

Week 1 Genesis 1 and Psalm 1

Genesis— this is the book of beginnings showing how the world and life was created, the creation and sin of mankind, God’s judgment by sending the flood and tower of Babel, the call and life of Abraham, and the building of the nation of Israel.

Genesis 1— God creates the earth and everything in it in six days and pronounces it very good. God created man and women in His own image and gives them the command to be fruitful and multiply and have dominion over all living creatures. **1. Where in Genesis 1 do we see evidence of the doctrine of the Trinity? 2. How are we made in God’s image (v. 26)?**

Psalm— the book of Psalms (150) is divided into five sections (books) with each ending in a doxology. The first section goes from Psalm 1:1 to 41:13. The book of Psalms gives the full expression of our praise, worship, joy, sadness, and trust. Psalms has been the hymnbook of Israel and then the Church for the last 3000 years.

Psalm 1— This Psalm sets the course for the lives of all people of all time. Either we choose lives that honor God and are saturated by His Word, thus leading to life and blessedness, or we choose lives of self-will and rebellion which ultimately leads to eternal destruction. **As you begin this year in Next Level, which do you choose? What are the “blessed” (happy) people like and not like, and what are the promises God gives to them?**

Week 2 Psalm 2 Genesis 2-6, PSALM 3

Psalm 2— This Psalm speaks of the sovereignty of God and His Christ over all people and all creation for all time. It is eternal suicide to reject the Lord as the King of our lives. **What are the various reactions you see in the world today to the Lordship of Jesus Christ?**

Genesis 2— On the seventh day God rests from all His work (v. 1-3). Chapter two gives a more detailed account of the creation describing the lush garden of Eden and the river that flowed out of it that becomes four rivers (v. 4-14). God gives clear instructions about one prohibition to Adam and Eve (v. 15-17). God creates Eve for Adam to meet their mutual needs for intimate relationship, companionship, and oneness (v. 18-25). Verse 3 says, “God blessed the seventh day and made it holy.” The fourth commandment says, “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy (Exodus 20:8). **Are Christians**

under the same obligation to keep the Sabbath (7th day) as Israel? Why or why not? Extra Question: In verses 18 to 25, God institutes marriage. What are some of God's purposes for marriage?

Genesis 3— In the form of a serpent, Satan deceives Eve, and she eats of the forbidden fruit and gives it to Adam, and he also eats. God appears in the garden to confront Adam and Eve and gives them a promise of a coming redeemer, but also tells them of their consequences of disobeying Him by eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. ***1. What strategy did Satan use to get Adam and Eve to fall and eat of the forbidden fruit? 2. How did God show Himself gracious to Adam and Eve even though they sinned against Him?***

Genesis 4— Cain and Abel are born to Adam and Eve, and in the course of time, the two sons present an offering to God. When God accepts Abel's offering and rejects the offering of Cain, Cain became furious and kills his brother. Cain is punished by God for his murder, but God places a protective mark on him. Hope arises again with the birth of Seth who carries on the godly line. ***Why was Cain's offering rejected and Abel's offering accepted by God?***

Genesis 5— This chapter lists the genealogy from Adam to Noah. Even though each person listed had sons and daughters, Noah and his wife, their three sons, and their wives are the only ones that will be alive after God judges the world by sending the flood. In the midst of a dark, sinful world, Enoch walks with God for 300 years and is taken directly to heaven without dying. Verse 22 says that "Enoch walked with God...300 years." ***What does this verse imply about Enoch and God? See Hebrews 11:5-6. Extra question: Other than Elijah, Enoch was the only person who never had to experience death. Will there be another generation in the future who will not have to taste death? Explain. See I Thess. 4:13-18.***

Genesis 6— Due to the continual exceeding wickedness that pervaded the world, God determines to destroy all living persons and creatures by a universal flood, but He finds one righteous person. God tells Noah and his family to build an ark to save them from the flood, and Noah obeys all that God commands. In verse 8 it says, "Noah found favor (grace) in the eyes of the Lord." ***List the godly character qualities that are evidenced in the life of Noah (v. 9-22).***

Psalms 3— As David was surrounded by Absalom's army, his trust and hope was in the Lord whose very presence was a shield around him. This psalm of

lament and confidence “becomes a pattern for praise, peace, and prayer amidst pressure.” (MacArthur) ***Share a time you felt betrayed and abandoned by someone. What brought you through?***

Week 3 Psalm 4, Genesis 7-11, Psalm 5

Psalm 4— In the dark experiences of life, we cry out to God and know He hears us when we call. Under dire pressure, David vacillates between feelings of terror and trust. Confidence in the Lord finally wins the day. After crying out to God in his distress (v. 1-2), ***what reasons does David give why he has become joyful, peaceful, and secure?***

Genesis 7— Noah, his family, and pairs of all living creatures enter the ark, and then the rain pounds the earth for forty days and fountains of the deep burst open. The waters covered the whole earth and every creature that had breath perished. Only Noah and his family survived the flood because they were safely in the ark. ***What is the only real ark of safety in the world today in order for people to survive God’s righteous judgment? See I Peter 3:18-22, Acts 4:12, and John 14:6.***

Genesis 8— After the flood ended, the waters of the earth recede, and finally Noah and his family leave the ark. Noah erects an altar to sacrifice burnt offerings in gratitude for deliverance through the flood. God responds to their act of worship and promises never again to send a catastrophic judgment by means of a flood. God establishes the cycle of seasons for as long as the earth remains. From start of the flood to the exit from the ark after the flood, ***exactly how long was Noah and his family in the ark? See 7:11, 8:13-14.***

Genesis 9— God makes a covenant with Noah and all his descendents and thus establishes 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?***

Psalms 5— "Give ear... O Lord." David asks God to hear his prayer. But he does much more than that. David eagerly expects an answer. ***What gives David the assurance that he will be heard when he prays?***

Week 4 Psalm 6, Genesis 12- 16, Psalm 7

Psalm 6— David shows us an instance where he had undergone the Lord's discipline. Indeed, all who are godly will endure His loving discipline from time to time. David cries out for God's mercy. In Jesus we see the extent to which God will go to offer us mercy that we don't deserve. ***How does David's response to God's discipline exemplify godly sorrow?***

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*

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?*

Psalms 7— David is a colorful writer, using graphic language to depict his request to God. His enemy will “tear like a lion, rip to pieces, and trample to the ground.” He uses even greater attributes for God. God is his refuge, judge, the Most High, his shield, and warrior. A lion cannot scale a fortress or overcome an armed soldier. David understood that God protects his own. **On**

what basis does David request God's assistance? Do we have that same right?

Week 5 Psalm 8, Genesis 17- 21, Psalm 9

Psalm 8— This is an incredible psalm, portraying the majesty of God compared to the smallness of man. Have we ever marveled at God's love for us? Why does God care for us at all? He could just wipe us out in an instant and start over, creating a new race of beings more inclined to love and serve him. Instead, He chose to save us. ***Describe a time when you were overwhelmed with an awareness of God's majesty and grace.***

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***

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 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.***

Psalms 9— This psalm reminds us of the sovereignty of God. He rules over the nations and none can thwart His will. All who oppose Him are brought to ruin and defeat (v 6). This is good news for those who trust in Him (v 10). ***How does David respond to God's deliverance from trouble?***

Week 6 Psalm 10, Genesis 22- 26, Psalm 11

Psalm 10— “Why, O Lord, do you stand far off...?” We are reminded by the Apostle Peter that God is on His own timetable, not ours. Our lack of understanding His purpose does not nullify His love or His promises. As the psalmist writes, God sees our trouble and grief and responds. ***In what way has God proven Himself faithful?***

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, and a willingness to become Isaac’s wife. The servant and Rebekah return to the land of Canaan, and 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 are***

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

Genesis 26— During a famine in the land God warns Isaac not to go to Egypt but to stay in the land of Canaan and confirms His covenant with Isaac (v. 1-5). Due to fear, Isaac lies about Rebekeh, 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 Rebekeh (34-35). *How is God’s grace and faithfulness shown to Isaac?*

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?*

Week 7 Psalm 12, Genesis 27- 31, Psalm 13

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 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 sendoff 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?*

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?***

Week 8 Psalm 14, Genesis 32- 36, Psalm 15

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 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.***

Genesis 33— To the relief of Jacob, his meeting after twenty years with his brother Esau is a cordial one. Jacob introduces his family and gives gifts of livestock to Esau. Esau returns to Seir and Jacob goes to Shechem, and erects an altar to worship the God of Israel. ***What might be some reasons that Esau was not angry with his brother Jacob anymore?***

Genesis 34— The Bible does not hide the sordid details of the lives of the sons of Jacob. After the rape of Jacob's daughter Dinah, his sons (especially Simeon and Levi) avenge Dinah, deceiving and killing Shechem and Hamor's family. ***Who was more honorable, Shechem or Jacob's sons (Simeon and Levi)? Why?***

Genesis 35— God calls Jacob back to Bethel where he had met God for the first time on his way to Haran. Jacob had all those with him purify themselves, put away all foreign gods, and bury them near Shechem. After obeying God by going to Bethel,

God again appears to Jacob and repeats the covenant blessings He gave to Abraham. Rachel dies while giving birth to Benjamin. Jacob comes to his father Isaac after twenty years and soon after that Isaac dies. ***How did God bless Jacob and what promises did He give Jacob for his obedience to return to Bethel (v. 5-15)?***

Genesis 36— This chapter gives a detailed genealogy of Esau. The descendants of Esau would become bitter enemies of Israel in the future. ***What can be said about the life and person of Esau? See Romans 9:13, Hebrews 12:16-17. Extra Question: What history did Israel have with Amalek, the grandson of Esau (v. 11)? See Exodus 17:8-16, Numbers 14:39-45, Deuteronomy 25:17-19, I Samuel 15, and Esther 3:1.***

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?***

Week 9 Psalm 16, Genesis 37- 41, Psalm 17

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 37— Joseph is the favorite son of Israel, therefore all the other sons are angry and jealous. Joseph tells his dreams of his family bowing down to him which makes them all the angrier, and so they plot to kill him. Instead of killing Joseph they sell him to the Ishmaelites who in turn sell him into slavery. Upon hearing of the loss of his son, Jacob will not be comforted. The Midianites sell Joseph to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh. Think back to the beginning of the life of Jacob in Haran up to the time Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers (chapters 25 to 37). ***Give the contributing factors why Joseph’s brothers sold him into slavery.***

Genesis 38— This chapter gives the unsavory account of Judah, his sons, and Tamar. Judah fathers the two sons of his daughter in law, Tamar. Judah tries to apply a double standard by making Tamar a prostitute, when all along he did not fulfill the obligation of giving his third son to raise up sons for Er, Judah’s firstborn. Contemplating this

whole scandal ridden story, *what is the most amazing result we see in the life of Judah and with the birth of Perez (Matthew 1:3)?*

Genesis 39— Joseph becomes a slave of Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, and excels in all he does so that he takes charge of everything in his household. Potiphar's wife tries to seduce Joseph, but he refuses and is wrongly imprisoned. In prison Joseph excels again and becomes the prison administrator. *1. Why was Joseph so successful both in Potiphar's house and in prison? 2. What lessons do we learn from the way Joseph resisted temptation?*

Genesis 40— Pharaoh's cupbearer and chief baker who offended him are assigned to Joseph's care by the captain of the guard. The cupbearer and the chief baker both have dreams, Joseph interprets their meaning, and the dreams are fulfilled exactly as predicted. *What lessons was God teaching Joseph in Chapters 39 and 40?*

Genesis 41— Two years after the return of the cupbearer to his position, Pharaoh has a dream that no one can interpret. The cupbearer remembers that Joseph is able to interpret dreams, and so Joseph is quickly brought up from the dungeon to interpret the dream. Giving credit to God, Joseph hears and accurately interprets the dream and is then chosen by Pharaoh to be the chief administrator of food during the next fourteen years of abundance and famine. *As you look back on Joseph's life from chapter 37 to 41, what factors prepared Joseph for going from a prisoner to be Prime Minister in one day?*

Psalms 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?*

Week 10 Psalms 18, Genesis 42- 46, Psalm 19

Psalm 18 — This Psalm is about God. Written by the newly elected king David, he recalls all that God has done for him. These deeds include protection from the insanity of Saul and numerous military victories. God performed miraculous deeds for a little shepherd from the hill country of Judah. *Take a moment and list what you are grateful for.*

Genesis 42— Now the plot thickens, and Jacob sends 10 sons to Egypt to buy grain due to of the famine in Canaan. As his brothers bow down to him, Joseph recognizes his brothers and remembers the dreams he had back in Canaan as a teenager. Joseph sends back 9 brothers with grain and keeps Simeon in prison until they return with Benjamin. Jacob is filled with self-pity at the thought of letting Benjamin go down to Egypt and possibly losing him too. He decides not to let Benjamin go to Egypt. *1. Why was it necessary for Joseph to test his brothers instead of immediately revealing his identity to them? What motivates him to do this: revenge, bring them to repentance, or what? Extra Question: What flaws do we see in Jacob's character (v. 35-38)? How should have Jacob reacted to this event as well as the things that have occurred in the previous 20 years?*

Genesis 43— The famine is so severe that Israel relents and allows his sons to go back to Egypt with Benjamin to get more grain. Once his sons arrive in Egypt, Joseph invites them to his own house to eat. Fearful of Joseph's wrath, they carefully mentioned about bringing back to him the money left in their sacks. Simeon is released from jail, and Joseph is overcome with emotion after seeing his brother Benjamin. The eleven brothers are seated in order by age, and Benjamin is served 5 times more food than his brothers. *Why do you think Joseph chooses not to reveal himself to his brothers, even at the poignant moment of greeting Benjamin? What more does Joseph want?*

Genesis 44— Still disguising his true identity from his brothers, Joseph sends them off back to Canaan at dawn. Joseph gives instructions to his steward to put his silver cup in Benjamin's bag in order to accuse him and give his final test to his brothers. Later, when the silver cup is found in Benjamin's sack, they are forced to return to face Joseph once again. Although Judah says they should all be his slaves, Joseph says that only the one guilty of stealing the cup would be his slave. Judah intercedes for Benjamin and pleads that he be allowed to take Benjamin's place for fear that if Benjamin does not return, Jacob may die of grief. *1. Why do you think Joseph choose to put the silver cup in Benjamin's sack? 2. Jesus is called the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. In what way did Judah exemplify Jesus in this chapter (v. 18-34)? How do we know his pleading impressed Joseph?*

Genesis 45— Joseph reveals himself to his brothers as they are dumbfounded and dismayed. Joseph shares with them God's purposes for his being sold by his brothers and urges them to bring his father and all their families to live with him in Egypt.

Pharaoh invites all of Jacob's family to Egypt and offers them the best land and the transportation to facilitate the move. Upon hearing that Joseph is still alive, Jacob is numb and does not believe their words until he hears Joseph's words repeated to him and sees the wagons he had sent to transport them. As Jacob hears the truth that his son Joseph is still living, what do you think went through Jacob's mind about the previous 22 years of grief and mourning? How does his story of wasted years of **lamenting touch our lives?**

Genesis 46— When Israel took his journey toward Egypt, he stopped at Beersheba and offered sacrifices to God. God appeared in a vision to Jacob and assured him that his journey to Egypt had His approval, giving him the promise that he would return to Canaan. All of Jacob's family and all their belongings are taken to Egypt in Pharaoh's wagons (v. 1-7). A record of all the names of Jacob's family who travelled to Egypt is given (v. 8-27). Jacob and Joseph finally reunite, and Joseph makes a plan so that Jacob's family can stay in Goshen (v. 28-34). ***What promises and assurances does God give to Jacob in his vision (v.2-4)?***

Psalm 19 — God's majesty is shouted in the heavens and written in scripture. This demands an allegiance to the one who redeems our soul. ***In what ways did David want to be pleasing to God? See verse 1***

Week 11 Psalm 20, Genesis 47- Matthew 1, Psalm 21

Psalm 20— David calls upon God's protection and favor. There are two assumptions here. First that God's help is sufficient to resolve any problem we face. Second is that God will act on our behalf. ***List some of the reasons David gives to assure us that God will respond to his prayer***

Genesis 47— Joseph takes Jacob and some of his brothers to see Pharaoh. Jacob blesses Pharaoh, sharing with him details of his life. After receiving approval from Pharaoh, Joseph settles all of his family in the land of Goshen which is in the district of Rameses (v. 1-12). Through wise administration, Joseph saves the people of Egypt from death and starvation, and the people give their lives and land in return (v.13-26). In the land of Goshen, the children of Israel have property, are fruitful, and multiply rapidly. Joseph promises to bury Jacob in Canaan after his death (v. 27-31). ***In this chapter, what are the ways Jacob showed himself as "Israel", the matured spiritual patriarch of his family?***

Genesis 48— When Jacob was close to death, he calls for Joseph and his sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, to come to receive a final blessing. Jacob elevates Manasseh and Ephraim to the status of full sons and declares the younger Ephraim to receive the blessing of the firstborn rather than Manasseh. From Abraham through Joseph’s sons, *what pattern do we see in the blessing of the firstborn son with the son who actually received the blessing? What lesson does this teach us about who God chooses? Extra Question: In verses 21-22, what is the significance of the words, “I have given to you rather than your brothers one mountain slope”?* See *Genesis 33:18-20, Joshua 24:32, and Numbers 13:8.*

Genesis 49— As he nears death, Jacob blesses his sons by reflecting on their past actions in order to determine how their future descendents would prosper. Through these two chapters (48-49), Joseph and Judah received the greater blessings, with Judah being promised that kings would come from his lineage culminating with the promised Messiah (v. 10). At his death, Jacob gives the final instructions to be buried in Canaan with Abraham, Isaac, and their wives. *What commendations and prophecies are given to Judah? Why?*

Genesis 50— Jacob dies and his family and the Egyptians mourn for seventy days. Joseph receives permission from Pharaoh to bury Jacob’s body in Canaan with his fathers. A long funeral procession with Jacob’s family and prominent Egyptian officials makes its way to the burying place in Canaan. After Jacob’s death, Joseph’s brothers are fearful of revenge, but he reassures them of his forgiveness and reminds them of God’s ultimate purposes of saving and building a nation. Before his death at 110 years of age, Joseph makes the leaders in Israel promise to carry his bones with them when they return to the Promised Land in the future. *Why was it important (1) to Jacob to be buried in Canaan (46:1-4, 47:29-31), and, (2) to Joseph to have his bones buried in Canaan (Hebrews 11:22)? Extra Question: As you read verses 19-21 and Romans 8:28, we think of God’s sovereignty and involvement in all the circumstances of our lives. What other Biblical stories do we see God’s sovereign work in the lives of God’s people? In your life?*

Matthew— The purpose of this book is to prove that Jesus is the King and long promised Messiah of Israel. Matthew quotes more than sixty Old Testament prophecies showing that Jesus is indeed the Christ, the Son of David. Since Matthew (also called Levi) was a hated tax collector before following Christ, he shows that the Lord extends grace and mercy to any who repent of their sin, trusts Christ, and turn their lives over to Him.

Matthew 1— In today’s society, a list of one’s ancestors is both irrelevant and boring. To the Jewish audience it was absolutely necessary to prove the right of Jesus to the throne of David. Starting with verse 18, Matthew wastes no time in explaining the birth of Christ and the strategic choosing of Mary and Joseph to bring this about. ***How does Joseph’s actions and reactions exemplify a godly character?***

Psalm 21— It is commonplace for people to forget God when they achieve their dreams, as if these things were accomplished by our own abilities. Not so with David, for he knows the depths of despair and sorrow, and savors the sweet triumph accomplished by God. ***List some of the blessings of God in this chapter***

Week 12 Psalm 22, Matthew 2-6, Psalm 23

Psalm 22 — This is obviously a Messianic psalm. Jesus even quotes the first verse on the cross. The description of suffering here is consistent with the torment of crucifixion. We too may feel abandoned by God at some point. However, for him to do so would be to deny his promise, “Lo I am with you always to the very end of the age.” ***Have you ever felt abandoned by God? What can we rely on to get us through those seasons of struggle?***

Matthew 2— Wise men from the east came to Bethlehem to worship and present gifts to the newborn “King of the Jews.” Because of King Herod’s jealous rage, God warns both the wise men and Joseph through dreams to flee from Herod. After Herod’s death, Jesus and his family returned from Egypt to Israel and settled in Nazareth, the home of Joseph and Mary. Four times in these two chapters the angel of the Lord gave instructions to Joseph through dreams. ***What are different ways that God guides and instructs us today?***

Matthew 3— John the Baptist was a forerunner of Jesus who was called to prepare the hearts of the people so that they would listen and obey Christ. Jesus was baptized by John in the Jordan River in order to “fulfill all righteousness.” ***1. As you read this chapter, what stands out in your mind about the ministry and person of John the Baptist? 2. Explain how the teaching of the Trinity is clearly seen in this chapter?***

Matthew 4— Jesus is led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the Devil (v. 1-11). Jesus begins His ministry in Galilee preaching repentance and the gospel of the kingdom (v. 12-24). ***In each of the three temptations, what was the means Jesus used to defeat Satan? How is this an example to us?***

Matthew 5— Chapters 5 to 7 is called the “Sermon on the Mount” because Jesus gave it on the side of a mountain (or hillside) near Capernaum. These chapters give the teaching of Jesus on the law and how it relates to real inner transformation of the heart rather than just outward conformity to the rules and regulations that the Pharisees taught. **1. Explain in a few words the meaning of the eight qualities (Beatitudes) of the blessed (v. 3-10).** **2. How does Jesus take the teaching of the law about anger, lust, divorce, revenge, and love to a higher standard?**

Matthew 6— In this chapter Jesus shows the Pharisee’s self-righteousness in giving to the poor, prayer, and fasting. He teaches us a pattern for our prayers (The Lord’s Prayer) and includes powerful lessons on money and worry. **1. As you read Verses 25 to 34, give the reasons why we are not to worry.** **2. What is the promise God gives us if we seek first His kingdom and righteousness in our lives?**

Psalm 23 — This is one of the most cherished of the Psalms and for good reason. We see in this Psalm the protection of our Great Shepherd, in good times or bad, He is ever present with us. **List the actions God takes on our behalf.**

Week 13 Psalm 24, Matthew 7-11, Psalm 25

Psalm 24 — David answers two crucial questions, who can stand in God’s presence, and **who is the King of Glory? How does this psalm answer them?**

Matthew 7— In this final chapter of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus speaks about judging others (v 1-6), a persevering prayer life (v. 7-11), and finishes His teaching with vital comparisons between the narrow gate and the broad gate, good trees and bad trees, and obedience and disobedience to His teaching (v.12-29). **1. Why do you think Jesus invites us to ask for things from our Heavenly Father?** **2. In verses 21 to 27, what is the difference between those who profess they belong to Christ and those who really belong to Christ?**

Matthew 8— Jesus shows His power and compassion through physical healing, casting out demons, and calming the storm. The faith of the Centurion (v. 5-13) is contrasted with the faith of the disciples (v. 23-27). **1. As you read the passage about the Roman Centurion, explain why Jesus was amazed at his faith including his understanding who Jesus was.** **2. Why did Jesus seem to make discipleship to hard (v. 18-22)**

Matthew 9— The authority, power, and compassion of Jesus are seen in the healing of the paralyzed man (v. 1-7), the bleeding woman (v. 18-22), the raising of the girl to life (v. 23-26), and the healing of the blind and mute (v. 27-34). The scribes and the Pharisees attack Jesus because He says He forgives sins, associates with tax

collectors and sinners like Matthew (v. 9-12), and His disciples do not fast like them. **1. After calling Matthew to be His disciple, Jesus went to his house to eat with the hated “tax collectors and sinners.” In what way can we follow Christ’s example where we live? 2. What prayer did Christ command us to pray? Why? See verses 35-38. Glory? How does this psalm answer them?**

Matthew 10— Jesus sends out His twelve disciples with authority to cast out evil spirits and heal diseases, giving them detailed instructions for their ministry. He warns His followers of great persecution in their service for Him but encourages them with the promise of care, protection, and guidance. He clearly delineates the cost as well as the rewards of discipleship. **What kind of commitment does Jesus call for in verses 37 to 39?**

Matthew 11— Jesus eases John the Baptist’s doubts about His being the Messiah and commends John for his faithfulness in fulfilling his calling and ministry (v. 1-19). Our Lord condemns the cities of Galilee for their indifference and lack of faith in Him and His teaching, but commends the common people who gladly heard Him. Jesus promises rest to all who are burdened down with the cares of life and with legalistic rule-keeping religion if they come to Him and take up His yoke. **1. Jesus said, “But wisdom is justified (vindicated/proved right) by her actions (v. 16-19).” Explain what He meant. 2. What advantages do we have by taking the yoke of Christ? See verses 28-30.**

Psalms 25—David longs to know God better. Discontent with his current level of awareness, he begs for more of God. **What will God do for the person who fears Him (vv. 12-14)?**