

# Genesis and the Theme of the Bible

## Introduction

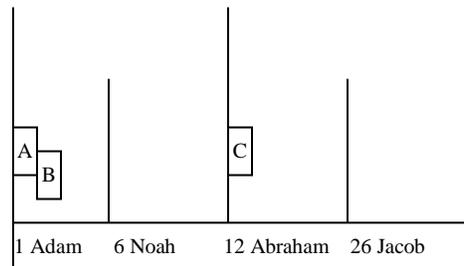
Genesis is a story in itself, but it is also part of the larger story of the Pentateuch [five books of Moses] which is in turn a part of the still larger story of the Bible. Because Genesis is a story and because it starts the biblical story, we find some important literary features in Genesis:

- † The setting: Genesis 1-3 provides the setting for the story, including the protagonist, antagonist, and other characters.
- † The tension: Genesis 3 introduces the tension for the story and then lays out the philosophy or theology that the protagonist will use to combat it.
- † The initial plot development: The rest of Genesis will show how the plot develops, far enough to affect everything else in the Bible!

## Summary

Genesis is about God's initial work to establish for himself a representative ruler on Earth. The story is broken into two major parts: first, God represented by individual people; second, God represented by a nation.

- † The first part has two main sections: God's interaction with Adam and his descendents, and then God's interaction with Noah and his descendents.
- † The second part also has two main sections: God's interaction with Abraham and his children, and God's interaction with Jacob and his children.



Along the way, God made three big promises.

- A. [Initial] Man to represent and rule for God.
- B. [After the fall] A new Adam would come to bring about a new creation, restoring the divine order and delivering the earth from the effects of sin. This is God's philosophy, with which he will combat the tension introduced by the fall.
- C. [To Abraham] God would raise up a nation to represent him and bless the rest of the world.

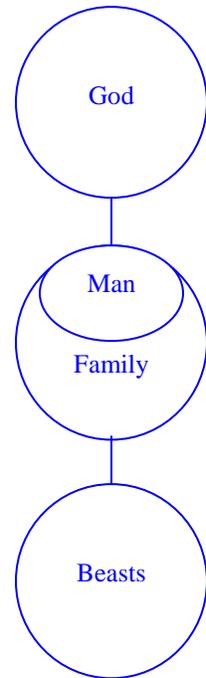
Importance: These three promises drive the action of the rest of the Bible!

- † The stories of Moses, Joshua, the Judges, and the Kings through Solomon are all about equipping the nation to represent God to bring about the fulfillment of these covenants.
- † The story of the kings and the prophets is about the failure of the nation, and especially the kings, to act on these promises, to represent God well.
- † The prophets also revealed that despite man's repeated failure, God would still deliver on these promises.
- † The New Testament is about how God is doing that, through the first advent of Christ and what is still to come.
- † Characters are judged good or bad by their reactions to God's revelation, including promises!

## Revelation of God's First Promise: Man to Represent God

*1:26-28: Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth."*

- † God created man to rule over the rest of creation for God, to represent him. There is promise and command here. Man is to trust and obey.
- † God made man in his image: we are made like him in that we are rational, creative, and have moral capacity; we have self-awareness and self-determination; we have divine awareness; we are designed to be in community; he invested in us some of his glory so that we would be capable of ruling for him.
- † Man will be fruitful and multiply, creating – not just more people! – more images of God! Like everything else, man and woman will reproduce after its kind, so generations will be like their parents. But man was made in God's image, so he is like his Father, God.



### Other Notes:

- † *2:18, 24-25: Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him" ...For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.*
- † God created woman to help man represent and rule for God [2:18-25]. Both man and woman are equal in importance before God, though man has the greater responsibility before God.
- † Man and woman are joined to become one flesh before God: they are one political entity – the family – with the man directly answerable to God for the family's wellbeing. Note their relationship is stronger than that of parents with children, for man leaves parents for wife; also it is the strongest relationship bond in the world because it is due to a covenant or vow.

This completes most of the setting: God has set up the earth, populated it with plant and animal life, and then created and equipped man and woman to rule it for him. God is the protagonist, it is his story.

## The Tension and Adam's Response

God's revelation was to avoid eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, for if they ate of it they would die [2:16-17].

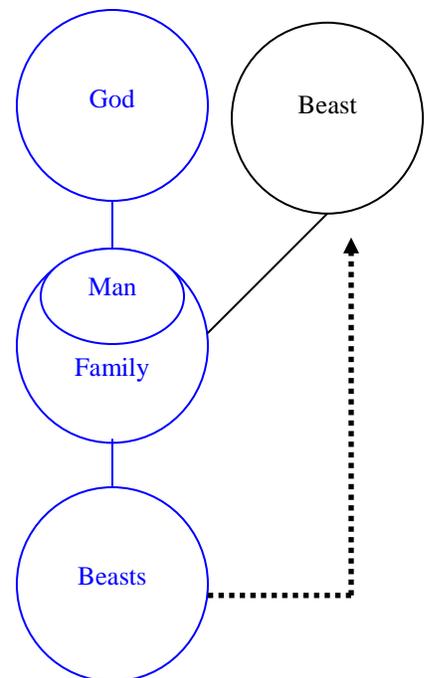
*3:1-8: Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?" The woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.'" The serpent said to the woman, "You surely will not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make {one} wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings. They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.*

† Satan distorted God's word, cast doubt on God's word, and then told another lie, in an effort to deceive Eve [3:1-5]. How do we know Satan was controlling the serpent? Divine awareness and *Revelation 20:2: And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years.*

† Eve did not trust and obey God's revelation. Instead, she used her own reasoning [which was flawed even before the sin!] which led her to sin by eating the forbidden fruit [3:6]. Eve clearly knew God's command about the fruit [3:3], and she knew her role as helping Adam rule over the beasts, but she allowed herself to be deceived and tempted by a beast [3:4-5] and acted on her observation and reasoning [3:6]. This is the key decision of life! Do we act on God's revelation – his promises and commands; trust and obey – or do we act on our own reasoning? This carries through the whole Bible, over and over again, and remains vital today.

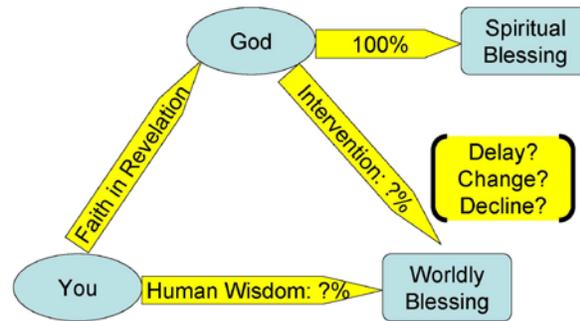
† Adam should have subdued the serpent and his wife, but instead he obeyed Eve [3:6] who obeyed the serpent, a beast, and thus subverted the authority structure. Instead of man doing the will of God – representing God, what he was created to do! – mankind had done the will of a Beast – represented the Beast – and even within the family, man had allowed the woman to become the head. Thus, as we see later, Satan gained control of the earth, because man gave up his authority and obeyed him through the beast.

† They knew they were naked so tried a fix of using fig leaves to make loin coverings; even so, they feared when God came around, because they knew they deserved death!



† Adam and Eve had failed in the same way we do: they chose to act in their human wisdom, instead of in faith on God’s revelation. They knew God’s promises and commands, but instead of trusting and obeying, they chose to rationalize their own solutions to their problems.

† This is the key test of all characters in the story! Characters are validated by God on whether they choose to trust and obey, especially trust.



**Revelation of God’s Second Promise: A New Adam to Restore God’s Intended Order**

*Genesis 3:14-21: The LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, Cursed are you more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you will go, And dust you will eat All the days of your life; And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel.”*

*To the woman He said, “I will greatly multiply Your pain in childbirth, In pain you will bring forth children; Yet your desire will be for your husband, And he will rule over you.” Then to Adam He said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat from it’; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it All the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field; By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return.”*

*Now the man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all {the} living. The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them.*

God dealt with the upside down order: beast/Satan first, then woman, then man.

- † Repercussions for man: loss of representative rule over Earth [as noted earlier], expulsion from the Garden of Eden, must now work hard to farm for food while alive, and certain death. Note: this death is passed on to children = sin nature.
- † Repercussions for woman: pain in child rearing; less intimate marriage relationship.
- † Repercussions for snake: cursed to eat dust; plus whole world enters into Satanic control and death.
- † Repercussions for Satan: prophetic announcement that God would restore the divine order through a promised seed of the woman – a new Adam – who would represent God faithfully and defeat Satan, though Satan will kill him in trying to prevent his rule. Until then, there would be enmity between those who seek to be obedient to revelation [seed of the woman] and those who forgo obedience to act in human wisdom [seed of the serpent] .

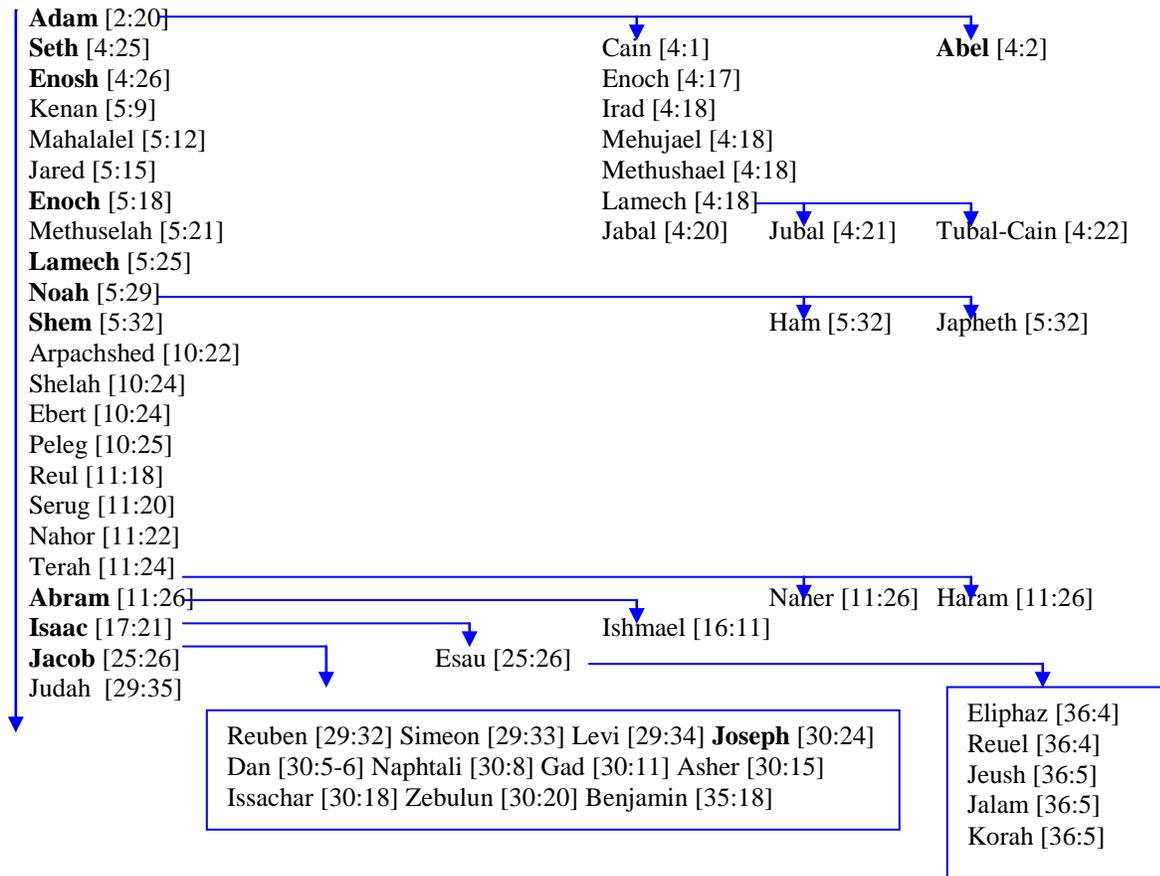
## Abel and Cain

- † Adam believed this promise! Just after getting a verdict from God of death for his sin, Adam names his wife “Eve” [3:20] which means “Life!”
- † Consistent with this promise, God provided for them covering of skins, requiring the death of innocent animals [3:21]. This symbolized the sacrificial system that would cover sin until the promised New Adam came as the ultimate sacrifice, and represented that God would continue to provide for the needs of his children.
- † Eve believed the promise too! When her first child came, Eve said literally, “I have gotten a man-child, Yahweh” [4:1]. She thought this child was the promised seed of the woman who would set things right.

*Genesis 4:2-8: Again, she gave birth to his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of flocks, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the LORD of the fruit of the ground. Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering; but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell. Then the LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will not {your countenance} be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it.” Cain told Abel his brother. And it came about when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.*

- † There is no indication of what kind of sacrifice this is, but the context suggests this was a sacrifice due to sin, since there is no mention of sacrifice while Adam and Eve were in Eden.
- † The fact that God had “sacrificed” an animal or two to make garments of skin for Adam and Eve after their original sin [3:21] suggests the appropriateness of requiring a blood sacrifice. Else, why would Abel keep animals? They were not used for food until after the flood.
- † Both brought offerings of their work, but only Abel’s was acceptable because it was modeled after the sacrifice God had shown with the animal skins. Abel’s sacrifice was thus a model of the ultimate sacrifice the New Adam would make when he died to pay the price for sin. 1 John 3:12 says Abel’s deeds were righteous while Cain’s were evil [prior to the murder].
- † Cain’s reaction to God’s lack of regard for his offering was one of anger [4:5], again indicating both weak faith and a tendency toward behaving in the natural. Cain killed his brother [4:7], apparently in this anger. Based on our understanding of Genesis 3:15, of enmity between those seeking to follow revelation and those seeking to live in the natural [swayed by the teachings of Satan through the serpent], this murder is not surprising.
- † Cain went out from the presence of the Lord [4:16], and named his city after his son, Enoch [4:17]. Cain’s descendent Lamech killed at least one person for wounding him [4:23], taking vengeance into his own hands [4:24]. These are actions in natural wisdom, for self-glorification.

## Generations



- † *Genesis 5:24: Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.* One of only two people said to be taken up into Heaven without dying first [Elijah is the other]! That he walked with God means that he trusted and obeyed: trusted in the promises and obeyed the commands.
- † Note that all the men who were singled out with favor from God come from the line of Seth and are ancestors of David up until the twelve sons of Jacob. Then, it is Joseph who is the obedient hero, not Judah through whom comes the seed of the kings.
- † Lamech believed in the Genesis 3:15 promise! *Genesis 5:28-29: Lamech lived one hundred and eighty-two years, and became the father of a son. Now he called his name Noah, saying, "This one will give us rest from our work and from the toil of our hands {arising} from the ground which the LORD has cursed."*

## Noah

*Genesis 6:5-8: Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. The LORD said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them." But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.*

- † The Lord saw that the world was wicked, with intent of thoughts on evil [6:5], and corrupt and violent [6:12]. In contrast, Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord [6:8] and was righteous, walking with the Lord [6:9]. Thus we can infer that Noah was acting on revelation and the rest of the world was acting in the natural. God judged all flesh [6:13], because of its violence, though it was man who acted wickedly [6:5], failing to act on revelation.
- † God spared Noah, his family, and two of every species, apparently because of Noah's distinctive willingness to obediently act on revelation [since God chose Noah through whom to provide deliverance]. God had previously revealed that violence and sin were not acceptable [4:7, 10].

*Genesis 8:20-9:5: Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. The LORD smelled the soothing aroma; and the LORD said to Himself, "I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done. While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night Shall not cease." And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. The fear of you and the terror of you will be on every beast of the earth and on every bird of the sky; with everything that creeps on the ground, and all the fish of the sea, into your hand they are given. Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you; I give all to you, as {I gave} the green plant. Only you shall not eat flesh with its life, {that is,} its blood."*

- † God made a covenant with Noah not to flood the earth again, which is signified by the rainbow.
- † From Noah then came all human life. He was in effect a New Adam, a new beginning for the earth. But he was tainted with a sin nature from the original Adam, as were his sons.

*Genesis 9:20-21: Then Noah began farming and planted a vineyard. He drank of the wine and became drunk, and uncovered himself inside his tent.*

- † Noah allowed something else in creation to control him: in this case the fruit of the vine. Thus he was disobedient and failed to fulfill the promise of God.
- † One of his sons, Ham, sinned by not covering Noah. He was cursed, and his descendents became the Canaanites and Egyptians [probably all of Africa].
- † Ham's descendent, Nimrod, boasts of himself and builds Babel [10:9-10].

## **Babel**

The people of Babel were acting in the natural in their attempt to get to God, choosing on their own wisdom to construct a tower to Heaven [11:4]. This displeased God, and so he acted to frustrate their plans [11:6-9]. From the beginning of mankind, God made it clear that he was willing to have fellowship with people [2:16; 3:8; 4:4-7, 10-15; 5:22-24; 6:13-21; 8:15-17; 9:1-17] and provide for them [2:15-18; 3:15, 21; 4:15; 7:14-21; 8:1-3; 9:3, 8-17], but he demanded people depend on him and obey his commands [2:16, 3:16-19, 4:10-12; 6:1-21]. It is evident that some knew what it meant to walk with God, such as Enoch [5:22-24] and Noah [6:8-9; 7:1; 8:20-21], but the people of Babel decided not to heed such revelation.

They chose where to settle [11:2]. They developed brick making and mortar [11:3]. They chose to build a city for themselves [11:4], despite God's command to fill the earth. They chose to build within the city a tower that would reach into Heaven [11:4], trying to reach God in their own power. They had an ambition to make a name for themselves to control their destiny by preventing their dispersion [11:4]. All of this was human reasoning, not acting on revelation.

-----*End First Division*-----

## **Revelation of God's Third Promise: the Abrahamic Covenant**

*Genesis 12:1-3: Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house, To the land which I will show you; And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed."*

- † Several generations later, in contrast to the people of Babel, God chose to build a people [which would become Israel] who would do things for his glory and represent him to the rest of the world. He chose to start with Abram, who brought his wife, Sarai, and his nephew, Lot.
- † While the people of Babel journeyed and chose a spot to settle on their own [11:2], God sent Abram out on his journey and showed him where to settle [12:1]. The people of Babel chose to stay together [11:4], whereas Abram was willing to go out from his people at God's direction [12:1, 4]. The people of Babel wanted to make a name for themselves [11:4], whereas Abram would depend on God to make his name great [12:2]. The people of Babel tried to reach God on their own initiative and ability [11:4] which caused God displeasure [11:6-9], whereas God went to Abram [12:1] and blessed him [12:3]. The people of Babel were interested in blessing themselves [11:4], whereas God would direct Abram's descendents to be a blessing to all the families of the world [12:3].
- † God's promise included several parts: land; a great nation and a great name; blessings on Abram and on all who blessed him; curses on his enemies [protection]; blessing to all other families through him.
- † Abram went into the land, built two altars to God, and wandered throughout the land [12:4-9].

## **Abram's Failure**

*Genesis 12:10: Now there was a famine in the land; so Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land.*

- † In response to the famine, Abram should have called on God to fulfill his promise of providing for them, but instead he turned to Egypt for provision. This is a failure to count on God's promise and a failure to represent God to the Gentiles.
- † While there, Abram further failed to rely on God's promise of provision and protection, resorting to lying about Sarai's identity, calling her his sister, so nobody would kill him for her [12:11-16].
- † Proving his promise, God did attach Pharaoh for taking Sarai from Abram [12:17].

## **Melchizedek and Abram's Success**

- † When some kings attacked the valley and took Lot captive, Abram took off after them and God delivered them into Abram's hand, again keeping his promise to bless Abram and curse those who attacked him [14].
- † After rescuing Lot and defeating several kings, Abram was met by the King of Salem, Melchizedek, a priest of God [14:18-20]. The author of Hebrews revealed that Melchizedek's name means King of Righteousness and to be King of Salem means to be the King of Peace! Salem later became Jeru-salem. Abram tithed to Melchizedek.
- † Abram refused to take reward from King of Sodom, trusting in God's provision and obedient to his role as representative of God to other nations [14:22-24].

## **Promise of a Son as Part of Third Promise in 12:1-3**

**Distrust:** Because childless, Abram assumes a servant boy will inherit [15:2-3].

**Promise:** God promised Abram a son and many descendants [which was previously promised; 15:4-5].

**Prophecy:** God prophesied the Exodus! Abram's descendants will be enslaved in a foreign land for about 400 years, but will come out wealthy having been delivered by God, who will judge the oppressor and return Abram's people to the promised land [15:13-16].

**Distrust:** Abram and Sarai try to make it happen in their own wisdom, using Sarai's maid, Hagar, who has a son by Abram, named Ishmael [16:1-4].

**Promise:** After thirteen years, God speaks again to reiterate the promise of 12:1-3 to Abraham [new name = Father of Many], give the sign of circumcision, and reiterate the promise that a son will be born to Sarah [new name = princess but with stress that kings of nations will come from her], named Isaac [17:1-16].

**Distrust:** Abraham laughed at the idea of Sarah giving birth at age 90 [17:17].

**Promise:** God would bless Ishmael but his promise would come through Sarah in Isaac [17:18-21].

**Distrust:** When Sarah heard the promise, she laughed [18:12].

**Promise:** God reiterated his intention for Sarah [18:13-14].

### **The Ups and Downs of Lot and Abraham**

- † When God revealed his plan to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham argued for the righteous in those cities, though there proved to be less than ten [18:32].
- † When the angels got to Sodom, Lot tried to protect them from the aggressive homosexual practices of the residents there [19:1-9].
- † However, Lot was willing to give up his daughters to these men, inconsistent with God's revelation [19:8].
- † After the rescue of Lot from Sodom and the destruction of those cities, Lot fell into drink and had sex with his daughters, counter to revelation in multiple ways. Their children became the founders of the Moabites and Ammonites, both enemies of Israel [19:30-38].
- † Abraham repeated to Abimelech, King of Gerar [Philistine], the lie about Sarah being his sister, again not trusting in God's provision [20].

### **The Great Trust of Abraham**

- † God brought a son to Sarah and Abraham, Isaac, just as promised [21:1-8].
- † God also said it was right to drive away Ishmael and Hagar, because Isaac was the son through whom God's promise would work; Ishmael had no inheritance in that [21:11-13].

*Genesis 22:1-14: Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." He said, "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you." So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him and Isaac his son; and he split wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. On the third day Abraham raised his eyes and saw the place from a distance. Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey, and I and the lad will go over there; and we will worship and return to you." Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son, and he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together. Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." And he said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" Abraham said, "God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." So the two of them walked on together. Then they came to the place of which God had told him; and Abraham built the altar there and arranged the wood, and bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." He said, "Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me." Then Abraham raised his eyes and looked, and behold, behind {him} a ram caught in the thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the place of his son. Abraham called the name of that place The LORD Will Provide, as it is said to this day, "In the mount of the LORD it will be provided."*

- † God then reiterated the promise of Genesis 12:1-3, specifically through Isaac [22:15-18].
- † This sacrifice of Isaac proved Abraham's faith. Abraham knew from God's revelation that one of his descendants would have to die to right the world, ridding it of sin and Satan. This then is the primary illustration of the promise of Genesis 3:15. Abraham was saved back in chapter 15, but only now does his faith become complete as he realizes he must trust God, it is God who must provide everything.

### **Transfer of promise to Isaac**

- † When Sarah died, Abraham bought her burial site, not taking anything from Gentiles [23].
- † Abraham procured Rebekah to be Isaac's wife [24].
- † Abraham died and was buried next to Sarah [25:1-11].
- † Isaac had twin sons, Esau and Jacob. While they were still in the womb, God revealed to Rebekah that the older would serve the younger, thus Esau would serve Jacob [25:19-26]. Despite this, Rebekah plotted with Jacob how he could trick Esau out of his birthright as eldest son, not trusting in God to fulfill his word [25:27-34; 27:1-46].
- † When a famine hit, God warned Isaac not to flee the land, and reiterated the promise of 12:1-3 to him [16:1-6]. Isaac obeyed that command, but repeated Abraham's failure of saying his wife was his sister, because afraid of Philistines [26:7].

### **Transfer of the promise to Jacob**

- † Jacob had a dream in which he saw a ladder from Heaven, and in which God reiterated his promise of 12:1-3. Jacob responded with awe, and then made a statement of faith [28:10-22].
- † Jacob went back to the land of his forebears and married Leah and Rachel [29]. God prospered him, brought him back to the promised land, and allowed peace with Esau, who eventually established Edom [30-33].

### **Jacob's Twelve Sons**

- † Jacob had twelve sons. Interestingly, Judah would be the forebear of David, but Joseph is the one through whom God delivered the family to keep his promise.
- † When a sister was raped, the sons not only did not trust the vengeance to God, they dishonored the rite of circumcision in the duplicitous murder of an entire town by Simeon and Levi [34].
- † The ten older brothers hated Joseph because he was their father's favorite [37:4].

### **Joseph Becomes the Deliverer**

*Genesis 37:5-11: Then Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more. He said to them, "Please listen to this dream which I have had; for behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and lo, my sheaf rose up and also stood erect; and behold, your sheaves gathered around and bowed down to my sheaf." Then his brothers said to him, "Are you actually going to reign over us? Or are you really going to rule over us?" So they hated him*

*even more for his dreams and for his words. Now he had still another dream, and related it to his brothers, and said, "Lo, I have had still another dream; and behold, the sun and the moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me." He related {it} to his father and to his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have had? Shall I and your mother and your brothers actually come to bow ourselves down before you to the ground?" His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying {in mind.}*

- † Joseph recognized from his dreams that he would be a Genesis 3:15 deliverer who would rule over his brothers.
- † Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery to some traders, who sold him in Egypt to Potipher, captain of the bodyguard for Pharaoh [37:18-36]. The brothers led Jacob to believe Joseph had been eaten by a wild beast, which would have been contrary to God's promise of provision.
- † While Joseph was in Egypt, Judah had three sons. He found a wife named Tamar for his eldest, but God took his life because he was evil [38:6-7]. So he instructed his second son to impregnate Tamar to keep his brother's seed alive, but he withdrew from her and spilled his seed on the ground, which angered God, who took his life also [38:8-10]. This goes back to the marriage promise of 2:24: the son leaves to find a woman, and brings her back into the inheritance [image of God/physical] and they become one flesh with regard to inheritance. Thus, Tamar had the rights of the son she married, the first born. Judah reveals he knows this when he accuses her of adultery.
- † To keep the family seed alive, Jacob should have led his third son to Tamar when he grew up, but he did not. She then resorted to a trick, positioning herself as a prostitute and seducing Jacob. When she left him, she took some identifying items. When she appeared pregnant, Jacob wanted her killed for her adultery to the family, but she produced the identifying items and he knew his own guilt of treating God's promise of seed lightly. Not only had he not led his third son to her, but he had spilled his seed in what he thought was a prostitute. [38] One of her sons was an ancestor to David.
- † Meanwhile, God was blessing Joseph, who had arisen to overseer of Potipher's house and investments. Potipher's wife tried to seduce him. Joseph knew he would incur trouble, maybe even death by angering her, but he refused to go against the revelation about marriage and continued to trust in God's provision and deliverance. She claimed he raped her and he was thrown into prison. [39]
- † In prison, Joseph thrived again. He also was gifted by God to interpret dreams for people. When Pharaoh had a dream that bothered him, he heard about Joseph's ability and called him out. Joseph told him the dream was for seven years of abundance followed by seven years of famine. With Joseph heading up the effort, Pharaoh was able to store up enough food during the good times to feed people during the famine. Eventually, he made Joseph his #2 man. [40-41]
- † Because of the famine, Jacob's family went to Egypt for provision, but this turned out to be part of God's plan, and through Joseph, God provided for Jacob and his extended family. They were under his protection and did bow down to him, realizing his dream [42-45]. The extended family stayed in Egypt, and this is how they came to be there for the Exodus.