

A WALK THROUGH THE OLD TESTAMENT

TIME FRAME #2 – THE PATRIARCHS

2166 BC to 1805 BC

(NOTE: These and all dates are approximate. They are taken from the ESV Study Bible, p.32)

GENESIS 12-45

SUMMARY

As we come to Genesis 12, God makes a transition from working with humanity in general to working through the members of a specific man and his family. The man is Abraham, and his descendants become the chosen nation of Israel. It is through this man and this nation that God is going to bless the world through the promised Savior/Redeemer. The four generations are known as The Patriarchs.

ABRAHAM (2166 BC to 1991 BC)

EVENT #7	SCRIPTURE
THE CALLING OF ABRAHAM	GENESIS 12:1-9
NOTES	
<p>1. Abraham (known at this time of his life as Abram) is introduced (Genesis 11:27-32).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• His father is Terah, and they lived in Ur of the Chaldeans. This was located near the Persian Gulf in present Iraq. (See map)• Their religious background is Pagan (Joshua 24:2).• It is clear that the first call of God had come to Abram while he was still living in Ur. We are not told how Abram came to believe in the One True God.• NOTE: That Job is a contemporary of Abram. He, along with his friends know God.• Terah joins Abram on his journey to Palestine/Canaan. They get half way there and stop in Haran. After the long journey from Ur the fertile plains around Haran seemed like a good place to settle. Joining them is Lot, Abram's nephew.• Abram's wife is Sarah (known at this time of her life as Sarai). She is childless...a truly humiliating condition in her culture.	
<p>2. God calls Abram (12:1-3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This is the second time God has called Abram. It is undoubtedly the same call God had issued to Abram while still in Ur.• Abram is first told to uproot his life, the source of his identity.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Leave your country○ Leave your family○ Leave your ancestral land/inheritance• Abram is then told to trust and follow God, receiving a new identity. As Abram takes this step of faith, God will bless him.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ I will make you a great nation○ I will make your name great○ I will channel my blessing through you to others○ I will protect you, blessing those who bless you and cursing those who dishonor you○ I will bless all peoples and nations through you. This is a reference to the coming Savior.	
<p>3. Abram completes the journey to Canaan (12:4-9)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Abram responds to God by stepping out in obedience. This was the second time he has left a place of security for the unknown, trusting God. Hebrews 11:8 tells us that Abram's faith led to his obedience.	

- Abram takes his household. This includes Sarai, Lot, his servants and all of his possessions. These are mostly made up of sheep and cattle.
- As Abram arrives in Canaan, he travels south to Shechem, located approximately half way between the Sea of Galilee and Jerusalem. Some 2000 years later Jesus will converse with the Samaritan woman here (**John 4**). God appears to him and repeats the promise to give his descendants this land. In response, Abram builds an alter and worships.
- Abram then continues south and settles near Bethel, located north of Jerusalem and west of Jericho. This will be the first area taken by Joshua and Israel. Again, Abram builds an alter to worship God.
- After a period of time, Abram travels south, towards the southern border of Canaan, moving closer to Egypt.

PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS:

EVENT #8	SCRIPTURE
THE JOURNEY TO EGYPT	GENESIS 12:10-13:4
NOTES	
<p>1. We are looking at this story because it reveals a tendency or weakness in Abram’s life that will affect him for most of his life. In certain situations of stress, fear or discouragement Abram resorts to relying on his own understanding and resources instead of seeking and trusting God. (Proverbs 3:5-6) These moments stand in stark contrast to his moments of trusting faith! God did not choose and bless Abram because he was perfect, but because of his faith, which revealed his heart towards God. It is important that we learn from Abram’s life, for all of us have one or more tendencies/weaknesses that from time to time cause us to trust ourselves rather than God, resulting in consequences that can deeply impact our lives.</p> <p>2. In this story we will see a pattern that often repeats itself in Scripture. Our Failure – God’s Mercy – Our Repentance and Restoration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abraham’s failures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Faced with famine, Abram turns to Egypt rather than God. There is no record that God told him to leave the Land. This made sense from a human perspective, as Egypt was known as the ‘Breadbasket of the World’. ○ Faced with his fear of the Egyptians, Abram resorts to deceit, endangering Sarai. ○ When Sarai is taken to Pharaoh’s house and faced the possibility of being made a member of his harem, Abram accepted the benefits but did nothing to protect her. • God’s Mercy is shown. Instead of disciplining Abram or allowing Sarai to be taken into the harem God speaks to Pharaoh through plagues and she is released back to her husband. Note that if Abram had lost Sarai he also would have been unable to have the child through whom God’s promises were to be fulfilled. • Abraham repents by returning to Canaan, where he goes to Bethel and the alter he had built there. There is no mention that the famine has ended. However, now Abram calls on the name of Yahweh – The LORD. A valuable lesson on faith is learned. • NOTE: Rather than judging Abram for his failures, God uses them to nurture Abram’s faith. This growth comes out of Abram’s heart for God. This pattern of nurturing and growth will repeat itself often in Abram’s life, as it does in ours. (Romans 2:4; Hebrews 12:3-11) 	

PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS:

EVENT #9	SCRIPTURE
GOD'S COVENANT	GENESIS 15
NOTES	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Note that it is God who initiates this conversation with Abram. It is important to note that from time to time God repeats His promise to Abram. God does the same to us through His Word. As God speaks He says:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Fear Not” – God knows Abram’s doubts and fears. Abram is sitting in Canaan with nothing to call his own except his tents. He has nothing to hold onto except God’s promises – but without an heir through whom they can be fulfilled. Note this is the same greeting Gabriel gives Mary and Jesus to the disciples on Easter evening.• “I am your shield” – Your protection• “Your reward shall be very great” – This refers back to God’s call and promise in Genesis 12:1-3. 2. Abraham asks his first question – How will I have any descendants? (Vs. 2-3)<ul style="list-style-type: none">• His assumption is that if he and Sarai have not had children by now they never would.• The custom of the culture said that if you died without an heir then your chief servant or steward would become your heir and inherit your possessions. For Abram, this would include the promises from God.• NOTE: Once again we see Abram’s tendency to not being able to see beyond human limitations and depending on his own resources to meet the need. His trust in God is being challenged by doubt. 3. God then responds in verses 4 and 5. You will have a son, and he will be your heir. Through your son your descendants will be more numerous than the stars. 4. Abram responds with faith (Genesis 15:6). This is one of the most significant verses in Scripture, giving the foundation for a relationship with God. Out of this faith would come righteous actions by Abram. However, his righteousness; his right standing and relationship with God is based on faith. This verse is quoted four times in the NT (Romans 4:3,22; Galatians 3:6; James 2:23) 5. Abram does have a second question – How will my descendants possess this land? (vs. 7-8) The land is occupied by very powerful people in fortified cities. How can a bunch of sheep herders force them out? 6. God answers by giving Abram a look into the future in verses 12-16.<ul style="list-style-type: none">• He predicts their time in Egypt – vs. 13• He then tells Abram about the Exodus under Moses – vs. 14• However Abram will not endure any of this, but will live and die in peace – vs.15• When the nation of Israel does conquer the land it will be just, for the sin of the people living there will be great – vs. 16	

7. God now seals this with an official Covenant – **verses 9-10; 17-20**

When two parties were to enter into a covenant, they would sacrifice animals, cut them in half and separate them, creating a path between them. The parties would then walk together down that path, finalizing the covenant promises. In this case, all of the promises were coming from God. So He alone walks between the sacrificed animals, repeating the promises He had made to Abram. His presence is represented by the flaming torch and smoking fire pot. These resemble the Shekinah Glory that will accompany the nation of Israel during the Exodus – Fire at night and a cloud by day.

PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS:

EVENT #10	SCRIPTURE
HAGAR AND ISHMAEL	GENESIS 16
NOTES	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sarai now gives in to the same tendency as her husband – use her own reasoning and resources to meet a need in her life. In this case, to ‘help’ God fulfill His promise of an heir. Verses 1-3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She validates her actions by blaming God (vs.2). If it is God Who has withheld her having a child, it must be OK to pursue other means. • Sarai gives her servant Hagar to Abram as his wife. Any children Hagar had would be considered an heir. It would also raise Hagar from the status of servant to wife, though not an equal with Sarai. • While the Bible does not condemn the practice of polygamy in the OT it clearly is not preferred and is not the norm. 2. Abram goes along with his wife’s plan and Hagar becomes pregnant. (vs. 3-4). The fact that he will name Hagar’s son (vs. 15) indicates that Abram did consider Hagar’s child his own and an heir. 3. Hagar and Sarai’s responses and reactions create discord in the family (vs. 4-6). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hagar gives in to pride and shows contempt towards Sarai. She has done what Sarai could not – become pregnant with Abram’s child. Also, she has a changed status, from servant to wife. • Sarai shows her deep hurt by first lashing out against her husband. It is interesting to see human nature play out as she blames him for the consequences of her plan! Perhaps Abram, pleased to have a child on the way, began to show Hagar favor that Sarai could not stand to see. • Abram then returns Hagar back to the status of servant. This places her back under the authority of Sarai, who deals with her so harshly that Hagar flees. This harsh treatment was probably intended to put Hagar ‘back in her place’. 4. God intervenes with mercy, sending the ‘angel of the LORD’ to speak to her. (vs.7-12) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some scholars believe this ‘angel’ is an OT (Pre-incarnate) appearance of Christ. Others believe this is a particular angel sent to deliver a particular message. For the record, I believe this is a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ. • His message to Hagar: 	

- He uses a question to encourage Hagar to open her heart to him **(vs.8)**
- ‘Return to your mistress and submit to her’ **(vs.9)** – The point is probably to change her attitude towards Sarai from contempt to respect more than a focus on Sarai’s authority.
- I will make the descendants of your son a great people
- He will not be a servant like you but will be fiercely independent and assertive.
- ‘Ishmael’ – means ‘God Hears’. God is showing great mercy and compassion on Hagar.

5. Hagar responds with faith and returns to Abram and Sarai. **(vs.13-16)**

- Perhaps this is the first time Hagar has personally experienced the touch of God on her life **(vs.13)**.
- As noted, Abram considers Hagar’s son his son and heir. Perhaps he assumes or at least hopes this will be the son through whom God’s promises are kept.

PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS:

EVENT # 11	SCRIPTURE
THE SIGN OF THE COVENANT AND A RENEWED PROMISE	GENESIS 17
NOTES	
<p>1. Thirteen years go by between Genesis 16 and 17 without any recorded revelation from God. Ishmael is now approaching manhood. Undoubtedly Abram and Sarai have become settled with the idea he will be Abram’s heir.</p> <p>2. God now appears to not only repeat the Covenant with Abram but to add vivid detail to it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● God reveals a new name for Himself – ‘God Almighty’ (El Shaddai) vs. 1 This name highlights God’s power – even the power to give him and Sarai a child in their old age. ● “Walk before me” (vs. 1) – This carries the idea of a close, ongoing intimacy with God. There is an emphasis on relationship here. The first step in this walk is placing Saving Faith in God’s promised Redeemer. ● “Be blameless” (vs.1) – This word is used to describe sacrificial animals as being ‘without blemish’. This is a pattern of obedience in one’s life. When we do fail, we quickly confess, repent and reconnect with the path of obedience. ● “That I may make my covenant between Me and you” (vs. 2) While this is certainly connected to the covenant made in Genesis 15, God adds Abram’s (and his descendants) part – They are to walk closely with God in obedience to God. As history will show, they will have a very up and down pattern of doing this. <p>NOTE: God is making this covenant with a man who is far from perfect! He made mistakes – some of which had far reaching consequences. But Abram loved God; trusted God; grew in his faith and walked with God. He repented when he stumbled and lived a pattern of obedience. In this Abram was blameless. Knowing this should give us hope in our imperfect walk with God.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● God changes Abram’s name (exalted father) to Abraham (father of a multitude). Vs. 5 ● God changes Sarai’s name to Sarah (both mean princess). Vs. 15 	

- God then gives Abraham the sign of circumcision. **(vs. 9-14)**
3. Abraham continues to struggle to believe God will provide a child through Sarah. **Genesis 17:15-21**
 - God repeats the promise that a child born through Sarah will be his heir. **(vs. 15-16)**
 - Abraham's laugh is probably not out of disrespect or sarcasm but disbelief. He simply is not able to get past the physical impossibilities that stand in the way of Sarah becoming pregnant.
 - Note that Abraham first thinks out his response and then speaks it to God. He asks God to reconsider and to see Ishmael as his blessed heir. **(vs.17-18)**
 - God repeats his promise to deliver a son through Sarah. **(vs. 19-21)**
 4. Abraham shows his faith and trust in God by obeying God's command to have every male circumcised. His faith might be hesitant, unsure and uneven, but was still foundational to his life. **(vs. 22-27)**

PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS:

EVENT # 12	SCRIPTURE
THE BIRTH OF ISAAC	GENESIS 21:1-21
NOTES	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "The LORD visited Sarah as He had said..." (Genesis 21:1) – God is the one who enabled Sarah to conceive a child. However, Abraham and Sarah did engage in sexual relations, for this was not an 'Immaculate Conception'. This was actually a step of faith for them. 2. This conception took place just as God said it would in Genesis 17:21 and 18:10. 3. Abraham obeys God and names the child 'Isaac'. He also circumcises Isaac when he turns 8 days old. (vs.3-4) 4. Sarah speaks out with joy, her laughter turned from disbelief to rejoicing (vs.6-7) 5. God establishes that Isaac, not Ishmael is the son who will carry the Covenant. At the same time, God protects and blesses Ishmael. Genesis 21:8-21 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isaac is weaned, probably around the age of three (vs.8). This was very significant, for it meant Isaac had survived infancy, a very important milestone! That is why Abraham throws a feast to celebrate the occasion. • Ishmael laughs at the event – the work conveys this is a mocking laugh. We should show Ishmael some compassion in this moment. For 13 years he had been raised to be the eldest son and heir of Abraham. Now, just as he is about to enter adulthood, this favored son, who as the son of Sarah outranked him, is going to take that away. (vs.9) • It is Sarah who sees and responds to his mocking. She wants Hagar and Ishmael removed from the family compound so he cannot become a rival to Isaac. When Abraham hesitates to do this to his son (a clear sign of the affection he has for him) God intervenes and tells Abraham to do as Sarah said. The reason God does this is to make clear that "through Isaac shall your offspring be named' (vs.9-12). 	

- God does not abandon Hagar and Ishmael. He will fulfill the promises He had made to her in **Genesis 16:11-12**. It is important to note that “God was with the boy...” (**vs.20**). It is also important to note that when Abraham dies, both Ishmael and Isaac bury him. (**Genesis 25:7-11**)

PERSONAL OBSERVATION:

EVENT #13	SCRIPTURE
ABRAHAM IS TESTED	GENESIS 22
<p>NOTES</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As we come to Genesis 22, Isaac is probably a teenager, at the cusp of full adulthood. 2. “God tested Abraham” (vs.1).- It is important to that this is not temptation to sin but a test meant to measure Abraham’s faith and how it has grown since Genesis 12. Duet. 8:2 – “to know what is in your heart.” 3. At the center of this test is the tendency we have seen for Abraham to rely on his reasoning and resources when under pressure. In order to ‘pass’ this test, Abraham will have to overcome this tendency and trust God to work outside of the ‘temporal box’. 4. When God calls to Abraham, he replies, ‘Here I am’ (vs.1). These words communicate the heart of a servant responding to the voice of their master. 5. God gives Abraham the specifics of the test (vs. 2). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Take your only son’ – The only one through whom the Covenant can be kept. Abraham has learned there is no ‘plan B’! We know he has offered alternatives in the past. • ‘The son you love’ – This is much more than just concern about the Covenant. We can only imagine the depth of love Abraham has for his long awaited son. • ‘God to the land of Moriah’ – 2 Chronicles 3:1 identifies this as the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. • ‘Offer him there as a burnt offering’ - This would be a final, all consuming sacrifice. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This is the ultimate level of trust. Everything inside Abraham had to be screaming ‘NO’! ○ This is the ultimate level of commitment. Not even his beloved son was to come before God. 6. Abraham’s obedience is immediate. Verses 3-4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Without delay Abraham gathers Isaac, two servants and the wood and heads to Moriah. It takes three days to get there – three days to contemplate what God has told him to do. 7. As they arrive, Abraham demonstrates his devotion to and trust of God. (vs.5-10) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Will go over there and worship’ – Abraham recognizes that this is not just an act of obedience, but is also an act of worship. • ‘We will come again to you’ – Abraham trusts that Isaac will return with him. He believes that even if Isaac dies, God will raise him from the dead. Hebrews 11:17-19. Abraham has grown past his tendency to rely on himself, and now trust God fully, even when it does not seem to make sense. • Abraham has every intention of following through and sacrificing Isaac (vs. 9-10) 	

8. God speaks out to Abraham. **Verses 11-19**

- The repetition of 'Abraham' (**vs. 11**) indicates urgency. God has no intention of allowing Abraham to harm his son.
- This act of obedience confirms Abraham's deepening faith (**vs.12**)
- God provides a ram as a substitute for Isaac (**vs.13**). Abraham responds by naming the place, 'Jehovah Jireh', which means, 'God Provides'. This is a picture of Christ being our substitute on the Cross

9. God reaffirms His Covenant with Abraham (**vs.15-19**)

PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS:

ISAAC (2066 BC – 1886 BC)

EVENT #14	SCRIPTURE
GOD PROVIDES A WIFE	GENESIS 24
NOTES	
<p>1. Abraham is deeply concerned that Isaac marry the right woman and makes plans to find that person. (vs. 1-9)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• He does not want Isaac to marry a Canaanite woman, for their culture was violent and their religion sensual. Abraham understands that in time, the Canaanites will be judged by God. (vs.3)• Isaac was to stay in the land. It is essential that he remain in the place God has promised him. (vs.5-6)• Abraham shows complete trust in God's ability to go before the servant to ensure the success of the mission. (vs. 7)• Abraham wants a wife from his family clan. (vs. 4)• 'Put your hand under my thigh' – This was an act of submission to Abraham and a commitment to fulfilling the task. (vs. 2, 9) <p>2. The servant takes on his task and travels to Haran, some 500 miles away. This would have taken around 21 days. (vs.10-14)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In verses 12 - 13 he displays his own faith, and entrusts his task to God.• His request reveals the type of woman he is seeking for Isaac:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ A woman with a generous heart○ A woman with a servant's heart <p>3. God graciously answers his request. (vs. 15-28)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rebekah appears, and proceeds to do the very things the servant had been looking for.• The fact she is attractive was a plus! (16)• Her dress would have revealed she was still a virgin (vs.16).• The servant pauses in verse 21 because he still did not know if Rebekah was from his master's family.• She reveals that she is indeed from the same household as Abraham (vs. 23-24)	

- The response of the servant is to worship God **(vs. 26)**.
4. Permission is secured for Rebekah to return to Canaan with the servant. **(vs. 29-61)**
 - Rebekah needed the permission of her older brother to go marry Isaac. Laban was acting as the head of the household.
 - The servant gives a lengthy explanation of his mission **(vs. 34-48)**. Getting then right to the point, he asks if Rebekah will go with him **(vs. 49)**.
 - Permission is granted **(vs. 50-51)**
 5. Rebekah returns with the servant and becomes Isaac's wife **(vs. 61-67)**.
 6. Sometime soon after this, Abraham dies. **(Genesis 25:1-18)**

PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS:

EVENT #15	SCRIPTURE
BIRTH OF ESAU AND JACOB	GENESIS 25:19-28
NOTES	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Like his father Abraham, Isaac's faith has been simmered over time. (Vs. 19-21) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He had been placed on that altar by his father only to be delivered by God. • He had waited until he was 40 to get married. • He then waited 20 years to have a child. • His faith in God shines out as he prays to God for Rebekah to have a child (vs. 21) <p>NOTE: God simmers our faith over time. Like any good stew, one ingredient is added at a time, in its own time.</p> 2. Esau's and Jacob's relationship will be characterized by conflict. This is seen in the womb! (vs. 22-23) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God foretells what is going to happen: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Promise will run through one of them, not both. They will become two separate nations. ○ It will run through the younger, not the older. 3. Their future is revealed at birth (vs. 24-28). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Esau is dark complexioned. This foretold his love of the outdoors and more gruff personality. • Jacob is quieter and will stay around the house. However, he is a schemer and deceiver. These characteristics will surface in his life time and time again. • The seeds of family discord are sown in verse 28. Isaac and Rebekah each have a favorite son. 4. Esau sells his birthright (vs. 29-34). The Birthright consisted of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being the Patriarch of the family – overseeing its provision and protection • Being the spiritual head of the family • Being the family line through which the Covenant with Abraham would pass, including the Promised Redeemer • Would receive a double portion of the inheritance 	

- 'Esau despised his birthright' – he failed to see or value its true value and responsibility.

5. NOTE: In **Genesis 26:1-5** God confirms his Covenant with Isaac.

PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS:

JACOB (2006 BC – 1859 BC)

EVENT # 16	SCRIPTURE
JACOB STEALS THE BLESSING	GENESIS 27
<p>NOTES</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The Blessing Isaac intends to give Esau will establish him as 'First Born', and the heir through whom the Promises and Covenant would go through. This would give Esau the Birthright discussed under Event # 15. (Genesis 27:1-4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This Blessing would override what happened in Genesis 25:29-34. • Isaac appears blind to Esau's character flaws. He also seems to disregard what God had revealed at the boy's birth in Genesis 25: 22-23. • Isaac's frailty and blindness will be crucial factors in this story. It is Rebekah who develops the plan to deceive her husband and secure The Blessing for Jacob (vs.5-13) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God would never initiate or condone the use of deceit to accomplish His will. However, in this case He allows this very human action and it will secure The Blessing for Jacob, just as He had declared at their birth. • Rebekah will pay a dear consequence for this action. As we will see, Jacob will soon flee to Haran. By the time he returns, Rebekah will have died, having not seen her beloved son again. The plan works, and Isaac blesses Jacob (14-29). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jacob has to lie to his father several times, even including God in the deceit (vs.20). It is clear Isaac has his doubts, but in the end is convinced Jacob is indeed Esau. • The first part of The Blessing is for God's abundant provision (vs. 28) • The second part of The Blessing affirms the position of Heir of the Covenant, and mirrors the promises God made to Abraham and Isaac (vs. 29). Ultimately, the Redeemer will come through Jacob's family line. Esau arrives, but Isaac refuses to reverse The Blessing (30-40). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perhaps Isaac sees God's hand in what has happened, fulfilling the prophecy of Genesis 25:22-23. • While not THE Blessing, Esau does receive A Blessing from Isaac (vs.39-40) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ He will not settle in the Promise Land. In fact, Esau will establish the nation of Edom and settle east of the Jordon River. ○ Esau will free himself from his brother's control. Esau determines to kill his brother after Isaac's death. However it will be decades before that happens! (vs.41) 	

PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS:

EVENT # 17	SCRIPTURE
JACOB FLEES ESAU AND SECURES THE PROMISE	GENESIS 27:42-28:22

NOTES

1. Once again using deception, Rebekah convinces Isaac to send Jacob to the safety of her family in Haran. **(Genesis 27:42-28:5)**
 - Jacob is sent away to secure a wife from the family, just as she had been secured as Isaac's wife. **(27:46)**
 - Isaac send Jacob with an affirmation of The Blessing **(28:3-4)**. This clearly indicates that Jacob is not to stay in Haran, but is to return to Canaan.

2. God confirms His Covenant with Jacob through a vision/dream **(Genesis 28:10-22)**.
 - The Ladder or Stairway represents the fact that God has a bridge between Heaven and Earth. He will fulfill His promise to send a Redeemer to provide salvation for people. Ultimately, that bridge will be Jesus Christ Himself **(John 1:51)**. In Genesis 11 the people had tried to build a stairway to Heaven. In reality, that stairway can only be built by God Himself.
 - God then speaks to Jacob, reaffirming The Covenant to him. **(vs.13-15)**
 - I will be your god, just as I was Abraham's and Isaac's.
 - I will give you this land.
 - I will make your descendants a great nation.
 - Through you the nations will be blessed as The Redeemer comes.
 - I will watch over you and bring you back to this land.
 - Jacob responds by saying that if God keeps him and brings him back to this land then Jacob will surrender to Him as God and Lord **(vs.16-22)**
 - While Jacob does recognize that God has appeared to him, it is interesting to note that he does not surrender to God in this moment. God needs to fulfill His part first!
 - While Jacob does consecrate the spot, he does not build an altar to worship God. Putting up a pillar **(vs.18)** is actually a Canaanite practice that will later be condemned by God **(Duet. 16:22)**.

3. Upon his return to the Land and life changing encounter with God in **Genesis 32:22-32** Jacob will return to this spot and build an altar to God **(Genesis 35:1-7)**.

PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS:

EVENT # 18	SCRIPTURE
MARRIAGE AND BIRTH OF HIS SONS	GENESIS 29-30
NOTES	
<p>1. Jacob meets and marries Rachel and Leah (Genesis 29:1-30).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jacob arrives in Haran and meets his cousin Rachel. Their story is similar to when Abraham’s servant had come to this same area and met his mother, Rebekah. There is one key difference however: There is no mention of Jacob seeking God’s help or guidance. (vs.2-12) • While Laban greets Jacob warmly, time will reveal that Jacob has met his match! Laban has the same tendency to scheme and deceive as his sister Rebekah and nephew Jacob. (vs.13-14) • Jacob agrees to stay with Laban and serve him for seven years to gain the right to marry Laban’s daughter, Rachel. Her sister, Leah, was more plain looking (‘eyes were weak’ was a phrase that meant she was not much to look at) while Rachel is beautiful. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jacob’s offer to work for seven years fulfills the ‘Bride Price’. It could be paid with money, possessions or as in this case, service. ▪ Just as Jacob had deceived his father Isaac, so he is deceived by Laban. By sleeping with Leah, he is committed to her as her husband. (vs.21-26) ▪ Laban’s scheme gains him another seven years of Jacob’s service plus gets his older daughter married. In return, Jacob gets the woman he loves. (vs.27-30) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ One has to feel compassion for Leah. She gets one week of her husband’s attention and then has to share him with her sister, knowing Jacob loves Rachel but at best will tolerate being married to her. <p>2. The birth of Jacob’s children (Genesis 29:31-30:24)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The deceitfulness of Laban plants the seeds of a dysfunctional family. Jacob showing favoritism towards Rachel over Leah will bring this dysfunction to full fruition. The competitiveness and animosity will bring great pain to Jacob and his family in the years to come. • It was within the cultural norm for a wife’s servant to bear children on her behalf. Those children were considered hers, and full members and heirs of the family. (30:1-13) • It is notable that Rachel sees this as a competition against her sister Leah (vs.8) while Leah’s desire is to gain the love of her husband (vs.32, 34), and had an attitude of thankfulness towards God (vs.35,13). • Jacob’s sons will become the 12 tribes of the nation of Israel. Their generation will complete this period of The Patriarchs. 	
PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS:	

EVENT # 19	SCRIPTURE
JACOB’S RETURN TO PALISTINE	GENESIS 31-33
NOTES	
<p>1. Jacob’s increased wealth comes at the expense of Laban’s sons. Over time their animosity towards Jacob begins to affect Laban’s attitude towards Jacob as well (31:1-2).</p> <p>2. It is God Who speaks into the situation and determines the timing of Jacob’s departure for home (vs.3).</p>	

3. Before the journey can be completed, Jacob first needs to escape from Laban, whom he does not trust (with good reason!) It will take God's intervention to protect him (**vs. 24,29**)
4. As they are leaving, Rachel steals her father's idols. She might have believed they held some form of power or protection. Also, they would have been valuable just for the metals they were made from. Her religious background would have been Pagan. It was not until marrying Jacob that she would have heard of The LORD. It is probable that her 'Faith' was a mixture of Pagan and the true God. (**vs. 30-42**)
5. The treaty between Laban and Jacob was based on their mistrust of each other (**vs. 43-55**).
 - The core of the covenant is **verses 48-52**. They are promising to never cross over to the other's land with the intent of doing them harm. Also, it is telling that Laban entrusts his daughters to God's care, not Jacobs.
6. Note that Laban swears by all of the gods he and his family believe in. Jacob only swears by the God of his father and grandfather (**vs. 53-54**).
 - This shows that though Jacob has spent a number of years with Laban, he has remained faithful to following only God. His faith seems to be growing, though there are indications it never matured to the depth of Abraham or even Isaac.
 - The conversion of Abraham has now extended to his grandson. As we will see, it will soon extend to at least Joseph, his great-grandson.
7. As we read **Genesis 32 and 33** one cannot avoid the irony and even humor of everything Jacob does out of his fear of Esau. In the end, all of it was wasted time and effort. It is clear that Esau has moved one long ago, and greets Jacob warmly as his brother (**33:4**).
8. The most significant event in these chapters takes place in **Genesis 32:22-32**, as Jacob has an encounter with God.
 - We are not told how the encounter began, but sometime in the night he and 'a man' (later identified by Jacob as God. This seems likely, given the blessing in **verses 28**). They wrestle until dawn. The idea of the words 'he did not prevail against Jacob (**vs.25**) is not that Jacob was too strong, but that he was determined to hold on. Jacob, recognizing this is God, wants a blessing.
 - The blessing revolves around a name change, from 'Jacob' (deceiver) to 'Israel' (he strives with God). After all he has done to scheme and manipulate to get his way, Jacob finally sees his real blessing needs to come from God.
 - This becomes the moment Jacob more fully surrenders to God.
9. Jacob settles his family in the city of Shechem in Canaan (**33:18-20**).

PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS:

JOSEPH (1915 BC – 1805 BC)

EVENT # 20	SCRIPTURE
JOSEPH IS SOLD INTO SLAVERY	GENESIS 37
<p>NOTES</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Jacob repeats the mistake of his parents as he favors his son Joseph over his other sons (37:3). The special coat he gave Joseph not only indicated this favoritism, but also could have indicated his intention of giving the Birthright to him. 2. Compounding the favoritism of Jacob are the dreams Joseph has (vs.5-11). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both dreams have the same meaning – Joseph’s family will one day bow before him. He will assume the role of leader and Patriarch. • The response of his brothers is predictable. Anger is turning to bitterness. Soon it will blossom into malice. • Although he speaks out at Joseph, Jacob seems to see that possibly God is behind these dreams (vs.11). • It is not hard to see that to some degree, Joseph has an attitude of pride. After all, he is the favored son. Apparently by God as well as by his father. The soon coming events will serve to break that pride and move him to complete dependence on God. 3. Joseph’s brothers sell Joseph into slavery (vs. 12-36) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At first they intend to kill him. However in the end they sell him as a slave to some traders going to Egypt. • Either they hated Joseph enough to break their father’s heart, or this plan was intended to pay him back for his favoritism. <p>PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS:</p>	

EVENT # 21	SCRIPTURE
JOSEPH’S JOURNEY FROM SLAVE TO PRIME MINISTER	GENESIS 39-41
<p>NOTES</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Joseph becomes steward of an Egyptian official (Genesis 39:1-18) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potiphar would have been a rich and powerful man. Note that Joseph’s success was the result of God’s hand on him (vs. 2, 5). • Because of his handsome appearance, Joseph is propositioned by his master’s wife (vs. 6-18) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Joseph’s refusal is based on his respect for his master (vs.8) and more importantly God (vs.9). • After repeatedly being refused, Potiphar’s wife lodges false rape charges against Joseph (vs. 13-18). 2. Joseph’s experience in prison (Genesis 39:19-40:23) 	

- While Potiphar's anger is kindled, he decides against putting Joseph to death and instead puts him in prison (**Genesis 39:19-20**). Perhaps he has some level of doubts regarding his wife's charges against Joseph.
- Once again, the combination of Joseph's character and ability and God's hand brings him to a place of stewarding (**39:21-23**).
- We see Joseph's deep faith in God as he offers to interpret the dreams of the Pharaoh's cupbearer and baker (**Genesis 40:8**). Joseph is able to interpret each dream accurately (**vs.9-22**).
- Although Joseph told him to remember him when released from prison (**vs.14-15**) the Cupbearer forgets him (**vs.23**).

3. Joseph is released and joins Pharaoh's court (**Genesis 41**)

- The dreams of Pharaoh undoubtedly come from God. The request of Pharaoh for them to be interpreted sparks the memory of the Cupbearer, whose close proximity to his king would have made him aware of the situation. He tells Pharaoh about Joseph and his interpretive skills (**Genesis 41: 1-13**).
- Joseph has been waiting two years for this moment! Even still, rather than enhance his standing before Pharaoh by claiming credit for this skill, he is quick to point to God as the one with the answers. Joseph is simply the mouthpiece (**vs. 14-16**).
- Both dreams refer to seven years of abundant harvest to be followed by seven years of an even harsher famine (**vs. 17-36**).

4. Joseph is elevated to the position of Prime Minister (**vs. 37-45**)

- Note that Joseph's testimony for God has an effect on Pharaoh (**vs. 39**).
- Pharaoh puts everything and everyone under Joseph's authority, with the exception of himself (**vs. 40-45**)

5. Joseph prepares for the coming famine (**vs. 46-57**)

- Joseph, using the authority given to him by Pharaoh, takes the seven years of abundance to put grain aside (**vs. 46-49**)
- As the famine strikes, not only the people of Egypt, but of the surrounding nations come to Joseph for food (**vs. 53-57**)

PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS:

EVENT # 22	SCRIPTURE
JOSEPH IS REUNITED WITH HIS FAMILY	GENESIS 42-45
<p>NOTES</p> <p>1. Among the other people who go to Egypt for food is Joseph's family (vs. 42:1-5).</p> <p>2. Recognizing his brothers but they not recognizing him allows Joseph to begin a series of actions designed to test their hearts to see if anything has changed with them (vs. 6-25). In verse 25 we see the generosity of Joseph in providing for his brothers. In addition, he might have been wanting to see what their response to finding the money was going to be.</p>	

3. God is going to use this famine to do a major work in Joseph's brother's lives. The first work, as is usual with God, is conviction (**Genesis 42:21**).
4. In **Genesis 44** Joseph completes his test of his brothers. Faced with breaking his father's heart once again, what will they do?
 - Judah steps forward and offers to take the place of Benjamin. His words to Joseph (**Genesis 44:18-34**) demonstrate that the conviction in **chapter 42:21** had grown to repentance and then a changed heart.
5. Joseph reveals himself and reconciles with his brothers (**Genesis 45**)
 - The emotion of Joseph reveals his soft heart and gracious attitude (**Genesis 45:1-2**)
 - As Joseph reveals his identity his brothers are frozen in fear, convinced he will now use his position to gain his revenge on them.
 - However Joseph sees God's hand in all of his experiences since they sold him. This spiritual perspective enables him to have a forgiving spirit towards them (**vs. 5,7,9; 50:19**)
6. Joseph sends for his father and the family settles in Egypt. This will set up the events that will unfold in Exodus (**vs. 45:25-46:7**)

PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS