

Psalm 11-12, Genesis 9-14 (#7)

Psalm 11— Here is another Psalm of David. It rings true with the courage of a shepherd, bear killer, lion slayer, and defeater of giants. When faced with overwhelming odds, we can say to our fear “How can you tell me to flee? God is my refuge.” *What does it mean when it says God is righteous?*

Psalm 12 — How poignant is this psalm for our modern society? Faithlessness and immorality are the acceptable standard of public and private conduct. As Christians, we must strive for God’s higher standards. *What does the word “faithful” mean?*

Genesis 9— God makes a covenant with Noah and all his descendents, thereby establishing human government on the earth. He gives them commands to be fruitful and multiply and not take the life of another. God gives the rainbow as a sign that He will never again destroy the earth by a flood. Noah becomes drunk and pronounces a curse on Ham’s son Canaan. *1. Does the Bible teach capital punishment? See Verse 6 and Romans 13:1-5. 2. What instruction, promises, and commands did God give Noah in this chapter?*

Genesis 10— This chapter lists the descendants of Noah’s sons, Ham, Shem, and Japheth and how they go on to populate different parts of the earth. *Reading verses 8 to 12, what can we deduce about Nimrod and his influence on the world at his time?*

Genesis 11— The tower of Babel “presents a unified humanity using all its resources to establish a city that is the antithesis of what God intended when He created the world. The tower is a symbol of human autonomy...thus establishing their own destiny without any reference to the Lord.” #5 p. 69. God confuses the languages so that people will fulfill His desire to populate and fill the whole world (vv. 1-9). A genealogy is traced from Noah to Abram, with a more detailed look at the descendants of Abram’s father Terah (vv. 10-32). *Why was building the tower of Babel wrong?*

Genesis 12— Abram is called to leave Haran and by faith go to a land God would show him with the promise of blessing if he obeys. After arriving in Canaan God appears to Abram, and so Abram builds an altar to the Lord (vv. 1-9). During a famine in Canaan, Abram and Sarai go to Egypt to find refuge but he asks Sarai to lie in order to protect himself from being killed. God protects Sarai and Abram from Pharaoh, and then they return to Canaan (v. 10-20). *What are the promises God gave to Abraham in this chapter for leaving Haran and journeying to Canaan? Extra Question: What are the three major purposes for which God called Abraham?*

Genesis 13— Abram and Lot separate because of the strife of their herdsmen and their great abundance. Abram gives Lot the option to choose where he would like to go, and Lot chooses the well watered Jordan Valley (vv. 1-13). After his separation from Lot, God promises to give land of Canaan to the offspring of Abram (vv. 14-18). *What do the actions of Abraham and Lot reveal about their character in this chapter? Extra question: What are the tests that Abraham experienced in Chapters 12 and 13, and what was his response to them?*

Genesis 14— Four kings make war against the kings of Sodom, Gomorrah and others and carry off Lot and his possessions. Upon hearing this, Abram, his 318 men, and trained men of his allies, went and defeated the four kings and rescued Lot. After winning the battle, Melchizedek, king of Salem appears and blesses Abram, and Abram gives a tithe of all he has to Melchizedek, but he refuses to take any of the booty from the battle when it was offered by the King of Sodom. *What are words you can use to describe Abraham in this chapter? Extra Question: Who was Melchizedek, and what significance does he have in the Bible? See Psalm 110:4, Hebrews 5:6, 7:1-7*

Psalms 13-14, Genesis 15-20 (#8)

Psalm 13 — This Psalm shows our distorted perception of time in the midst of trouble. When sorrows and pains seem an eternity, we can trust in God's unfailing love. Truly, sorrow endures for the night but joy comes in the morning. *How do we overcome our fears of abandonment in the midst of adversity?*

Psalm 14 — The Apostle Paul quotes this Psalm in Romans 3:10-12. He uses it to make the point that righteousness based upon merit is an unattainable goal. It is interesting to note that this Psalm makes no attempt to justify our sins before a holy God. Verse 7 cries out for salvation, not if God chooses, but when he does. *What are God's attributes given in this Psalm?*

Genesis 15— God appears to Abram in a vision and makes a covenant with him by assuring him that his very own son will be an heir and his offspring would be as numerous as the stars in the heavens. Abram believed God's Word, and He counted it to him as righteousness (vv. 1-6). To assure Abram of His promise, God made a covenant through sacrificing animals and dividing their bodies. Since Abram fell into a deep sleep, only God participated in the covenant showing the unconditional nature of it (vv. 7-21). *What are the promises and assurances that God gave to Abraham in this chapter?*

Genesis 16— Unwilling to wait on the Lord, Abram has Ishmael by Hagar, the maidservant of Sarai. Since Hagar looks down on Sarai because she is pregnant and not Sarai, she receives harsh treatment from Sarai and flees into the wilderness to get away from it. The angel of the Lord appears to Hagar and encourages her to return and submit to Sarai and gives her a promise to multiply her offspring. *What are the reasons why Abraham agreed to the suggestion to have children through Hagar instead of waiting on the Lord? Extra Question: What evidences are there that Abraham believed that Ishmael really was the promised offspring?*

Genesis 17— With Abram (meaning "exalted father") at ninety-nine years of age, God appears to him as "El Shaddai (God Almighty)" and changes his name to Abraham, because he will be the father of a multitude of nations. God commands all of the males in Abraham's household to be circumcised as a sign and seal of His covenant (vv. 1-14). Then God changes the name of Sarai (my princess) to Sarah (princess) and promises to give Abraham a son by her within a year, and that He will establish His covenant with Isaac (vv. 15-27). *Explain the*

meaning, purpose, and details of God's command to Abraham to circumcise all males in his household. What spiritual meaning did it convey to Christians in the New Testament? See Colossians 2:11-13.

Genesis 18— The angel of the Lord and two angels appear to Abraham at Mamre, and Abraham and Sarah show hospitality to them. The Lord reaffirms the fact that Sarah will bear Isaac in her old age although she laughs. Upon hearing God's plan to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham intercedes on behalf of Lot's family. *Upon assuring Sarah that she indeed will bear a son in her old age, the Lord said, "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" In your life or the life of your family or church are you facing any situation or circumstance that, except for divine intervention, is impossible to overcome? Can you trust God to do the impossible in this? Extra Question: What impresses you about the conversation between God and Abraham concerning God's judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah?*

Genesis 19— The two angels come to Sodom and are given hospitality by Lot. The men of the city surround Lot's house to assault the two visitors but are prevented from doing so. Lot and his family are forcibly removed from the city so that God can destroy the people of Sodom for their sin. Lot's wife disregards the command not to look back and is transformed into a pillar of salt, perhaps engulfed by the sulfur and brimstone. Lot's two daughters, compelled by their desperation to preserve their family line, stoop to have an incestuous relationship with their father, showing their acceptance of the morals of Sodom. *What lessons can we learn from (1) Lot, (2) Lot's wife and daughters, (3) Sodom and Gomorrah, and (4) God in this chapter? Extra Question: Why do you think Lot's future son-in-laws thought he was jesting (joking) when he tried to warn them of God's imminent judgment?*

Genesis 20— Abraham journeys to Gerar and again, fearful for his life, has Sarah say she is his sister. God protects Sarah and Abraham again and comes to Abimelech in a dream revealing Abraham's half truth. Despite his lie, Abraham intercedes to God for Abimelech, and heals his wife, and opens the wombs of the women of his household. *Why did Abraham lie again about Sarah? What consequences came from these lies? See Genesis 26:1-11*

Sources for summary and questions: 1. Serendipity Bible for Groups . c. 1988 Littleton, CO. 2. MacArthur Study Bible c. 1997 Thomas Nelson, Inc. 3. Life Application Bible c. 1988 Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. 4. The Illustrated Bible Handbook. c. 2008 by George W. Knight, Barbour Publishing Inc. Uhrichsville, OH. 5. ESV Study Bible c. 2008 Crossway Bibles, Wheaton, IL. 6. The World Bible Handbook, Lawrence Richards, Word Inc. Waco, TX. 7. The Quest Study Bible, c. 1994 Zondervan Publishing & Christianity Today, Grand Rapids, MI & Wheaton, IL. 8. The Transformation Study Bible, c. 2009, David C. Cook.

Psalms 15-16, Genesis 21-26 (#9)

Psalm 15— The word “who” is repeated nine times in this Psalm. Who may, who is, who does, who speaks, and so on. These are words depicting faith in action. Words depicting a life spent living out the two greatest commandments. *Who may dwell in God’s temple or holy hill?*

Psalm 16— This Psalm is quoted by both Peter and Paul as prophetic, foretelling the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and his ascension to God’s right hand. *What are the blessings we receive because we have set the Lord always before us (see verses 8, 9, and 11)?*

Genesis 21— Isaac is born to a ninety year old woman which shows that the birth of Isaac and the eventual development of the nation of Israel is nothing less than a miracle from the God of the impossible. When Ishmael was laughing in mockery and ridicule at Isaac during his weaning celebration, Sarah demands the expulsion of Ishmael and Hagar from their encampment. Abraham reluctantly complies with Sarah's request after receiving reassurance from God that Isaac is the only heir, and also giving Abraham a promise that He would take care of Ishmael and make him a great nation (v. 1-13). After being sent into the wilderness, God appears to Hagar providing needed water and assuring her of His blessing on Ishmael (v.14-21). Abraham and Abimelech reach an agreement about a well at Beersheba (v 22-34). *Verse 10 says, “So she said to Abraham, ‘Cast out this slave woman with her son, for the son of this slave woman shall not be heir with my son Isaac.’” Explain the spiritual truth that is illustrated by Paul concerning this verse. See Galatians 4:22-31, Romans 9:6-9.*

Genesis 22— God tests Abraham by commanding him to take his son to Mount Moriah and offer him as a sacrifice. At the last moment God prevents Abraham from killing Isaac but provides a sacrifice in Isaac’s place and then repeats His promise to multiply his offspring. *Isaac was the dearest thing to Abraham’s heart when God asked him to sacrifice him. As you look at your life, what is your “Isaac”? What is the one thing you treasure above all else? Have you ever surrendered your “Isaac” to God?” Extra Question: After God provided Abraham a sacrifice in place of Isaac, he called the place, “Jehovah Jireh” or “The Lord will provide.” 2. When is a time in your life when you found God to be “Jehovah Jireh” to you? What is one thing you need God to provide for you right now?*

Genesis 23— Sarah dies at the age of 127, and Abraham buys a burial place for her in a cave near Hebron which will be used for his gravesite and that of future generations. *What does buying this land for a burial site say about Abraham's trust in God and His promises?*

Genesis 24— Abraham sends his servant on a 520 mile (837 km) trip from Beersheba to Haran to find a wife for Isaac among his own family. The servant is overwhelmed by the way God orchestrated his journey to find Rebekah who is a woman of purity, beauty, initiative, with a willingness to become Isaac's wife. The servant and Rebekah return to the land of Canaan, where Isaac and Rebekah are married. *How is God's providence seen in this chapter?*

Genesis 25— After Sarah's death, Abraham takes Keturah as his wife, and she bears him six sons who Abraham sends away before he dies so that Isaac becomes the sole heir. Abraham dies at the age of 175 and is buried beside Sarah by his sons, Isaac and Ishmael (v. 1-10). The descendents and death of Ishmael are given, and the scripture says that he lived in hostility with all his siblings (v. 12-18). God answers Isaac's prayer, and twins are born to Isaac and Rebekeh. Esau and Jacob become rivals, and each parent picks a favorite, but God revealed to Rebekah that the elder would serve the younger. Esau sells his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of stew (v. 19-34).

What good traits, bad traits and resulting actions do we see in Isaac and Rebekah? Extra Question: What does this chapter reveal about the personality and character of Jacob and Esau?

Genesis 26— During a famine in the land, God warns Isaac not to go to Egypt but to stay in the land of Canaan where He confirms the covenant with Isaac (v. 1-5). Due to fear, Isaac lies about Rebekah, but God protects him. Through God's faithfulness even in a drought, Isaac was blessed and reaped a hundredfold during the harvest time (v. 6-16). Isaac is a man of peace and will not fight over water rights even during a time of drought. The Lord again appears to Isaac and affirms His covenant. Isaac and Abimelech make a covenant and have a feast (v. 17-33). The choice of wives by Esau makes life bitter for Isaac and Rebekah (34-35). *How is God's grace and faithfulness shown to Isaac?*

Psalm 17, Genesis 27-32 (#10)

Psalm 17 — "Though you test me, you will find nothing..." Oh how I wish I could utter such words! David seems to be extremely arrogant, claiming to be righteous, free from sin, and steadfast in following God's decrees. As arrogant as that may seem, God called him a man after his own heart. David, although not sinless, was truly exceptional. *Is there a way you can improve your walk with God?*

Genesis 27— Isaac calls Esau and asks him to hunt for game and then prepare a meal so Isaac can bless him. Hearing this, Rebekah tells Jacob to deceive Isaac into thinking that Jacob was Esau so he would receive the special blessing. A meal is prepared by Rebekah, and Jacob presents himself as Esau before Isaac and receives the blessing. Immediately after, Esau prepares a delicious meal and presents it to his father Isaac who realizes that Jacob tricked him and received His blessing instead. Esau plans to kill his brother so Isaac and Rebekah send off Jacob to her brother Laban's house in Haran to marry one of his daughters. *Knowing that Jacob had a heart for the spiritual blessings that came along with the birthright, and God's statement that the "older would serve the younger," were Jacob and Rebekah justified in deceiving Isaac into getting the blessing? Explain. If not, what should they had done?*

Genesis 28— Isaac sends off Jacob with Abraham's covenant blessing to Paddan-aram to the house of Laban to find a wife. Esau marries a daughter of Ishmael to please his parents. On his way to Haran God appears to Jacob at Bethel in a vivid dream and confirms the promises and blessings that He gave to Abraham and Isaac. Jacob makes a vow to God in return. *List all the promises God made with Jacob in his vision at Bethel (v. 12-15). Extra Question: In verse 22b Jacob says, "And of all you give me I will give a full tenth (tithe) to you (ESV)." Does the Bible teach tithing for the Christian today? Why or why not? Give scriptural evidence.*

Genesis 29— Jacob encounters Rachel with her sheep at the well near Haran. He then meets Laban and stays with them for a month and agrees to work seven years to marry Laban's daughter Rachel. Jacob meets his match in Laban who deceives Jacob in marrying first the oldest daughter Leah, and then Jacob agrees to work another seven years for Rachel. Rachel is barren, but Leah's womb is open and has four sons. *As you read this chapter, how do you see God's work of justice play out in the life of (1) Jacob and (2) Leah?*

Chapter 30— Verses 29:31 to 30:22 describes the birth of 11 sons and a daughter to Jacob and his four wives. This chapter shows the discord, infighting, and rivalry that happens when God’s law of marriage is not followed. Jacob’s family thought it was the mandrake plants that caused fertility, but the scripture declares that it was God who opened the womb. In verses 25 to 43, it is God who increases Jacob’s flocks not his superstitious practices.

As you read the story of the birth of the 11 sons and one daughter (29:31 to 30:22), relate the good, the bad, and the ugly in the actions and happenings in the lives of Jacob’s four wives.

Genesis 31— After Jacob hears Laban’s sons complaints and sees Laban’s attitude toward him change because of God’s blessing on him, then God speaks to Jacob and tells him to return with his family to the land of Canaan. Without advising Laban, Jacob and his family flee Haran, but eventually Laban catches up with him. Laban is instructed by God to be careful how he speaks to Jacob. Laban accuses Jacob of stealing his household gods, but without anyone knowing, Rachel hides them under her saddle. Jacob recounts the injustices he suffered at the hands of Laban, and they both form a covenant and set up a stone pillar. *How did God show His grace and protection on Jacob and his family in this chapter?*

Genesis 32— After a peaceful separation from Laban, Jacob’s life is once again full of fear and panic thinking of meeting his estranged brother Esau who had vowed to kill him twenty years earlier. Being terrified, Jacob cries out to the Lord and appeals for protection on the basis of God’s covenant and promises (v. 1-12). Flocks and herds are sent on ahead as gifts by Jacob to appease Esau. Jacob wrestles with God all night until daybreak, and God puts his hip socket out of joint and changes his name to Israel, meaning “he struggles with God” (v. 13-32). *Share the spiritual lessons taught in the story of Jacob wrestling with God.*