaelites) sold Joseph to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard.

Potiphar ("whom Re," i.e., the sun-god "has given,")

Unger's New Bible Dictionary.

Chapter 38

Now at this time, Judah left his brothers, met and married a woman who bore him three sons, named Er, Onan, and Shelah.

Judah got a wife for Er, whose name was Tamar.

The LORD put Er to death because Er was wicked in HIS sight.

Judah told Onan to fulfill his duty as a brother-in-law, and lie with Tamar to produce offspring for his brother, but Onan spilled his seed on the ground to keep from producing offspring. This was wicked in the LORD's sight, so he was put to death also. Now Shelah was just a boy, so Tamar went to live in her father's house. A long time later, Judah's wife died and Judah grieved. Afterward he went up to shear his sheep at Timnah. When Tamar was told this, she shed her widow's clothes, disguised herself with a veil, and sat at the entrance to Enaim, which is on the road to Timnah, for she saw that Shelah was now grown and she had not been given to him as a wife. She looked like a prostitute to Judah and he asked her to sleep with him. "What will you give me?" "I'll send you a young goat." "Give me a pledge until then." "What pledge should I give you?" "Your seal with its cord and the staff in your hand." So he did, and slept with, and impregnated her. She left and put her widow's clothes back on and when Judah sent the young goat, Tamar was not to be found. Later, Judah was told that Tamar was guilty of prostitution and pregnant. Judah was going to burn her to death but she showed him his pledge and told him that he was the father. Judah said, "She is more righteous than I, since I wouldn't give her to my son Shelah." Tamar gave birth to twin boys, one who put his hand out first, (and the midwife tied a scarlet thread on his wrist) but came out last. The first, Perez, ("breach") then Zerah. ("dawning, rising, shining").

Chapter 39

Now we will see that the LORD was always with Joseph, and that Joseph trusted and loved the LORD always, as we study him over the remaining chapters of Genesis. Joseph prospered and lived in Potiphar's house. Potiphar could see that the LORD was with Joseph, so he entrusted everything he owned to Joseph's care, concerning himself only with what he ate. Now Joseph was desirable to Potiphar's wife and she wanted to go to bed with him. (I think that she may have been young, and that Potiphar may have been older and too busy with his duties, as the commander of the guard, to pay enough attention to his bride.) Of course, Joseph refused. His concern was: "How could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?" Not that he wasn't concerned about sinning against his master. Now Potiphar's wife persisted with her desire for Joseph. Day after day she spoke to him about it, but he refused. One day she caught him by his cloak, but he slipped out of it, and so she used his cloak as 'evidence' that he had intended to "make sport" of her and convinced her husband, who put Joseph in prison. But while Joseph was in prison, the LORD was with him. Now the prison warden could also see that the LORD was with Joseph, so Joseph was put in charge of all the prisoners, and made responsible for all that was done there. Now we can see that Joseph's duties in Potiphar's house certainly was helpful in preparing him for these responsibilities given to him in prison. It seems that he was still a young man at this point. Do you think that he realized yet, that God had a plan for him? The warden, like Potiphar, paid no attention to anything under Joseph's care, because the LORD gave Joseph success in everything that he did. The LORD was with Joseph!

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Kevin Crittenden:

Could Judah have married Tamar when he found he was the father?

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

I found nothing in the Law that wouldn't have allowed that, except his own actions, that he defiled her when he slept with her, believing that she was a prostitute. I'm sure that he felt unworthy. "She is more righteous than I". Then we have to wonder why he didn't give her to Shelah for a wife. This, under the Law, I believe, may be a violation. If so, then for Judah to take her as his wife, would be wrong. Other thoughts?

Marc Hermon:

Technically, the Law of Moses had not been established yet although I think large parts of laws given to the patriarchs by God eventually became codified with Moses. Marrying Tamar would be like marrying his daughter and would have been wrong, although he was wrong in the first place by marrying a Canaanite woman. Did he worship her gods? Some of the psuedopigraphical books say that Er was trying to avoid having children with Tamar because she wasn't Canaanite and he was being influenced by his mother. Clearly his sons were not raised correctly. The law of "Levirate" marriage was established under Moses but was already being practiced here and probably dictated by God. Onan didn't respect this law of God either and was put to death because of it. Judah was then again guilty for not following through and giving his third son to Tamar as he promised and was required to do according to the Levirate law. Judah was again guilty engaging in fornication with who he thought was a prostitute.

The point of all of this is that only God can take such an awful situation and despite the disgracefulness of our sin provide salvation. Through this unholy union of Judah and Tamar came the most holy and righteous of all offspring...Jesus Christ our Lord.

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, Marc!

Charles Fry:

When the Law of Moses was written, it was forbidden for a man to take his daughter in law as wife, or have sex with her, which is consistent with civil laws already on the books. The Law Code of Hammurabi was inscribed on stone in the days of the Patriarchs, in the region Abraham came from. One provision of that code said: 155] If a man betroth a girl to his son, and his son have intercourse with her, but he (the father) afterward defile her, and be surprised, then he shall be bound and cast into the water (drowned).

"Surprised" = caught. In the eyes of his "civilized" contemporaries, Judah had committed a capital offense by defiling his son's wife. Of course, he thought she was a prostitute at the time, but he had no legitimate recourse to continuing having sex with her, in the eyes of the world he lived in.

On the other hand, this is the fourth mention of sins of Jacob's four oldest sons. Reuben defiled his father's bed, Simeon and Levi broke their father's oath and their own when they slaughtered the Shechemites. While Judah's sin is grave, it is not in the

same category of rebellion against his father's authority, and we see the rights of the firstborn passing to him (though Jacob preferred Joseph, and his son Ephraim).

Charles Fry:

Reference in the Law, consistent with the older code of Hammurabi, Leviticus 20:12 (NASB)

12 If there is a man who lies with his daughter-in-law, both of them shall surely be put to death; they have committed incest, their bloodguiltiness is upon them.

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, Charles!

Comment:

Marc Hermon:

I wonder if Esau's wife, Basemath was base 10 or base 2 or maybe even hexadecimal?

Replies:

Kevin Crittenden:

She may have been a daughter of one of the Octalites.

Marc Hermon:

The Octalite people were very rare. Never found much purpose in life. I wonder what the base of the Octalites ate?

Kevin Crittenden:

Maybe they became the American Indians. Then they had a papoose in life.

LuAnn Woody:

Great exchange! Thanks!

Kevin Crittenden:

This is a top-notch educational thread, LuAnn!

Mar 13: Genesis 40-43 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, March 13, 2017

THE LAW

Genesis 40-43

The most important thing here

is to read and ponder the scriptures consistently.

Chapter 40

Last week we left Joseph in prison, but in very good hands!

"The LORD was with Joseph" (39:2, 21, and 23)

Now it should be apparent to the reader that Joseph knew this.

At such a young age, Joseph did not despair over the situations that he found himself in, and God gave him success in all he did.

I am reminded of Job 1:22. After Job had lost everything,

for no apparent reason to him, the passage tells us that,

"In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing."

Now some time later, the cupbearer and baker were imprisoned for offending the Pharaoh, where they were assigned to Joseph, and he attended them.

After they had been in custody for some time, (they and Joseph probably became familiar and comfortable with each other.)
the cupbearer and baker had troubling dreams, and Joseph saw their sadness the next morning and asked them about it.
"We both had dreams, but there is no one to interpret them."
Then Joseph said, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell me your dreams." So, they told Joseph their dreams.
First the cupbearer, and Joseph told him that Pharaoh would reinstate him, but when you are released, please mention me to the Pharaoh and get me out of here.
Then the baker, and he liked the interpretation that Joseph gave to the cupbearer, but the interpretation for the baker was that he would be executed and these things would happen in three days.
Three days later, the cupbearer was restored and the baker was hanged. Now, the cupbearer forgot Joseph!
Oh....this seems terrible, but I'm persuaded that we'll see that God has a plan.

Chapter 41

Now two years later, Pharaoh had a dream. Then he woke up.
When he fell asleep again, he had a second dream, very similar to the first dream, and in the morning his mind was troubled.
He sent for all the magicians and wise men of Egypt, but no one could interpret his dreams.
About this time, the cupbearer thought of Joseph, and told Pharaoh of the events that occurred two years earlier in the prison, and Pharaoh sent for Joseph.
(I like to think that Pharaoh probably would not have responded favorably to Joseph's circumstance, had the cupbearer remembered to speak to him about Joseph, but now, the cupbearer's prison account was very much of interest to him.)
"I am told that when you hear a dream you can interpret it."
"I cannot do it," Joseph replied, "but God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires." So Pharaoh told Joseph his dreams.
Joseph told Pharaoh that his dreams meant Egypt would have seven years of great abundance and then seven years of severe famine, and that the dream was given in two forms because God has firmly decided on the matter, and that HE would do it soon.
Now Joseph had a good plan for storing up much of the abundant years so that Egypt would not be ruined in the famine years.
This, and Pharaoh's faith that God was with Joseph, caused Pharaoh to place Joseph in complete charge of these matters for at least the next fourteen years.
Joseph would be second only to Pharaoh in all of Egypt.
Now Pharaoh gave Joseph the name Zaphenath-Paneah, ("sustenance of the land is the living one"). And he gave him Asenath (who belongs to Nieth," i.e. the Egyptian Minerva).
Daughter of Potipherah, priest of On, ("strength"). to be his wife.
Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh. (This is thirteen years since he was thrown into the cistern by his brothers. He must now, probably have the appearance of a man who should be respected, and not that of a youth.)
Joseph's wife bore him two sons, Manasseh ("causing to forget") and Ephraim. ("fruitful") Now Joseph collected and stored all the food of the abundant years until there was too much to measure.
Now when the famine came it was severe in all the world, and Joseph sold grain to the Egyptians and to all the world.

Chapter 42

Now Jacob sent ten of his sons to Egypt to buy grain and, of course, they had to go to Joseph. Joseph recognized his brothers but they did not recognize him. (It had been about 22 years since they had seen Joseph, plus, he probably looked very Egyptian.)

Now we see Joseph formulating a plan to bring his father and Benjamin to Egypt. Now this plan did involve some deception on Joseph's part, but nothing to bring any harm to his brothers.

So he accused them of being spies and held them in custody for three days, then he sent nine brothers back with instructions to bring back Benjamin so that he could believe their story.

Joseph put grain and their silver back in their sacks.

When they got home and discovered the pouches of silver in their sacks they were afraid, and Jacob, now having 'lost' two sons,

refused to let them take Benjamin back with them.

They all seemed to be very fearful of these unfavorable circumstances. But they were going to need more grain!

Chapter 43

Now, while they had grain, they put off going back to Egypt, but when it was gone, Jacob said, "Go back and buy us a little more food." Now after much attempts at reasoning with their father, Judah

personally guaranteed Benjamin's safety, and so Jacob agreed.

However he told his sons to take worthy gifts and a double amount of silver with them. Then Jacob said, "May God Almighty grant you

mercy before the man so he will let your other brother and Benjamin Come back with you. As for me, if I am bereaved, I am bereaved."

So they set out for Egypt, and when Joseph saw Benjamin, he told

his steward, "Take these men to my house, slaughter an animal and prepare dinner; they are to eat with me at noon."

Now the brothers were fearful at Joseph's house, thinking that there was going to be trouble over the silver that was put back in their sacks, so the steward calmed their fears. He told them, "It's all right,

don't be afraid. Your God, the God of your father, has given you treasure in your sacks; I received your silver."

In the house the steward took care of the brothers and tended their donkeys, while the brothers readied their gifts for Joseph when he came home at noon. When Joseph came home they gave him their

gifts as they bowed down before him.

Joseph wanted to know about 'their' father. They told him that he was alive and well. When Joseph saw Benjamin, he was deeply moved and he went to his private room and wept.

After recovering, he came out and said, "Serve the food."

Joseph was served by himself, the brothers by themselves, and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves, because Egyptians could not eat with Hebrews, for that is detestable to Egyptians.

And so, Joseph's brothers ate at Joseph's house, and when portions were served them, Benjamin's portion was five times as much as anyone else's.

So they feasted and drank freely with him.

Everyone is comfortable now, but Joseph has more surprises in store for his brothers. Joseph wants his father to come to Egypt!

And we see that God has caused Pharaoh to put Joseph in a position to make that happen!

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Charles Fry:

I like how in Stephen's summary of these events he states that God facilitated Joseph finding grace (favor, Gk charis) in the sight of Pharaoh. Grace in the eyes of the Lord gave Noah the opportunity to save his family, and begin anew in a transformed world. Grace in the sight of Pharaoh gave Joseph the opportunity to save his family and set the stage for a new nation and future redemption.

Acts 7:9-13 (NASB)

9 "The patriarchs became jealous of Joseph and sold him into Egypt. Yet God was with him, 10 and rescued him from all his afflictions, and granted him favor and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and he made him governor over Egypt and all his household.

11 "Now a famine came over all Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction with it, and our fathers could find no food. 12 But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent our fathers there the first time. 13 On the second visit ..."

Comment:

Joanne Caffie:

Morning Butch, thank you for your diligence in presenting these thoughts for us weekly. It sounds like Joseph may have only been between 13 & 14 years old when his brothers considered killing him (just a little boy). WOW! No wonder they felt guilty seeing not only still alive but successful too.

But that would also mean that Potiphar's wife was trying to have a relationship with a young boy as well (shameful). Thoughts anyone?

Comment:

Yvonna Hartman:

Joanne, in Gen. 37:2 it says Joseph was 17 when tending to the flocks with his brothers.

Replies:

Joanne Caffie:

Thanks Yvonna for helping me better understand. I "think" I knew that Joseph was 17 when this all took place but I allowed my mind to take me elsewhere and my tiny brain is still struggling to pull this timeline all together. If Joseph was 17 at the time he was sold and even if he spent 3 years in prison (1 from Potiphar and 2 more after the butler was released) that would still only make him 20 years old at this time.

However, Gen 41:46 says that he was 30 years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. So now there are 10 years that I can't account for.

Is it possible that his age of 30 included the 7 years of prosperity and at least 3 years of famine before being reunited with his family? #somanyquestions

Charles Fry:

Joanne Caffie, I'd say he spent more time as a servant of Potiphar than you are thinking. Potiphar would not have put an untried 17 year old Hebrew slave in charge of his household. The text says that Potiphar "saw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord gave him success in everything he did." (Genesis 39:3). Because of that, Joseph "found favor in his eyes" and was given more responsibility. He must have spent several years in that household, gaining his master's trust and confidence, before his position and appearance led to the failed seduction and accusations by Mrs. Potiphar. And then he also spent some time in jail before he was again promoted there

due to the Lord's blessing so that he had "favor in the eyes of the prison warden" (Genesis 40:21-22). Both of those processes took time, even before the cupbearer neglected to speak up in his behalf for two years. It's not hard to account for about 13 years in servitude and prison before he was brought to Pharaoh's attention, at the age of about 30.

Joanne Caffie:

Thanks Charles for more clarification. My numbers are starting to add up. 😊

Comment:

Marc Hermon:

The butler's head was lifted up and the baker's head was lifted off!

Comment:

Marc Hermon:

Strategy to always remember which one, the cupbearer or baker was put to death:

The Egyptians were very well known for their baked goods. Many "oven"/bakeries have been discovered in archaeological excavations. When God eventually leads his children out of Egypt he requires the Passover to be made of unleavened bread to separate them from the "sin" yeast bread of the Egyptians. The blood of the Lamb on the doorposts is eventually represented by the fruit of the vine which hopefully we bear in our cups. The cupbearer lives when the sin of the baker is put to death.

Comment:

Randy Ingle:

Great summary! These have always been some of my favorite chapters to read

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thank you, Thank You, THANK YOU, Butch! I couldn't put my Bible down last night. I read to the end of Genesis. Love these stories of old.

Mar 20: Genesis 44-47 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, March 20, 2017

THE LAW

Genesis 44-47

The most important thing here is to read and ponder the scriptures consistently.

Chapter 44

Now, as Joseph's brothers prepared to return home, Joseph had his steward fill their sacks with food and their silver, but to also put Joseph's own silver cup in Benjamin's sack.

Then as the brother's were on their way, Joseph had his steward overtake them, accuse them, and 'discover' Joseph's cup in the sack of Benjamin. (A little more trickery deceit on Joseph's part, but with no harm to his brothers.) So the brothers went back with the steward to Joseph's house, where they expected Benjamin to be made Joseph's slave.

However, Judah would make every effort to convince Joseph to keep him rather than Benjamin so that their father, Jacob, would not be heartbroken.

Oh, how he pleaded! Benjamin simply must return with his brothers.

Chapter 45

Now Joseph was unable to control himself anymore and so he had everyone leave his presence except his brothers, and he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard him, and Pharaoh's household heard of it.

Then Joseph said, "I am Joseph! Is my father still living?"

But they could not answer him because they were terrified.

Joseph had them come closer as he encouraged them to not be distressed and angry with themselves for what they had done by selling him into Egypt. Joseph explained to them that it was God that had brought him to Egypt, and the reason for it was to save lives, and to save the lives of his own family also, by a great deliverance. Oh, the brothers must have been stunned!

Pharaoh was pleased when he heard of Joseph's brothers and he encouraged Joseph to bring his whole family to Egypt and they could enjoy the fat of the land.

So Joseph provided provisions for his brothers journey and also carts for all the families to ride in on the way to Egypt. And he instructed them to bring twenty donkeys loaded with the best things of Egypt and grain and bread for his father's journey.

And as they left Egypt for Canaan, Joseph said to them,

"Don't quarrel on the way!" Joseph knew them still.

Now when they came to Jacob and told him everything, Jacob was stunned and did not believe them. But as he considered all that Joseph had sent to him, Jacob/Israel became convinced and was

very excited that he would see his son Joseph before he died.

Chapter 46

Now Israel/Jacob set out with all he had and when he reached Beersheba he offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac.

God spoke to Jacob in a vision at night and told him,

"I am God, the God of your father,

Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you into a great nation there. I will go down to Egypt with you, and I will surely bring you back again. And Joseph's own hand will close your eyes."

And Israel/Jacob and his sons continued on to Egypt.

They had with them, all that they had acquired in Canaan, and all of Jacob's offspring. All who traveled with Jacob numbered sixty-six

persons, plus all of the brothers wives. Including Joseph's family,

Jacob's family numbered seventy. (Acts 7:14 says seventy-five)

Joseph met his father in the region of Goshen, threw his arms around him and wept for a long time. Israel told Joseph,

"Now I am ready to die,

since I have seen for myself that you are still alive."

Joseph told his brothers and his father's household that he would explain to Pharaoh that they were all shepherds and that they should tell Pharaoh that when he called them in and they would be allowed to settle in the region of Goshen,

"for all shepherds are detestable to the Egyptians."

Chapter 47

Now Joseph took five of his brothers to present them to Pharaoh.

Pharaoh asked them, "What is your occupation?"

They explained that they were shepherds and that they had come to live in Egypt because Canaan had no pasture for their flocks, and could they please settle in Goshen. (Apparently Goshen still had pasture even though the land was two years into the famine.)

So Pharaoh told Joseph to settle them and their father, Jacob, in the land of Goshen, the best part of the land, and if any of the brothers had special abilities, to put them in charge of his own livestock.

Then Joseph brought Jacob before Pharaoh and Jacob blessed him. Pharaoh asked Jacob his age and Jacob told him a hundred and thirty years, which were not as many as his fathers, but they had been difficult. Then Jacob blessed Pharaoh again and left.

Then Joseph settled his father and brothers and provided them all with food according to the number of their children.

Now over the next several years Joseph traded grain for the money of the Egyptians. Then for their livestock. And then for their land and their very selves.

Joseph did not acquire the land of the priests for the Pharaoh because they were receiving an allotment from the Pharaoh that sustained them.

So, but for the land of the priests, Pharaoh owned all of Egypt and all of the Egyptian's livestock in Egypt, under the governing of Joseph.

And the people were grateful to Joseph for 'saving their lives'.

Meanwhile, the Israelites acquired property in Goshen and were fruitful and increased greatly in number.

Now Jacob lived in Egypt seventeen years and when his time to die drew near, he called for Joseph and said to him,

"If I have found favor in your eyes, put your hand under my thigh and promise that you will show me kindness and faithfulness.

Do not bury me in Egypt, but when I rest with my fathers, carry me out of Egypt and bury me where they are buried."

"I will do as you say," Joseph said.

"Swear to me," Israel said. Then Joseph swore to him, and Israel worshipped as he leaned on the top of his staff.

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Kevin Crittenden:

Thank you, Butch! Joseph's ability to truly forgive his brothers for "killing" him for the sake of the father, Israel, reminds me of Jesus' ability to truly forgive those who crucified him for the sake of the Father. Not only that but to prosper them as well.

Luke 6:35-36 "But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. 36 Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful."

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thank you, Butch O'Neal! Most excellent summary of an excellent example for all of us! I couldn't stop last week and what a joy it was to read it again tonight. :-) What an amazing understanding Joseph had of God! He was in control. Joseph did not see himself as the victim of his brothers' cruelty & sin. He didn't allow bitterness & revenge to blind him to the overall purposes of His God. All that had happened to him had been part of the plan of Almighty God. Three times Joseph told his brothers, "God sent me ahead of you" and "It was not you who sent me here but God." Later in Genesis 50:20 he makes the remarkable statement, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives." May we be more like Joseph and repay evil for good!

Mar 27: Genesis 48-50 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, March 27, 2017

THE LAW

Genesis 48-50

The most important thing here is to read and ponder the scriptures consistently.

Chapter 48

Joseph was told that Jacob was ill and so he took his two sons and went to his father. Israel/Jacob rallied his strength and said to Joseph:

"God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and there he blessed me and said to me, 'I am going to make you fruitful and will increase your numbers. I will make you a community of peoples, and I will give this land as an everlasting possession to your descendants after you.' "now then, your two sons born to you in Egypt before I came to you here will be reckoned as mine;

Ephraim and Manasseh will be mine, just as Reuben and Simeon are mine. Any children born to you after them will be yours; in the territory they inherit they will be reckoned under the name of their brothers. As I was returning from Paddan, to my sorrow Rachel died in the land of Canaan while we were still on the way, a little distance from Ephrath. So I buried her there beside the road to Ephrath" (that is, Bethlehem).

Now Israel's eyes were bad and he could hardly see, so he had Joseph bring his children close so that he could bless them.

Joseph placed his children in front of Israel so that when Israel reached out, his right hand would be on Manasseh and his left on Ephraim. But Israel put his right hand on Ephraim and crossed his arms so that his left hand was on Manasseh.

Then Israel blessed Joseph and said:

"May the God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day.

the Angel who has delivered me from all harm--may he bless these boys.

May they be called by my name and the names of my fathers Abraham and Isaac, and may they increase greatly on the earth."

Now Joseph tried to change the positions of Israel's hands, so that Israel would have his right hand on Manasseh, but Israel refused,

saying that the younger brother would become greater and he blessed them, saying:

"In your (singular) name will Israel pronounce this blessing:

'May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh.'"

So Ephraim was ahead of Manasseh.

Then Israel told Joseph, "I am about to die, but God will be with you (plural) and take you back to the land of your fathers. And to you, as one who is over your brothers, I give the ridge of land (Or, And to you I give one portion more than to your brothers--the portion) I took from the Amorites with my sword and my bow."

Chapter 49

Jacob/Israel called for his sons to gather around so that he could tell them what would happen to each of them in the days to come.

This was in the form of his blessings to them, in accordance to what was appropriate to each son.

All these are the twelve tribes of Israel.

Then Jacob/Israel gave instructions to his sons to bury him with his fathers in the cave which Abraham had bought as a burial place for the family. Then he breathed his last and was gathered to his people.(Consider closely the blessings in this chapter, we reap what we sow!)

Chapter 50

Joseph threw himself over his father and wept, and kissed him.

Then the physicians embalmed Israel, as per Joseph. This took forty days.

(reminds me of the rain in the flood at Noah's time. [Gen. 7:12]

And the Israelites eating manna. [Ex. 16:35] And Moses on the mountain. [Ex. 24:18] And the Israelites wandering in the desert.

[Nu. 32:13] And JESUS fasting. [Mt. 4:2] The word 'forty' is in the NIV translation over a hundred times. I believe it compares with the word 'seven' in GOD's Holy Word.)
And the Egyptians mourned for him seventy days.
Then Joseph, with Pharaoh's blessing, went up to bury his father, and all Pharaoh's officials accompanied him, as well as all of Joseph's household and all of Israel's household and charioteers.
It was a very large company. This certainly speaks of Joseph's regard in Egypt.
They stopped at the threshing floor of Atad, where lamented loudly and bitterly, and Joseph observed a seven day period of mourning.
When the Canaanites saw this they said, "The Egyptians are holding a solemn ceremony of mourning." Now that place is called Abel Mizraim. (mourning of the Egyptians)
So Jacob's sons buried their father and returned to Egypt.
Now, Joseph's brothers feared that Joseph might hold a grudge against them so they sent this word to Joseph.
"Your father left these instructions before he died:
'This is what you are to say to Joseph: I ask you to forgive your brothers the sins and the wrongs they committed in treating you so badly.' Now please forgive the sins of the servants of the God of your father."
Joseph wept at this message.
His brothers said, "We are your slaves."
Joseph said, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God?"
Joseph acknowledged that they intended to harm him but that God intended their treatment of Joseph to produce good, the saving of many lives, which, ironically, seems to have included them.
So Joseph reassured them and promised to provide for them.
And Joseph stayed in Egypt and saw the third generation of Ephraim's children. He also saw the children of Makir son of Manasseh and they were placed at birth on Joseph's knees.
(That is, were counted as his)
Now Joseph was a hundred and ten and was about to die.
Joseph told his brothers that God would take them out of this land and to the land that HE had promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
And he made his brothers swear an oath to carry his bones up from 'this place'.
Then Joseph died, was embalmed, and placed in a coffin in Egypt.
This account of Joseph's life has remarkable similarities to the life of JESUS. JESUS was treated badly by many as HE steadfastly continued to obey HIS Father's Will to save many, and HE suffered much.
Joseph's life, as fruitful as it was, could only be a sign and shadow of what the life of our LORD and SAVIOR would accomplish, while HE was here on earth!

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Marc Hermon:

Butch, thank you for taking us through this great first book of God's Word. I hate to see it come to an end although I like how it ends....with God gathering Jacob and Joseph to His people. It should be our highest hope of how our story ends also.

Comment:

Lori Watt:

Very good comments, Butch! Thank you for your work!!

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

I, too, am sad we are finished with this great book. Thank you so much, Butch, for your devotion to this study. What a blessing it has been! Lord willing, let's do it again next year if the Lord has not returned. :-) This set of verses gives me goosebumps, "You intended to harm me but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives!" In all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose (Romans 8:28)

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

I agree with you, Ginger! I would like to do it again! Your 'goosebump' set of verses always has amazed me, in that Joseph was so mature as to see that. While the indication is that his brothers may still have not understood. It also seems to me that this work that GOD had for Joseph to do may have taken a great physical toll on him, since he seems to be the first of the twelve brothers to be gathered to his people although he was the second to the youngest. Just a thought.

Joanne Caffie:

Not to lift myself up in any way but this sounds a lot like my life. I am the youngest of 9 yet the responsibility of 5 generations rest on my shoulders (even the caring of my 93 yr old mother). May I too realize that God in His infinite wisdom had a plan bigger plan for ke all along.

GREAT job Butch!

Butch O'Neal:

Joanne, you have long been an inspiration to me, and I'm sure to many others. You are a fine example of a Christian's love and obedience to GOD's Will.