

## Handbook 5

### Studies on the Life and Times of

# The Patriarchs

## Abraham, Isaac, Jacob,

## Joseph, Moses & Joshua

By Albert Fairweather



*“He is the LORD our God; His judgments are in all the earth.  
He remembers His covenant forever,  
The word which He commanded, for a thousand generations,  
The covenant which He made with Abraham,  
And His oath to Isaac,  
And confirmed it to Jacob for a statute,  
To Israel as an everlasting covenant” (Psalm 105:7-10)*

### Back cover

#### Handbook Studies by Albert Fairweather

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**In this Handbook,**

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Jesus said,

## “I Am the Light of the World”

The Gospel of John introduces Jesus as the **‘Living Word’**, and the **‘Creator God’**: *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made”* (John 1:1-3).

The **‘Word’** in the Greek is *‘Logos’*, and it means that God was **‘visibly seen and heard’** in the Lord Jesus Christ. When He spoke, God was speaking. God was fully revealed in Jesus Christ’. Jesus said, *“He who has seen me has seen the Father”* (John 14:9).

**He is the giver of all life:** He created Adam and Eve in His likeness: *“In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it”*; *“That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world”* (John 1:4-9).

**He is the giver of light to men:** He gave us a **mind** with the ability to understand and to comprehend spiritual truth. He gave us a **conscience** to know good and evil, and a **will** to choose, to accept or reject Him. The problem is we hold to **darkness**, not willing to follow Him, resisting allowing **His light** found recorded in His **word** in the **Bible** to shine into our hearts.

**Belief is to be in Him alone as the Divine One.** He presents **Himself** as the only object for us to **believe in**: *“I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness”* (John 12:46). The darkness is sin and we see this in the Jewish leaders. He was a threat to their system, set up for their personal profit and protected by their own interpretation of God’s Law. He wants to shine **divine light** into our souls and dispel sin’s darkness.

**The case of a woman caught in the act of adultery:** She was brought to Jesus by these religious leaders who were looking for a reason to accuse Him of breaking God’s law so they could condemn Him: *“Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?”* (John 8:5).

He did not answer them, seeming not to hear, and instead wrote on the ground with His finger. When they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, *“He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first”* (John 8:7). Again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. *“Then those who heard it, being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest even to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst”* (John 8:9).

These Jews were given **light** and were **convicted** but not **converted**, for they **failed** to follow it up **with repentance and faith in Christ**. The woman was humiliated by them, and left all alone. The question is, *“Where was the man also guilty in this?”* So these men departed, leaving Jesus alone with the woman.

Then Jesus said to her, *“Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?”* She said, *“No one, Lord.”* And Jesus said to her, *“Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more”* (John 8:10-11). The word **‘Lord’** revealed her life touched by the grace of Jesus, and her faith now placed in Him.

**The Life-changing Light:** Then Jesus said, *“I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life”* (John 8:12). Multitudes of adulterers, drunkards and even murderers, all who turn to Him in repentance and simple faith, have been forgiven as this woman was.

The Bible says that, *“if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved”* (Romans 10:9). **Not, you might be saved, but you will be saved!**

The Lord Jesus wants to shine **His light of truth into all hearts**. We need to face up to our need of forgiveness. God’s word reveals our true condition, and gives us light to show a new path. *“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path”* (Psalm 119:105). I have seen remarkable changes in many lives.

This is His desire for each of us: *“For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ”* (2 Corinthians 4:6)

**I am sure that this woman went on to prove that the Lord had sent light into her soul where once the darkness of sin had ruled. He does that for all who call in sincerity upon the name of the Lord.**

**Christians are now called to be ‘the light of the world’ (Matthew 5:14-16)**

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## Introduction:

# Hear, O Israel!

### The four thousand years of Israel's history

Their history began with Abraham in Genesis Chapter 12, and is traced down through Isaac to Jacob whose name was changed to Israel. 'Jacob' means *'one who has prevailed with God'* (Read Genesis 32:1-31). His 12 sons formed the 12 tribes of the nation of Israel. **The Old Testament** reveals much of their history. The Gospel of Luke traces the **genealogy** of Jesus back to Adam through Abraham, and His is the only surviving record. Our Lord **Jesus Christ is in all of the Scriptures, and we need to keep Him before us as we study their history.**

**Jacob went down to Egypt:** The book of Genesis records this and there his family became very numerous. The Book of Exodus records how they were **enslaved** and that God sent Moses their deliverer, and how God gave them His law, and they said, *"All that the LORD has spoken we will do"* (Exodus 19:8).

The essence of the law is found in these words: **"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength"** (Deut. 6:4-5) and *"You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbour as yourself: I am the LORD"* (Leviticus 19:18). Our Lord Jesus Christ said there was no commandment greater than these. Israel failed to keep the law and came under the judgements that the law prescribed.

**Note what Moses and the priests, the Levites said to all Israel: "Take heed and listen, O Israel: This day you have become the people of the LORD your God. Therefore you shall obey the voice of the LORD your God, and observe His commandments and His statutes which I command you today"** (Deut. 27:9-10).

**The Books of Joshua and Judges gives their history:** these record how they possessed **the land**, and their failure to obey the word of the Lord. This brought on them a cycle of **judgement** then their **repentance** and **deliverance**. All of the Prophets sent to them by the Lord proclaimed the same message: *"If you will return, O Israel," says the LORD, "Return to Me; And if you will put away your abominations out of My sight, Then you shall not be moved"* (Jeremiah 4:1). Over many centuries this nation has suffered because of their unbelief, culminating in the rejection and crucifixion of their Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ.

**The books of the Prophets:** They warned Israel to repent and turn from their idols, but they also wrote of a glorious future for this nation. **Following the rapture of the Church** (1Thessalonians 4:13-18), there will be a time of **'great tribulation'** during which time **a remnant of the nation is saved. Messiah will**

**return** to judge the nations and Israel will be restored to their land for His 1000 year reign in righteousness (Matthew 19:28; Revelation Chs.19-20).

**The Prophets messages: The book of Daniel:** *"At that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people (over Israel); and there shall be a time of trouble (great tribulation), such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone who is found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt"* (Daniel 12:1-2).

**The book of Isaiah:** *"But Israel shall be saved by the LORD with an everlasting salvation; you shall not be ashamed or disgraced forever and ever"* (Isaiah 45:17). Read the many prophesies of Isaiah 2:1-5; 11:1-16; 19:16-25; 26:1-21; 42:1-25; 43:1-28; 44:1-8; 49:1-26; 54:1-17; 61:1-11; 62:1-12; 63:1-19; 65:1-25; 66:1-24.

**The book of Jeremiah:** *"Behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell safely; Now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS"* (Jeremiah 23:5-6). Read also Jeremiah 30:1-24; 31:1-40; 33:26; 46:27-28.

**The book of Ezekiel:** *"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God"* (Ezekiel 36:26-28).

**The book of Hosea:** *"Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered. And it shall come to pass In the place where it was said to them, 'You are not My people,' there it shall be said to them, 'You are sons of the living God'"* (Hosea 1:10 and 2:14-23; Ch.14).

**The book of Joel:** *"For behold, in those days and at that time, When I bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, And bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat (Armageddon); And I will enter into judgment with them there On account of My people, My heritage Israel, Whom they have scattered among the nations; They have also divided up My land"* (Joel 3:1-2; Revelation 16:13-16).

**The book of Micah:** *"Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it. Many nations shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the*

house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.” For out of Zion the law shall go forth, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem” (Micah 4:1-2 and Micah 7:18-20).

**The book of Habakkuk:** “For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea” (Habakkuk 2:14). Habakkuk cried out, for Judah was soon to be invaded. Like all the prophets, he had a great love for God’s people Israel, and grieved over their sin and impending judgement.

**The book of Haggai:** “For thus says the LORD of hosts: Once more (it is a little while) I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; and I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations, and I will fill this temple (to be built in Jerusalem) with glory,’ says the LORD of hosts” (Haggai 2:6-9).

**The book of Zechariah:** “Thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘Behold, I will save My people from the land of the east and from the land of the west; I will bring them back, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. They shall be My people and I will be their God, in truth and righteousness’ (Zechariah 8:7-8; Chs. 11-14).

**Nearly all of the Old Testament prophetic books have the Messiah and Israel’s present and future as their main theme.**

**The New Testament book of Romans:** “And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: “The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; For this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins” (Romans 11:26-27 and all of Romans Chapters 9 to 11).

### **Where are we today in light of these prophecies?**

The nations are aligning as foretold in Ezekiel Chapters 38 and 39 and in Joel Chapter 2, **Russia and her allies are named** and positioned ready to attack Israel. This will happen soon after the rapture of the Church in the first half of the Tribulation.

**Ezekiel 38:1-4.** Gog and Magog are Russia and her leader (Ezekiel 38:5-6). Here are listed Persia (Iran); Ethiopia (Sudan); Libya; Gomer and Togarmah (Turkey).

**Ezekiel 38:13.** Sheba and Dedan are the Arab Gulf States now making peace with Israel; Tarshish is Britain, and her young lions are America and the Commonwealth of Nations (Australia, Canada etc).

These nations question what Russia and her allies are doing but do not resist this invasion. America must grow weaker and have no political will to intervene. All is coming into place! Our God overrules in all the earth and behind all rulers!!

**Israel Repents and turns to the Lord:** The Lord intervenes on Israel’s behalf and destroys most of those armies, and drives the remainder up into Siberia (Joel 2:20). This leads Israel to repent and turn to the Lord: **“So the house of Israel shall know that I am the LORD their God from that day forward”** (Eze.39:22).

In Matthew 24:15 to 22 and Revelation 12:17, the mid-point of the Tribulation, Israel are His elect people. “Then you shall know that I am in the midst of Israel: I am the LORD your God and there is no other. My people shall never be put to shame” (Joel 2:27).

**This invasion of Israel is not to be confused with Armageddon where all nations are gathered in the Jezreel Valley (Megiddo) as in Joel Ch. 3; Zechariah 14:1-2 and Revelation 16:13-16**

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## **Study 1**

# **The Life and Times of Abraham**

**The unfolding of God’s purposes in this man and Israel.**

**Lessons on the testing of faith over many years (Hebrews 11:8-19).**

Abraham is the founding father of the Hebrew nation. He one of the most important men in the Bible. He is mentioned in 16 books of the Old Testament and 11 in the New. Three world religions venerate him; Judaism, Christianity and Islam. In God’s plan He choose Abraham of the family of Shem, Noah and Adam.

### **Some facts about Abraham**

**Jesus Christ came from his seed, born to Mary:** He is “the Son of David, the Son of Abraham” (Matthew 1:1; Galatians 3:16).

**His hope was to see the Messiah.** The Lord Jesus said, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day...” (John 9:56).

**He was justified through faith:** He “believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness” (Genesis 15:6; Romans Ch. 4).

**His blessings come down to us:** “So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham” (Galatians 3:9).

**His faith and obedience:** “By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called...” (Hebrews 11:8).

**His works confirmed his faith:** “Do you see that faith was working together with his works” (James 2:22). He is called the friend of God (James 2:23).

### **Studies on the life of Abram before his name was changed**

**Genesis 11: 27-32.** Terah was the father of Abram and his name means “exalted father”. Later his name was changed to Abraham, “father of a multitude”. Lot is also introduced as the son of Haran who died before his father Terah in the city of Ur, near Babylon on the Euphrates River.

Evidently the Lord had called Terah (his name means ‘delay’) and his family to leave Ur and travel to Canaan, but they settled down in the city of Haran, half way to Canaan (Acts 7:4).

### The call of Abram

**Acts 7:2.** The ‘*God of glory*’ called Abram and this changed his life. The ‘*God of glory*’ also called Moses at the burning bush and Saul on the Damascus Road. He also calls us and once we see “*the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God*”, our lives will never be the same again (see 2 Cor. 4:1-7).

**Genesis 12:1.** Abram knew of God’s call but he was delayed in Haran until his father Terah died (Acts 7:4). When God calls us to follow Him we should immediately obey (Matthew 4:19). We should not let friends, family, wife or husband deter us from trusting Christ as our Saviour.

**Genesis 12:2.** When God called Abram He promised: **a.** To give him the land of Canaan and lead him to the land. **b.** To make him a great nation, Israel. **c.** To give him a great name, he is well known. **d.** To make him a blessing and he would be a blessing. God also calls us not only to be blessed, but to be a blessing to others.

**Genesis 12:3.** Those who blessed him and Israel his ‘seed’ would be blessed and those who cursed him and his ‘seed’ would be cursed. This has often been fulfilled in Jewish history. In a coming day judgement will fall on all who curse Israel. In him all families of the earth will be blessed (Galatians 3:9, 16).

All of this points to our Lord Jesus Christ, born to Mary of the seed of Abram. It was through him and his ‘seed’, his descendants, that Christ would be born (Genesis 12:7; Matthew 1:1). The babe in Mary’s womb fulfilled this.

### Abram’s Faith and Obedience

**Genesis 12:4-5.** ‘*By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called*’ (Hebrews 11:8). In obedience he ‘*departed*’; ‘*So they came to the land of Canaan*’. He was aged 75. Lot went with him, a follower, not a leader like Abram. Lot never held the same vision about God’s call and purposes as did Abraham.

Saul lost the kingdom and his life because of his disobedience. Samuel said to him, “*Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He also has rejected you from being king*” (1 Samuel 15:22-23). A true faith will be marked by obedience to God’s revealed word.

### Keeping Focused on God

**Genesis 12:6-7.** Abram passed through the land. The Canaanites then possessed the Promised Land. God set Abram’s eyes on Himself, “*To your descendants I will give this land*”; this called for faith and not fear of the Canaanites! Faith sees God beyond all the circumstances of this life.

**Genesis 12:8.** Two things marked Abram as a pilgrim and stranger in Canaan:

**a.** He had a tent for He was a sojourner and pilgrim in this world. “*He waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God*” (Hebrews 11:10). “*Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul*” (1 Peter 2:11).

**b.** He built altars where he worshipped the true God, but Lot never built an altar. Before the giving of the Law of Moses, the Patriarchs and heads of families offered burnt offerings. We have an altar where we worship (Hebrews 13:10).

### The Testing of Faith

**Genesis 12:10.** Famines brought times of testing. God had called him to this land, and would provide. A true faith will be tested! (James 1:2-3; 1 Peter 1:7). God’s promise to Israel was, “*Trust in the LORD, and do good; dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed*” (Psalm 37:3); “*They shall not be ashamed in the evil time, and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied*” (Psalm 37:19).

**Genesis 12:11-20.** Under testing, he moved to Egypt which is a type of this world. We are told not to love the world (1 John 2:15-17). In Egypt he lost his tent, his altar and communion with God and his pilgrim character. He also lost a good conscience, for he lied about Sarai and said she was his sister. For this he was rebuked by Pharaoh and sent away in disgrace. It is sad when we fail the Lord before unbelievers and bring the name of Christ into reproach.

### The Restoration of Abram

**Genesis 13:1-5.** Departure from God always comes at a price, for he returned to Canaan richer materially but poorer spiritually. In Egypt he bought Hagar, a servant girl, whom he later took as a secondary wife (Genesis 16:1). To her Ishmael was born, who became the father of the Arab nations, Israel’s bitterest enemies to this day. In Egypt, he lost Lot who remembered the good land of Egypt and chose the well-watered plains of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 13:11). We must be careful to always set a good example for younger believers to follow.

**Restoration involves returning to the point of departure for Abram again had his tent and altar.**

### Strife leads to Choices

**Gen. 13:6-9.** Strife among the herdsmen. It is sad when divisions occur among brethren, worse when it becomes public knowledge. Abram was conscious of this, “*for we are brethren*”! He gave Lot first choice of the land. This shows the grace of Abram, and the greed of Lot! Lot’s Uncle, the older man, should have had first choice. Note Abram’s love for those he could no longer walk with.

**Genesis 13:10-13. Lot’s choices led down.** We must accept responsibility for our choices even when others lead us astray. Note these lessons from the life of Lot:

**a.** Lot was a righteous man (2 Peter 2:7), but he chose the Jordan plain and walked away from the land of Canaan promised by God.

**b.** He pitched his tent towards Sodom, an evil city filled with violence and sodomy. This did distress his soul but he knew this when he went there.

**c.** But he dwelt in Sodom and lost his daughters to their moral standards (Genesis 19:14; 30-38). We must protect our children from evil influences.

**d.** He became an elder in Sodom, for elders held political power and sat in the gate of the city (Genesis 19:1). Lot had no tent or altar in Sodom and he was unable to walk with God once he departed from Abram.

Lot lost his testimony and was mocked by these evil sodomites; he lost his family to the morals of Sodom and lost his wife who became a pillar of salt.

Note God's comment: *"But the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinful against the Lord"* (Genesis 18:20-33; Ch. 19). It is wise to seek guidance from the Lord and the illumination within of the Holy Spirit so as to make wise choices.

God's will is found in God's word and by waiting on Him!

**Genesis 13:14-18. Abram's choices led up.** God set Abram's vision on His promises and the broad expanses of the well-watered land of Canaan. He lost nothing by the strife and separation, for he still had his tent, altar and communion with God. And we should set our affections on things above (Colossians 3:2).

### **Our choices are eternally important:**

**Moses** chose *"to suffer affliction with the people of God"* (Hebrews 11:15).

**Joshua** chose to serve the Lord: *"Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve...but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord"* (Joshua 24:14-16).

**Mary** chose to sit at Jesus feet: *"Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her"* (Luke 10:42).

### **War in the promised Land**

**Genesis 14:1-18.** The kings of Sodom and Gomorrah were defeated in war, and Lot was taken captive, while Abram dwelt far above these conflicts. Abram, the man of faith was also the man of love and compassion and he and his friends delivered his 'brother' Lot and all the people. The king of Sodom went to meet Abram after his victory. Now he faced a greater danger than the battle:

### **Melchizedek and Abram**

**Genesis 14:18-20.** God Most High (El Elyon) had a priest-king called *Melchizedek* in Salem (meaning peace). His name means *'King of Righteousness and King of Peace'*. This is the first mention of Jeru-Salem (possession of peace, Psalm 76:2). Melchizedek gave to Abram memorials of sacrifice, bread and wine.

He blessed Abram in the name of El (God mighty, strong) Elyon (highest), *'possessor of heaven and earth'*, who had given Abram victory in battle. This strengthened Abram faith so he gave this priest-king a tithe, or one tenth of all the spoils of battle. In this he then made a right decision with Sodom's king.

Melchizedek was king of **righteousness** and king of **peace**. He was greater than Abram, for this priesthood did not record any beginning or end of days, and he blessed Abram who gave him tithes (one tenth) of all (Hebrews 7:1-4).

He pre-figures Christ the Messiah who has an eternal priesthood and ever lives to make intercession for His people (Hebrews 4:14-16, Hebrews 7:24-26). Christ would be *"a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek"* (Psalm 110:1-7).

**Genesis 14:21-24.** Abram choose to trust God and refused the king's offer of Sodom's goods. He had the true and living God, El Elyon *"possessor of heaven and earth"* and needed no more! He would take none of the goods of Sodom; he would trust El Elyon to provide.

The King of Sodom said, *"Give me the persons (souls) and take the goods for yourself"*. This Abram rejected, for he would take nothing from this man. This is like Satan's offer to Christ, *"All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me"* (Luke 4:5-8). Christ rejected all the material wealth, power, pride, pomp and glory this world has to offer!

Satan wants the souls of men and women and offers material possessions to gain these. Judas and Esau fell for this lie of the devil! For, *"Now godliness with contentment is great gain"* (1 Timothy 6:6).

### **God is Abram's Shield and Reward**

**Genesis 15:1-4.** *'After these things'* links back to the events of Chapter 14. Abram had refused the goods of Sodom and God gave him greater promises, *"I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward"*. God most High would guard and reward him, for *"Those that honour Me, I will honour"* (1 Samuel 2:30).

These promises made Abram bold to ask the Lord (Adonai) God (Jehovah) for a son. Abram feared that his servant Eliezer would inherit all his possessions under the customs of that time. Sarai his wife was barren and too old to have a child.

**Genesis 15:5-6.** So Abram asked the Lord God for a son. The Lord promised him a son and descendants more numerous than the stars in number! *"And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness"*. This is central in the Bible, setting forth *'justification by faith'* (Romans 4:3; Galatians 3:6; James 2:23). Faith is simply believing what God has said! And Abraham *"Who contrary to hope, in hope believed"* (Romans 4:18).

**Genesis 15:7-21.** Abram was told to bring various animal sacrifices, and the Lord then reminded him that it was He who brought him from Ur to give him the land

of Canaan. The Lord predicted that his descendants would be captives and afflicted for 400 years and this was fulfilled when Joseph and Jacob went to Egypt. But in the fourth generation they would come back to this land.

God is slow in judgement but quick in mercy, for His judgement would wait 400 years for the Amorites, possessors of the land, to repent before His judgement fell on them as Joshua led Israel back to the land.

It was the practise at that time for the two parties making a covenant and to pass between the pieces of sacrificed animals. Here the Lord alone passed between the sacrifices, symbolised by the smoking oven and the burning torch, and in this way securing to Abram and his descendants the covenant forever.

The oven speaks of Israel's trials and afflictions, the torch of their witness in this world. They among all the nations were chosen to be His special people and His witness on earth. Sadly, in this they failed on many occasions.

**Genesis 15:18-21.** Israel have never possessed all the land promised to them by the Lord. Solomon's kingdom came close, but it will only be fully occupied by the saved of Israel when Jesus reigns as "*King of kings and Lord of lords*".

### The failure of Abram's faith

**Genesis 16:1-5.** God had promised Abram a son, but the years went by and Sarai said "*the Lord has restrained me from bearing*". A wife without children was looked down upon, so she followed a custom of that time, and gave Hagar, a slave girl they had purchased in Egypt, to Abram as an inferior wife, and she bore him a son, Ishmael. In this Abram "*heeded the voice of Sarai*". It is one thing to wait **ON** the Lord and another to wait **FOR** the Lord to act.

**Genesis 16:6-16.** Polygamy has always led to problems in families, and while tolerated in Israel, it was never sanctioned by the Lord. From the beginning it was 'One wife for one man for life', and "*the two shall become one flesh*" (Matthew 19:5). A man cannot become one flesh with multiple wives. Lamech was the first to depart from God's order and he took two wives (Genesis 4:19).

Hagar now despised Sarai because she was unable to bear children. Sarai dealt harshly with Hagar, an ungodly thing to do, and she fled into the wilderness. But the Lord had his eye on this slave girl wife, and sent her back to submit to Sarai, with the promise to multiply her descendants, and He told her to call her son **Ishmael** (meaning 'God hears'). This encounter greatly touched Hagar, and she named a well there as a memorial.

Abram sowed problems within his family by not waiting on the Lord to fulfill His promise, and Ishmael became the progenitor of the Arab peoples, enemies of Israel to this day. Abram was 70 years old when he left Ur, and was 86 years of age when Ishmael was born.

In the book of Galatians the believers were reverting back to the law of Moses. In Chapter 4, we learn that Abram had two sons, one born to Hagar who represents **law**, for she was the **slave girl** and her son, **Ishmael** was born to the **flesh**, not by God's will but by Abram and Sarah's will. In contrast, the son born to Sarah represents **grace**, for she was the **free woman**, and her son **Isaac** was born through the **promise of God** and these two sons and their mothers are symbolic of the two covenants of **law** and **grace**.

### A change of name and the renewed covenant

**Genesis 17:1-8.** Abram, now aged 99, was called to walk more closely with '*Almighty God*'. This name is *El Shaddai*, and a better translation is "*The All Sufficient One*", meaning '*God who strengthens, satisfies and chastens to make fruitful*'. This name for God occurs 31 times in the book of Job, for God's chastening hand fell heavily upon him. In the book of Ruth, Naomi said after losing her husband and sons in Moab, "*Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara (bitter), for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me*" (Ruth 1:20).

The Lord changed his name **Abram** (Exalted Father) to **Abraham** (Father of a multitude). Chastening had its effect, for his walk also changed, and he became spiritually fruitful in godliness, and God would also multiply his descendants. How many nations can trace their ancestry back to 2000 BC as can Israel?

The '*Almighty God*' renewed His covenant with Abraham and would multiply him exceedingly. God's chastening also produces fruitfulness in our lives (Proverbs 3:12). "*For whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives*" (Read Hebrews 12:1-17). We should thank Him for chastening, as it helps to make us mature, and is a sign of His love for us.

**Genesis 17:9-14.** The circumcision of males was practised at the time, but it was given a new meaning for Abraham and his covenant descendants, as a sign they were God's earthly people. Every male child aged 8 days was to be circumcised, and all uncircumcised were not to be numbered among the Lord's people. This was an outward sign in the flesh, practised by Jews to this day. But true circumcision is of the heart and not of the flesh. Read carefully Romans 2:25-30; 4:11-12; 1 Cor. 7:19; Galatians 5:6-11; Philippians. 3:3; Colossians 2:11.

**Genesis 17:15-27.** Sarai's name is changed and she is given a new name, Sarah, meaning Princess. God also renewed the promise that she would bear a son. Abraham laughed in wonder, for he was almost 100 years old, and Sarah almost 90. But he still longed for Ishmael to live, and to have favour before God. Sarah would bear a son and they were to call him **Isaac**, meaning 'Laughter', and the covenant promises would pass on to him. Ishmael would also be blessed and 12 nations would come from him, but the covenant was established with Isaac. That very day he took Ishmael and all the males in his household and circumcised them.

## The Lord appears to Abraham. Sodom to be destroyed

**Genesis 18:1-15.** This chapter is mainly self-explanatory. It is believed that of the three men who appeared to Abraham, two were angels, but one was certainly the Lord. Abraham and Sarah showed them the customary hospitality. When they told him that Sarah would have a son, she was listening in the tent and she laughed in **unbelief**. God is faithful, for when Isaac was born she laughed for **joy**.

**Genesis 18:16-33.** Abraham was held in high esteem by the Lord, for He is called *“The friend of God”* (James 2:23). God also knew him, and that he would instruct his family to keep the ways of the Lord so that God’s purposes for him and his descendants might be fulfilled. We also must instruct our children.

The doom of Sodom and Gomorrah was pronounced, for the Lord revealed to Abraham what was hidden from Lot. He was about to destroy the cities of the plain, and the Lord graciously listened as Abraham interceded for those people, but there were not even 10 righteous in the city.

**Genesis Chapter 19:1-38.** This chapter closes off the history of Lot. It reveals the wickedness of the men of Sodom, how Lot’s sons-in-law thought he was joking. The angels took him, his wife and two daughters by the hand and led them out of the city and told them not to look back.

Lot’s wife looked back as her family perished in the flames and she became a pillar of salt. Jesus said, *“Remember Lot’s wife”* (Luke 17:32). We should not look back to what God has called us out from, but look up to what He is calling us to! (Philippians 3:12-15).

Abraham looked down from the heights of the land of Canaan into the valley and saw the smoke rising from Sodom and Gomorrah and the land of the plain, and God remembered Abraham and delivered Lot.

The daughters of Lot were influenced by the morals of Sodom and made their father drunk and lay with him. To them were born sons who became the fathers of the people of **Moab** and **Ammon**. These nations became bitter enemies of Israel.

**Genesis Chapter 20:1-18.** Abraham again lied about Sarah his wife, and Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took her, but God spoke to this king in a dream and God protected her. The Lord watches over His children even when they fail Him. *“Do not touch My anointed ones, And do My prophets no harm”* (Psalm 105:15).

## Isaac born to Sarah

**Genesis 21:1-8.** *“And the Lord visited Sarah as He had said, and the Lord did for Sarah as He had spoken”*. Sarah had laughed in unbelief at God’s promise, now she laughed for joy as she held Isaac in her arms. Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born and Sarah was 90. Here we see our miracle working God..

Abraham circumcised his son, and made a great feast when Isaac was weaned. Abram was a great chieftain, and no doubt many friends were called. The lesson for us is that God is faithful and will not fail us, and we need to wait patiently on Him, *“Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass”* (Psalm 37:5).

## Polygamy brought problems for Abraham

**Genesis 21:9-21.** The birth of Isaac brought problems with Ishmael his son by Hagar. Sarah saw Ishmael scoffing, and she sensed danger for her son Isaac. Therefore she said to Abraham, *“Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, namely with Isaac”* (Genesis 21:10). This displeased Abraham, for he loved his son Ishmael.

However, God told him to do what Sarah had requested, so he sent Hagar and Ishmael away. Ishmael became a large nation, the progenitor of the Arab peoples and enemies of Israel to this day. Abram was 70 years old when he left Ur, 86 years of age when Ishmael was born, and 100 when Isaac was born.

## Living among the people of Canaan

**Genesis 21:22-34.** Abimelech was king of the Philistines. He and his commander came to Abraham to make a covenant with him. It shows that Abraham was a great man, a Chieftain with large flocks and many servants, and this king wanted Abraham not to hurt in any way his people.

Abraham took this opportunity to rebuke Abimelech over a well Abraham had dug and the king’s servants had seized. He called the well **Beersheba** (well of the oath) and there is a town there to this day.

## Abraham’s greatest test of faith

**Genesis Chapter 22.** God told Abraham to take his son whom he **loved** and offer him as a burnt offering in the land of Moriah. This was the place where later David bought the threshing floor of Araunah (2 Samuel 24:16) and where Solomon built the Temple. Abraham did not question or protest, but obeyed and said he and the lad would **worship**. Taking Isaac to Moriah, he built an altar, bound his son and placed him on the altar and took the knife to slay him. The Angel of the Lord intervened, for he saw a ram caught in a nearby thicket, and Abraham offered the ram instead of his son.

In this we can see God looking down through the centuries to the time when His Son would be nailed to the cross as a burnt offering (Ephesians 5:2) and as a sin offering (2 Corinthians 5:21).

**Genesis 22:1-13.** Note these points: The first mention of **‘love’** in the Bible. Isaac is a type of Jesus, the Son whom the Father **‘loved’** (John 3:35). The first mention of **‘worship’** in the Bible, for Abram and his son would go and **‘worship’**.



Both of them ‘**went together**’, just as the Father and Son went to Calvary (John 8:29). The ‘**ram caught in the thicket**’ is a reminder that God would provide ‘**the lamb**’, pointing on to the Lord Jesus Christ, the ‘**Lamb of God**’ who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29, 36; 1John 2:2). There was a substitute ram for Isaac, but there was no substitute for our Lord Jesus Christ.

Abraham called Moriah, where he offered up Isaac, ‘Jehovah Jirah’, meaning ‘the Lord will provide’. Because he obeyed and did not withhold his only son, God promised to bless and to multiply his descendants, “*In your **seed** all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice*” (Genesis 22:18).

This **seed** is our Lord Jesus Christ! (Hebrews 11: 13-20). “*By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, "In Isaac your **seed** shall be called," concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense*” (Hebrews 11:17-19).

### **His only possession in Canaan, a burial cave for Sarah**

**Genesis Chapter 23.** In this chapter we have the death of Sarah. Even though God had promised Abraham the land of Canaan, the only property he ever owned there was a cave for a burial place in the field of Machpelah which is **Hebron**.

Notice his godly conduct before ‘*the sons of Heth*’ in purchasing this field and cave. He insisted on paying the full price of 400 shekels to Ephron. He was greatly respected by the people of Canaan.

There he buried Sarah, the noble princess (she died aged 127). Abraham was also buried there by his sons, Isaac and Ishmael (Genesis 25:1-11). Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob and Leah were also buried there. Hebron became an important city and David ruled Judah from there for seven years (2 Samuel. 2:11).

### **A Bride for Isaac**

**Genesis 24:1-14.** Abraham, the father, is a picture of our heavenly Father seeking a bride for His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. The unnamed servant sent to find a wife for Isaac is a picture of the Holy Spirit sent into this world, seeking for our Lord Jesus Christ the bride, His Church (Revelation 19:6-8).

Abraham believed God would provide a wife for Isaac from his own family in Haran, the city he had left when aged 75 years. The daughters of the land of Canaan were ungodly, worshipping idols (see Genesis 27:46).

We learn from the New Testament not to be unequally yoked in marriage with unbelievers (2 Corinthians 6:14). This will hinder us in serving the Lord. We need to teach our young people to ask the Lord to lead them to the right one to be their husband or wife. They should only marry a believer, and only the one of the

Lord’s choice. Children with unsaved mothers or fathers may grow up as unbelievers. For instructions on marriage read 1 Corinthians Chapter 7.

**Genesis 22:20-24.** The unnamed servant took 10 camels loaded with his masters goods and arrived at a well outside the city of Haran where Nahor, Abraham brother’s family lived. There he prayed that the Lord would bring out to the well the young woman to be Isaac’s bride. He asked for a sign, for the young woman to offer him a drink from the well and to also water his 10 camels. This is no small task as a thirsty camel can drink over 120 litres!

**Genesis 24:15-33.** God answered his prayer before he had finished speaking, for Rebekah, the granddaughter of Nahor came to the well with her pitcher. She was a very beautiful virgin, and the servant asked her for a drink. She gave him a drink, and immediately also watered his camels.

He wondered at her, and gave her presents of gold, and asked about her family and if he could lodge with them. She told him she was the daughter of Bethuel of the family of Nahor, Abraham’s brother.

The servant bowed his head and worshipped, “*As for me, being on the way, the Lord led me to the house of my master’s brethren*”. As we walk with the Lord prayers will be answered, “*Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us*” (1 John 5:14)

We must ask in faith, “*But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind*” (James 1:6). Answered prayer should also lead us to praise and worship the Lord!

Rebekah ran home and her brother Laban came out to greet the servant and invited him to their house. The servant washed and food was set before him but he refused to eat until he had told his mission.

**Genesis 24:34- 67.** The servant told of his answered prayer, and Laban and Bethuel said, “*The thing comes from the Lord...Here is Rebekah before you, take her and go...*” “*We will call the young woman and ask her personally...*”

They asked her the most important question of her life, “*Will you go with this man?*”. “*And she said, I will go*”. Rebekah was a young woman of faith and courage, and so the servant took her and she became the wife of Isaac.

The Lord’s call comes also to us, “*will you go with this man*”, the Man Christ Jesus? May your answer be, “*I will go*”. This is commitment, yielding our lives in serving our Master.

**This ends our brief Study on the Life and Times of Abraham, ‘The friend of God’.**

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## Study 2

# The Life and Times of Isaac

**A peaceful man, the child of promise, his name means ‘laughter’**

God promised to give Abraham a son in his old age when he and Sarah were past the age of having children (Genesis 15:1-6). He was named ‘Isaac’ by the Lord (Genesis 17:19), and was born when Abraham was 100 years old and Sarah over 90. Sarah’s laughter of unbelief (Genesis 18:9-15) was turned to joy at the birth of this son and heir when she was past the age of having children (Genesis 21:1-6).

### Pictures of Christ and His Church!

**Abraham** pictures to us the **Father**, seeking for His Son the Lord Jesus Christ a bride, the **Church**. The unnamed **servant** pictures the **Holy Spirit**, who is working in hearts to bring people to Christ. **Isaac** is a small picture of the **Lord Jesus** and **Rebekah** is a small picture of the **Church**, the bride of Christ.

God gave Isaac a wife of faith and he was comforted after his mother’s death (Genesis 24:67). Are we willing to say as did Rebekah *‘I will go’* (Genesis 24:58) and to follow the Lord Jesus Christ wherever He may lead us along life’s journey? God has the best plan for our lives if only we will trust and obey Him.

Isaac was 60 when Jacob and Esau were born; Isaac loved Esau and the venison that Esau brought, but Esau was a natural man without faith any love for the things God valued. Rebekah loved Jacob even though he was not so attractive in his looks, yet he valued the spiritual things of God. This was revealed when Esau despised his birthright while Jacob coveted it.

The birthright comprised the promises made by God to Abraham, that his descendants would inherit the land of Canaan and that from his ‘seed’ would come the Christ (Genesis 12:1-3; Galatians 3:16). Jacob loved the things that were in God’s plans. But showing favouritism to their children only led to grief.

### Promises and Prosperity

**Genesis 26:1-33.** The Lord renewed to Isaac the promises made to Abraham and his ‘seed’. But sadly, like his father, he lied about his wife and said she was his sister. Fathers need to be careful to set a good example to their children.

He prospered in the land and again reopened the wells his father had dug that the Philistines had filled in. Each new generation of Christians should earnestly search out for themselves truths from God’s word, and recover truth that has been lost and avoid Philistine ways of this evil world!

**Genesis 26:34.** Esau’s choice of wives caused grief to Isaac and Rebekah. He chose women steeped in idolatry from among the Canaanite people.

### Isaac deceived in old age, and lessons from Esau and Judas

**Genesis 27:1-41.** At Rebekah’s instigation, Jacob (his name means ‘supplanter’) deceived his father and stole the birthright. Esau for a pot of stew had despised the promises that Jacob valued. Abraham had given this birthright to Jacob, and for this Esau hated Jacob and planned to kill him..

Esau despised his birthright and was **‘remorseful’** and later **‘regretted’** his loss and sought the blessing with tear (Hebrews 12:14-17). Judas also **‘regretted’** betraying Jesus for 30 pieces of silver (Matthew 27:3 -7).

Neither Judas nor Esau **‘repented’** of their sin and sought **God’s forgiveness**. Esau’s descendants became the Edomites, who hated Israel and often warred with them. Judas went out and hanged himself (Genesis 25:27-34 and Ch. 27).

### The death of Isaac aged 180 years.

Jacob returned after many years in time to meet up with his father, and was with him when he died. He was reconciled to Esau and together they buried him (Genesis 35:27-29). So ended the life of Isaac, a peaceful man who meditated and sought to walk with God.

His wife Rebekah was a godly woman who supported him as a good wife should. She was a stronger personality than Isaac and was not always right in what she did. But she valued the spiritual in Jacob and did not like Esau’s worldly ways.

Isaac is mentioned among the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11:20: *“By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come”*.

**This is God’s final word on Isaac’s life of faith. May our names be listed among the people of faith in God’s records in heaven!**

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## Study 3

# The Life and Times of Jacob

**A life filled with conflict but God triumphed**

**Genesis 25:20-26.** The birth of Jacob. His mother Rebekah had problems conceiving, so Isaac pleaded with the Lord and the Lord granted his plea. Two babies struggled in her womb, so she went to inquire of the Lord, and He said; *“Two nations are in your womb, Two peoples shall be separated from your body;*

*One people shall be stronger than the other, And the older shall serve the younger”.*

**Genesis 25:27-29.** Esau was the firstborn, and Jacob was born holding Esau’s heel. And so Jacob’s name means to ‘follow behind’ or to ‘supplant’, because he held Esau’s heel. *“So the boys grew. And Esau was a skilful hunter, a man of the field; but Jacob was a mild man, dwelling in tents. And Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob”.* Rebekah was discerning of Jacob’s desires for the things of God, but Isaac only valued Esau’s hunting skills.

The character of these boys was soon revealed, for Esau was willing to sell his birthright that Jacob valued for a pot of stew. He sold his spiritual inheritance - all the promises God had made with Abraham and with his decedents.

**Chapter 27.** The history of Jacob continues and at Rebekah’s instigation Jacob (the supplanter) deceived his father and stole the birthright. Esau was remorseful because of his loss and sought the blessing with tears, but he had despised the promises God made to Abraham and Isaac. Isaac had given the blessing to Jacob and because of this Esau hated Jacob and planned to kill him. It is important to read about Esau in Hebrews 12:14-17 and in Romans 9:10-13.

### **The cost of duplicity**

To protect Jacob, Rebekah asked Abraham to send Jacob away to find a wife from her family in Haran. She wanted the best for her son, for the women of Canaan were idol worshipers. But there was a great cost to both Jacob and Rebekah, for she died before Jacob returned 20 years later. In God’s plan Jacob had the promises and it was a serious mistake for Rebekah to pre-empt God.

**Rebekah’s and Jacob’s duplicity came at a price. It is important to always speak the truth and to wait on God and to wait for God.**

**Genesis 28:1-22.** Isaac realised that God wanted Jacob to have the blessing, so he blessed him and sent him away to Rebekah’s family at Haran. On the way Jacob went to sleep with a stone for a pillow, and he dreamed of a ladder reaching up to heaven. The Lord spoke to him and gave him the blessing He had given to Abraham. Jacob set up a memorial stone, called the place Bethel (house of God) and pledged to give God one tenth of all He gave to him.

### **Jacob and Laban**

**Genesis Chapter 29.** Jacob went on his way and came to a well near Haran and met Rachel, the daughter of Laban watering his sheep. Jacob was welcomed into Laban’s home and he had two daughters, Leah the elder and Rachel, and he loved Rachel and agreed to serve seven years for her by caring for Laban’s flocks. On the

night of the marriage Laban deceived Jacob and in the dark he sent Leah into Jacob’s tent. Laban then gave him Rachel but he was to serve another seven years for her. Then Leah had children but Rachel was barren because Jacob love Rachel.

**Genesis Chapter 30.** Strife began among Jacobs wives, and he married their handmaids, Bilhah and Zilpah. Polygamy was never sanction by God and lead to much unhappiness. This is seen in Book of Judges Chapter One, where Elkanah’s wife Peninah provoked his other wife Hannah and made her life very unhappy.

Jacob was concerned over providing for his wives and growing family. Laban agreed to give Jacob all the brown spotted sheep and goats from his flocks. Laban was deceitful, and so was Jacob for he made sure he had all the strong animals.

**Genesis Chapter 31.** Jacob heard the words of Laban’s sons saying he had taken away all that belonged to Laban, and he saw that Laban was very unhappy with him, so he called his wives and sons and secretly departed, taking his flocks with him. The Angel of the God (our Lord Jesus Christ), spoke to him, for He had seen how Laban treated Jacob, and told him to return to the land of his family in Caanan.

Laban pursued him, but God spoke to him and told him to be careful what he said to Jacob. Rachel had stolen Laban’s gods (family idols) and hid them. Laban searched but did not find them. Jacob and his sons made a heap of stones, calling it Galeed (heap of witness). He and Laban agreed to part and be at peace.

### **God met with Jacob, a turning point in his life**

**Genesis Ch. 32.** *“So Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. When Jacob saw them, he said, “This is God’s camp.” And he called the name of that place Mahanaim”.* This means ‘two hosts’, God’s host and Jacob’s. Jacob sent messengers to his brother Esau and became very afraid when he heard that Esau was coming with four hundred men. So he divided his family, flocks and herds into two companies, so if Esau captured one he would have the other.

Then he called on the God of his father Abraham and Isaac to deliver him from Esau, and then he sent presents of flocks ahead to Esau to appease him. That night he sent his wives and sons across the ford of the River Jabbok close to where it runs into the River Jordan, just south of the Sea of Galilee.

*“Then Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day. Now when He saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob’s hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him. And He said, “Let Me go, for the day breaks.” But he said, “I will not let You go unless You bless me!” So He said to him, “What is your name?” He said, “Jacob.” And He said, “Your name shall no longer be called **Jacob**, but **Israel**; for you have*

*struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed.”*

*Then Jacob asked, saying, “Tell me Your name, I pray”. And He said, “Why is it that you ask about My name?” And He blessed him there” (Genesis 32:24-29).*

God met Jacob and wrestled with him where two streams met, where the Jabbok, meaning ‘outpouring’, poured into the Jordan. There had to be an outpouring, an emptying of Jacob’s self-life before God could give His inpouring of grace.

**Jacob** the ‘supplanter’ became **Israel**, meaning ‘God contends, fights’. There God touched the hollow of Jacob’s thigh, then he was weak and limped, leaning upon his staff. Jacob now learnt not to rely on his own scheming, but to lean on God. Paul was also given a thorn in the flesh to keep him humble (2 Cor.12:7-10).

**Genesis Chapters 33-34.** Jacob gifts placated Esau and the brothers were reconciled. In Chapter 34 there is the sad matter of Dinah, and the cruelty of her brothers Simeon and Levi in killing all the men of Shechem.

**Genesis Chapter 35.** God again spoke to Jacob, giving him instructions to return to Bethel, the house of God, where the Lord had appeared to him after he left his parents He then called on his family to *“Put away the foreign gods that are among you, purify yourselves, and change your garments”* (Genesis 35:2), and he buried these idols by Shechem. This shows the godly change in Jacob.

Jacob suffered great sorrow with the death of Rachel after she gave birth to Benjamin, for she died near Bethlehem. Her death prefigures the sorrow of Jewish mothers over the centuries, and especially the sorrow on Mary watching the Lord Jesus being crucified (Luke 2:35; Matthew 2:18).

**Genesis Chapter 37.** Jacob suffered great sorrow over his sons deception in saying Joseph was killed by a wild animal and showing him the coat of many colours covered in blood. But Joseph was sent to Egypt in God’s overruling plan where Jacob later joined him. Then his sorrow was turned into joy.

He arrived at his father’s home before Isaac died: *“Then Jacob came to his father Isaac at Mamre, or Kirjath Arba (that is, Hebron), where Abraham and Isaac had dwelt. Now the days of Isaac were one hundred and eighty years. So Isaac breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people, being old and full of days. And his sons Esau and Jacob buried him”* (Genesis 35:27-29).

Jacob continued to live in Canaan, and our Lord had the last say on the life of Jacob: *“By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff”* (Hebrews 11:21).

**Jacob said to Pharaoh that his days were few and evil, but his life ended well.**

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## Study 4

# The life and Times of Joseph

**God’s light shone into the life of Joseph; his courage and faith under trail.**

**Please read Hebrews 11:22, Genesis Chapters 28 to 50.**

**Genesis 35:16-20.** Jacob’s first love was **Rachel** and Joseph was their first-born and Jacob’s favourite son. Polygamy and favouritism led to a family where jealousy and disunity ruled.

Jacob suffered a great loss when Rachel died giving birth to **Benjamin**, the last of his 12 sons. As she was dying she called her son **Ben-Oni**, ‘*son of my sorrow*’, but Jacob called him **Benjamin**, ‘*son of my right hand*’.

**Genesis Ch. 37.** Joseph was loved by his father and he made him a coat of many colours. Joseph dreamed of sheaves and planets bowing down to him, then saying his parents and brothers would bow down to him. For this his brothers to hated him.

When he was aged 17, his brothers conspired to kill him and they put him in a pit and then sold him into slavery in Egypt. His brothers deceived their father for they killed a goat and dipped Joseph’s coat in its blood, then sending it to Jacob saying, ‘*Is this your son’s tunic?*’

There is a sad history of some of his sons. For Jacobs older son **Reuben** went up to his father’s couch, to his wife Bilhah. In giving out blessings, Jacob said, *“You shall not excel”* (Genesis 35:22; 49:3-41). **Judah** sinned with his daughter-in-law Tamar (Genesis Ch. 38). His sons **Simeon** and **Levi** killed Hamor, Shechem and the Hivite men. Jacob’s words to them were *“Instruments of cruelty are in their dwelling place”* (Genesis 34:25-26; 49:5-7). Troubled followed Jacob.

**What we sow we reap! There is always a reaping from wrong actions.**

## Joseph, the stainless among the stained

**Genesis Ch. 39.** Joseph was sold into Egypt as a slave to Potipher and he served him faithfully, for ‘*God was with him*’ and he was made overseer of Potipher’s household. He daily resisted temptation and refused to sin with Potiphar’s evil wife and she took her revenge by twisting the truth and he was imprisoned. There he found favour with the prison keeper, and again ‘*God was with him*’, and there he met Pharaoh’s baker and butler and interpreted their dreams.

**Genesis Chapter 40.** Joseph could have become very bitter, but forgave, and triumphed over all the circumstances because he trusted in God.

## Joseph called to higher service

God was preparing His servant through all his trials to fit him to be second only to Pharaoh and to rule over all Egypt, and to make a place of safety for his family and to provide food for many nations during the seven years of famine. *“He sent a man before them; Joseph; who was sold as a slave. They hurt his feet with fetters, He was laid in irons”* (Psalm 105:17-18). God’s grace ruled in all Joseph’s trials for his good and God’s glory.

**Genesis Ch. 41.** In the furnace of affliction his faith grew, until the call came suddenly and he was brought into Pharaoh's presence and made lord over all Egypt. *“The king sent and released him. The ruler of the people let him go free. He made him lord of his house, And ruler of all his possessions, To bind his princes at his pleasure, And teach his elders wisdom”* (Psalm 105:20-22).

## Joseph is a lovely type or shadow of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Rejected by his brothers, he was given by Pharaoh a gentile bride, Asenath. Christ was also rejected by His brethren Israel, and given the Church, His bride, bought at great cost. The name of Jesus means ‘Saviour’, *“for He will save His people from their sins”* (Matthew 1:21)

In the midst of the famine, Joseph was revealed to his brothers and they bowed before him. Israel will come into Great Tribulation and then recognise their Messiah as their Deliverer (Zechariah Chs. 12 to 14).

Joseph did not take revenge on his brothers, but he wisely brought them to repentance. Our Lord also wisely disciplines and leads us to repent and trust in Him. Jacob thought that all things were against him, but God was over ruling in all things. Can we see God’s hand in all the events of our life and trust Him?

Joseph’s words to his brothers who doubted his grace were, *“But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive”* (Genesis 50:20).

**The trials God allowed Joseph to endure prepared him to be ruler over all Egypt, the most powerful nation on earth at that time. Read Psalm 105:7-22.**

## His last days - the faith of Joseph

*“And Joseph said to his brethren, ‘I am dying; but God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land to the land of which He swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob’. “Then Joseph took an oath from the children of Israel, saying, ‘God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here.’”*

**Genesis 50:24-26.** So Joseph died, being one hundred and ten years old; and they embalmed him, *‘and he was put in a coffin in Egypt’* When Israel left Egypt, they carried his bones and buried them in Shechem, in the land promised to Abraham (Exodus 13:19; Joshua 24:32).

**God did not deliver Joseph from trials but out of them all.**

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## Study 5

# The Life and Times of Moses

## Lessons in Leadership under great trials.

**His name ‘Moses’ means ‘drawn out’. Pharaoh’s daughter named him for she ‘drew’ him out of the waters of the River Nile.**

It is most important to read the book of Exodus before doing this Study. Israel were slaves in Egypt and living in difficult days. God told Abraham that his descendants would be strangers in another land for 400 years before their deliverance (Genesis 15:13-16; Exodus 1:1-22; 6:20; Hebrews 11:23).

**Exodus 2:1-10.** Moses was blessed with a godly father and mother. His father Amram sought a wife from among the godly in the tribe of Levi. Here we see the faith and wise decision of Amram. He wife Jochebed was a godly young woman of great faith who committed their baby boy to the waters of the Nile, trusting him into God’s care when Pharaoh commanded that all baby boys be killed.

This is a lesson for us, for a Christian man should only marry a believer, and he should be godly himself if he expects to marry a woman of virtue and faith. The Bible says: *“Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?”* (2 Corinthians 6:14).

Children need parents who live together in love and harmony, who also love and wisely discipline their children, and take time to teach them the Bible, and pray together for them. *“Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, The fruit of the womb is a reward”* (Psalm 127:3). Fathers also have a great responsibility: *“And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord”* (Ephesians 6:4).

**We also need faith and wisdom to raise children in the days we live in.**

## The Call and Excuses of Moses

**Exodus 2:11-15.** Moses had many lessons to learn, for he acted in self-will in killing the Egyptian. In all our trials we must also learn that God must deliver in His time and way. His enslaved Israelite brethren did not understand why he, a

Prince in Egypt and brought up in Pharaoh's household, would want to help them. Neither did many of the Jews understand or accept the Lord Jesus as their promised Messiah and Deliverer when He came amongst them (John 1:11-13).

**Exodus 3:10-12.** Moses was first called **to salvation** by 'the Angel of the Lord', "I am the God of your father" (Exodus 3:1-10). Later he was called **to service**, "I will send you". God was calling him and promised grace to enable him to lead Israel out from under Egyptian slavery. But Moses was fearful and made excuses (Exodus 4:1-17; Zechariah. 4:6-7). God's calling is essential in all ministry and we should not run unsent, for whom He calls, He enables.

### **Moses - the Man of no Compromise**

**Hebrews 11:23-29.** Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter after his conversion. Egypt's pomp, power and glory has lost its attraction to him. **He chose** to suffer affliction with the people of God. Heaven filled his vision, not the sinful pleasures of this world.

**He was not ashamed of reproach**, of being known as an Israelite. He chose the company of God's people rather than Egypt's riches that soon pass away. Jesus said, "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:26).

**By faith he forsook Egypt**, for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible, for he walked by faith with his eyes fixed on God's purposes. **By faith** he kept the Passover, and by faith he passed through the Red Sea.

**Exodus 5:1-3.** He chose to walk the Lord's journey. "We will go **three days journey**". Christ walked His life's journey and did His Father's will, 'And He said to them, "Go, tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures **today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected**". "Nevertheless I must journey today, tomorrow, and the day following; for it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem" (Luke 13:31-33).

This pictures our life's journey, for we also are called to walk today and tomorrow, and the third day to be perfected on entering heaven! Like our Lord, we are called to take up the cross daily and follow Him, and to accept the world's rejection as He did (Luke 9:23). We must keep Him before us in our vision, for our life's journey will end when we enter His presence.

### **Pharaoh's compromises, he was Satan's tool**

**Exodus 8:25-27.** Pharaoh said, "**Sacrifice in the Land**". But Moses said "we will go **three days journey**". The God of Israel demanded a sacrifice where blood was shed, pointing to the sacrifice of Christ. This was an abomination to the Egyptians who served many gods and idols without any sacrifices (Genesis 43:32).

**Exodus 8:28).** Pharaoh said, "**Not very far off**". Satan would hold God's people in Egypt, for it pictures this world system and all that appeals to unsaved people.

**Exodus 10:8-11.** Pharaoh asked, "**But who will go?**" Satan wants to claim our families and hold them to this world's attractions. 'And Moses said, "We will go with our young and our old; **with our sons and our daughters, with our flocks and our herds we will go, for we must hold a feast to the LORD**" - "**not a hoof shall be left behind**" (Exodus 10:26).

### **The cost of compromise**

Compromise always comes at a cost and leads to failure on the journey of life! Each time we compromise to this world's values, a little more is lost.

**Abraham** failed when he said "She is my sister". This was a half-truth but still a lie! (Genesis 12:13).

**Lot** failed when he made a wrong choice, for he "Pitched his tent towards Sodom", but these people were exceedingly wicked (Genesis 13:10-13)

**Aaron** failed when he made the golden calf and allowed Israel to worship this idol (Exodus 32:1-6). He gave into peer pressure from the people.

**Saul** failed when he spared evil King Agag. He disobeyed God and lost the kingdom and his life (1 Samuel 15:1-23). God called him to obey.

Our Lord calls us to "Take up the cross daily, and follow Me" (Luke 9:23-25). The Cross is the emblem of shame, suffering and rejection by this world. It means dying to self-will and our own way. It means choosing to live for Christ and to find His will for our lives. It means no compromise with anything displeasing to the Lord.

In Paul's words, "If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory" (Colossians 3:1-4).

**Peter and Andrew** made this choice when Jesus said: "Follow Me, and I will **make you fishers of men**" (Matthew 4:18-20). When we do this, Christ 'makes' something useful of our lives and of eternal value in His sight.

### **Christ is Foreshadowed in Israel's Redemption**

**Exodus 12:1-2.** God was about to **deliver** with mighty power the Israeli slaves from Egypt's bondage, so He first gave them a **new calendar**, a new beginning.

The Jewish month of Nisan (our month of April) became the first month of their year. He also gives us a new beginning, a new life when we accept Christ:

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

The Lord gave Moses no instructions for the first **nine days** of this month. This may picture the first 30 years of the perfect life of Christ out of public view.

**Exodus 12:3-5.** On the **tenth day** of this month, a **perfect lamb** was chosen. As Jesus came into public view, John the Baptist said, *“Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”* (John 1:29). Note these words given to Moses; **‘the lamb’**, **‘your lamb’** for each family. We need a personal faith in Christ as **‘our Lamb’**, the Lord Jesus Christ!

From the **tenth day** to **fourteenth day**, the lamb was **observed** to see that it was *‘without blemish’*, for it had to be perfect. For three years the people **observed** the perfect public life, miracles and teachings of Jesus who said, *“Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me?”* (John 8:46).

**(Exodus 12:6-13).** On the **fourteenth day** in the evening (6 pm), the lamb was slain and **the blood applied** to their door posts and lintels and the lamb eaten. This fulfilled many Scriptures, for Christ died for us: *“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace”* (Ephesians 1:7). The lamb eaten reminds us of this truth that Christ is our spiritual food, for He saves us and we enjoy fellowship with Him; *“truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ”* (1 John 1:3).

**Exodus 12:14.** The **Passover** was to be a reminder to Israel of their redemption. From this we see the importance of the blood, *“For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul”* (Leviticus 17:11).

‘Atonement’ means ‘a covering’ and in the Old Testament God ‘covered’ their sins until Christ took them away when He died for the sins of the whole world.

**Exodus 12:14-28.** The feast of unleavened bread was then kept for seven days. Leaven corrupts and is a picture of sin, *“Therefore let us keep the feast (keep festival), not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth”* (1 Corinthians 5:8).

**Exodus 13:21-22.** They daily had the **Divine presence**, seen in the Shekinah Glory, the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night.

**Exodus 14:1-30.** They had the **Divine protection**, for He delivered them from Pharaoh’s army and they safely crossed the Red Sea. The ‘Angel of the Lord’ is Christ who went before them; He is still with His people along life’s journey.

**Exodus 16:4, 31-32.** They had **Divine provision**; the Manna sent down daily from heaven! We also enjoy His provision, *“And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus”* (Philippians 4:19).

The Manna sent from heaven giving life to the people reminds us of **the life-giving Christ**, for we have life in Him (John 6:35). The Showbread was food for

the priests and reminds us that as priests to our God we have **the life sustaining Christ**. He sustains us in our life and service for Him (Leviticus 24:5-9).

They were His **covenant people** (Genesis 15:18; Exodus 3:6-8). They were delivered by Divine power and baptised into (or identified with) Moses in the cloud and in the sea (Exodus Chapter 14; 1 Corinthians 10:1-4).

They had Moses **the deliverer** of Israel who pointed on to Christ that Prophet who would deliver all who believe: *“I will raise up for them a Prophet (Christ) like you (Moses) from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him”* (Deuteronomy 18:18-19).

### Who gives *‘Songs in the Night’* when sorrows surround?

Elihu said to Job, *“But no one says, “Where is God my Maker, who gives songs in the Night”* (Job 35:10). Job suffered more than any man as God allowed Satan to take his wealth, servants, family and lastly his health. Job is set before God’s people as an example of extreme suffering, whose faith in God never wavered. God revealed Himself to Job, but did not give him the reasons for his suffering. God holds up His people before Satan to show that His grace is sufficient for His saints, and this glorifies our Lord (2 Corinthians 12:7-10, Ephesians 3:10-11).

God’s word says: *“Blessed is the man whose strength is in You, Whose heart is set on pilgrimage. As they pass through the Valley of Baca (Valley of Weeping), They make it a spring; The rain also covers it with pools”* (Psalm 84:5-6).

There are times in our lives when there is sorrow, suffering and grief, but, like a refreshing spring or rain, we can also know the peace that comes from the presence of God. Nehemiah and Ezra said to the remnant of Israel, *“Do not sorrow, for the joy of the LORD is your strength”* (Nehemiah 8:10).

The Israeli slaves had no song in Egypt, for they worked long hours under the taskmasters whips, and their male babies were killed at birth by Pharaoh’s orders. They had no Bibles as we have, only the promises given to Abraham and handed down to each generation, and the bones of Joseph as reminder of his faith, that one day they would return to Canaan (Genesis 15:12-14; 50:25-26).

**Exodus Chapters 14 & 15.** They **sang** after crossing Red Sea, for they saw Pharaoh’s army dead on the sea shore. Pharaoh was Satan’s servant, set on destroying Israel through whom would come the Messiah (Read Exodus 15:1-5).

They were then delivered **from** Egypt, and this pictures this present **world system**, *“We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one”* (1 John 5:19). *“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him”* (1 John 2:15-17).

The 'world' here is Satan's systems of power, greed, promiscuity and wars of destruction that rule on earth today.

They were brought **into** Canaan (Joshua Chapters 1 to 4), the land promised to Abraham and his descendants as an earthly inheritance (Genesis 12:7; 15:7), a land flowing with milk and honey (Exodus 3:8). They were given an **earthly** inheritance, but ours is a **heavenly**, possessed by faith alone (1 Peter 1:3-5).

**Exodus 15:22-24.** They soon lost their **song**, for three days into their journey at their first trial they forgot their great deliverance and murmured at Marah (Bitter). Unbelief then marked out their journey and that generation died in the wilderness except for Caleb and Joshua (Hebrews 3:7-19). Their **song** was not regained for **forty years** until they said "*we have sinned*" (Numbers 21:1-17).

**Exodus 15:25-27.** Moses was shown a **tree** when cast into the waters healed their bitterness. We must bring Christ into all our trials for He hung on a **tree** for six hours, until He cried '*It is finished*', and there He did the work that saves (Luke 4:1-13). We should not murmur at the Marah's of life, for this is **the tree** that can make all our Marah's sweet! (James 1:2-3; 12-14).

### They drank of that Rock

**Lessons from the Rock:** For "*all (Israel) drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ*" (1 Corinthians 10:4). Christ is:

**1. The Rock of salvation: Exodus 17:6.** Water from this rock saved them from thirst. The wise man built his house of life on the sayings of Jesus, for He is that Rock. His name 'Jesus' means 'He saves from sin' (Matthew 1:21; 7:24-27).

**2. The Rock of security: Exodus 33:18-23.** Moses was hidden and covered by God's hand as all His glory passed by, for no man can look on His glory and live. And for Christians, "*your life is hidden with Christ in God*" (Colossians 3:1-4).

**3. The Rock of supply: Numbers 20:2-8.** The people again contended with Moses. He was to '*speak to the rock*', but he struck the rock twice. His sin was great, for Christ was crucified once, never to be struck again "*For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified*" (Exodus 17:6; Hebrews 10:14). Yet the water still flowed, as does God's grace when we fail our Lord. Sadly, because of his sin Moses saw the promised land, but could not enter in.

Leaders should learn from the mistake of Moses. We should never lose our temper with God's people, even if they are 'rebels'. The servant of the Lord must not strive, but act with grace, humility and patience (2 Timothy 2:24-26).

### Their song regained

**Numbers 21:4-9.** Lessons we can learn from Israel's wanderings in the wilderness. They **wandered** around when they should have **walked** into the

promised land. This marked their last murmuring. Many died from the serpents bites. '*Then the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live"*'

The serpent of brass points to the Lord Jesus! "*And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life*" (John 3:14).

**Numbers 21:5-7. Steps to restoration** – Confession. For the first time Israel said "*We have sinned*". These are the hardest words to say in any language! Repentance leads to confession of sin and to forgiveness and restoration.

**Numbers 21:16-20. Their leaders were revived** The nation was led on to victory. They no longer wandered, for Israel sang. Their repentance led to revival and their joy was restored (Zechariah 12:10). King David sinned and lost his joy. He wrote, "*Restore to me the joy of Your salvation*" (Psalm 51:12).

**If we have lost our song of joy in the Lord it can be regained! The key is to confess the sin and arise and walk again by faith.**

**Numbers Chs. 22 to 25.** Balak, the king of Moab sent for the false prophet **Balaam** to come and curse Israel. But God would not allow him to curse them only to bless. Those he could not **curse** he taught Moab to **corrupt** by sending their immoral women to seduce the men of Israel who were killed for this sin. This brought the last judgment on Israel before they entered the land.

**Numbers Ch. 26.** Then the Lord sent Moses and Eleazer the priest to take another census of the people of Israel. Only Caleb and Joshua were left from those who were numbered in the Wilderness of Sinia. Because of their unbelief, every male 20 years of age and older had left their bones in the wilderness. We need to walk by faith lest we suffer loss at the judgement seat of Christ.

### The Summery of Moses Relationship with God (Read Hebrews 3:1-6)

**Moses was converted**, for this was seen in his godliness and commitment to God's word, for by faith he **kept** the Passover and sprinkling of blood! (Hebrews 11:28). He was steadfast and unmovable in his trust in God.

**Moses was called by God to lead** (Exodus 3:1-10; Acts 20:28). He led a complaining and rebellious people for 40 years, and showed exceptional patience and interceded for them when they sinned.

**Moses was prepared by God and not a novice.** He maintained communion with God under severe trials (Exodus 33:11; 1 Timothy 3:6).

**Moses was more than a 'visionary'** (Numbers. 12:1-8). God spoke to Moses '*face to face*', not is some dream or vision! **Moses depended on God** (Numbers 20:6). He remained spiritual in conflict and waited on God to show him the way (Numbers 12; 2 Corinthians 10:3-6).



Moses had a shepherd's heart and loved God's people, caring for Israel even though they so often did not appreciate his leadership (Exodus 18:13). He patiently endured their ingratitude (Exodus 32:9-14; 33:11).

### The character of Moses

**Moses showed meekness** and not envy. Meekness is not weakness (Numbers 11:25-29; 12:3). Meekness is the power to control our emotions in gentleness.

**Moses was impartial to all.** When his own sister sinned he put her out of the camp for seven days, and for one week Israel could not travel (Numbers 12:15).

**Moses did not presume to know God's will** (Leviticus 24:12) but waited on God and was uncompromising when His will was known (Exodus Chs. 8 and 10).

**We should seek to emulate the qualities exhibited in his life.**

### His weakness and sin

**His weaknesses are few and we all have some!** He was slow to grasp God's call, and made excuses even though God promised to be with Him (Exodus Ch. 4). **His sin was great.** Only one is recorded for he lost his temper with the people and in anger he struck the rock twice (Numbers 20:12).

### The last days of Moses

**Deuteronomy 31:30; 32:1-4. His lovely inspiring song** is recorded, for his ministry was refreshing to the end of his life. He left the nation strong and ready for the conquest of the land. He prayerfully mentored and left behind proven men in leadership (Numbers 27:12-23). Overall, he left a good example for Joshua, Caleb and other younger men to follow.

**Deuteronomy 34:1-8. The death of Moses.** Then Moses went up to the top of Mount Pisgah, and the Lord showed him all the land that he was not allowed to enter, and he died there and was buried by the Lord, and no one knows where his grave is. But he did enter the land, for he met there with the Lord Jesus Christ! *“And behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem”* (Luke 9:30-31).

**God's comment:** *“Moses, My servant is dead”* (Joshua 1:2) and *“Moses also was faithful in all his house”* (Hebrews 3:2). These are wonderful words.

***“But since then there has not arisen in Israel a prophet like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face”*** (Deuteronomy 34:10).

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## Study 6

# The Life and Times of Joshua

### Lessons from decisive leadership in leading Israel to possess the land.

**Joshua** was a young man when Moses led Israel out from Egypt. His Hebrew name means 'Jehovah's Salvation' and this is the same as 'Jesus' in the Greek, for our Lord Jesus *'will save His people from their sins'* (Matthew 1:21).

The first mention of Joshua is in Exodus 17:1-16 when he fought while Moses and Hur prayed, and the army of Amalek was defeated. Amalek were a wicked people who attacked the weak and the stragglers of Israel as they marched in the wilderness. The Lord would have war with them from generation to generation. Amalek, named after Esau's grandson, is a type of the flesh that often troubles us.

Saul was sent to kill them and all their animals, but he disobeyed and spared Agag their king and the best of their flocks. As a result he lost his kingdom and his life (1 Samuel Ch.15). It is only through the Spirit that we can overcome the flesh in the spiritual warfare we are engaged in (Romans 8:2-4; Galatians 5:16-26).

The devotion and communion of Joshua: He was loyal to Moses and went with him up Mt. Sinai (Exodus 24:13). He sought God's company, for God had first place in his life (Exodus 33:11).

He was a man of faith as was Caleb, for they brought a good report of the land. They were the only men of their generation over 20 years of age to enter Canaan. The rest died in the wilderness because of their unbelief (Numbers 14:6-10). Joshua was a man in whom was the Spirit of God, a proven soldier who became God's appointed leader over Israel (Numbers 27:15-23).

### Overview of 'promise', 'law' and 'grace'

All that follows are 'types' or 'examples' that are written for our 'learning' and 'admonition' (1 Corinthians 10:1-13). God by grace **promised** to give Abraham's descendants the land of Canaan. **Grace** is 'unconditional favour'. Moses and then Joshua possessed the **earthly inheritance** under the **law**. It is by **grace** and through **faith** that we are given as a gift our **promised heavenly inheritance** (1 Peter 1:3-5).

Israel have not yet possessed the land to the fullest extent, but they will when Christ reigns: *“The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!”* (Revelation 11:15).

### Joshua Chapter 1.

**Joshua 1:1-2. God speaks:** *“Moses My servant is dead”*. God gave Moses a wonderful memorial! What would you like written on your grave stone?

**Joshua 1:3-4. God's charge:** He was to possess all the land promised to Abraham. *"Every place...your foot will tread upon"*. This can also be our prayer, 'Lord, give us 'big feet' to possess our inheritance given to us in Christ!'

**Joshua 1 5-6. God's promise and challenge:** *"I will be with you...be strong and of good courage"*. Let us have courage and strength in the Lord to possess our heavenly inheritance by walking by faith.

**Joshua 1:7-8. God's Word:** *"This Book of the Law"* was to be meditated on and *"all that is written"* to be obeyed, and then Joshua would have good success. We likewise need to daily read His word and commit to live by it to enjoy success.

**Joshua 1:9. God's presence:** *"the Lord your God is with you"*. We have His presence with us: *"I will never leave you nor forsake you"* (Hebrews 13:5).

### Preparations to Possess the Land

**Joshua 1:10-11.** For three days Israel prepared to march to possess the land as God commanded Joshua, and provision was made for food, travel and for battle. On our journey of life we need to prepare our hearts daily and look for opportunities to serve Him. We will see conflict and spiritual warfare but will be perfected when we enter His presence at the end of our three-day journey of life.

**Joshua 1:12-18.** The two and one-half tribes who had chosen to live east of Jordan promised to help until the land was possessed.

### Joshua Chapter 2.

**Joshua 2:1-11.** God said to *"Go, view the land"*. This was a military strategy to survey the enemies strength and where the army should march. In this the Lord led the spies to house of the harlot **Rahab** and she hid them. This led to her confession of faith in the God of Israel (Hebrews 11:30-31).

**Joshua 2:12-21.** Rahab's faith led her to request assurance from the spies for her and her family's protection. She said, *"give me a true token"*. The scarlet cord was the evidence of her faith, and that her household would be spared. The scarlet cord, the colour of blood, reminds us that *"We have redemption through His blood"* (Ephesians 1:7). Later Rahab married Salmon the prince of Judah, and they became ancestors of Christ (Read Matthew 1:1-16).

### Joshua Chapter 3.

**Joshua 1:23-24. The spies faithful report:** *"Truly the Lord has delivered all the land into our hands..."* The spies that Moses sent brought up a bad report of the land and Israel refused to enter (Numbers Chapters 13 & 14).

**The Red Sea crossed:** This speaks of what they were delivered **from**; from **Pharaoh** and **Egypt**. We are delivered from Satan and this world system (1 John 2:15-17).

**The Jordan crossed:** This speaks of what they were brought **into**, the land of Canaan. As Israel entered the land, warfare began. From this we learn that by faith we are given a heavenly inheritance to possess, and there will be spiritual conflict as we seek to faithfully follow Christ (Ephesians 6:10-20).

**Joshua 3:1-2.** God gave the time and place for them to enter the land, and we do well to wait on Him for His guidance in our service.

**Joshua 3:3-7.** The priests carrying the Ark with God's presence, protection and provision went before Israel (Hebrews 13:5-6). In this Joshua was magnified as their captain and leader. This pictures Christ, the Captain of our salvation made great in our eyes in leading us through life (Hebrews 2:9-10; 6:19-20).

**Joshua 3:8-10.** God's power was supreme over all of their enemies while Joshua and all Israel obeyed the word of the Lord. Disobedience would mean defeat.

**Joshua 3:11-17.** God held up the waters and the priests with the Ark stood still in the Jordan until all Israel crossed over. Christ who stood firm on the cross until He said, *"It is finished"*, securing our entrance into a heavenly inheritance.

### Joshua Chapter 4.

**Joshua 4:1-9; 19-20.** The 12 stones left covered by the waters of the Jordan were a memorial to Israel that God held back the waters for them. In Christ we have died to our old life: *"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me"* (Galatians 2:20). We are buried by baptism into His death and risen with Him into a new life of faith (Romans 6:1-14).

The 12 stones taken from the Jordan to Gilgal were a memorial to Israel of their crossing into Canaan. They remind us of resurrection and our inheritance in Christ.

**Joshua 4:10, 21-24.** The priests bearing the Ark remained in Jordan until everyone crossed over. Israel passed through the waters of death, coming up from the Jordan to Gilgal. They were a new generation made ready to enter the land.

### Joshua Chapter 5.

**Joshua 5:1.** When the people of Canaan heard of the waters of Jordan being dried up and Israel entering their land, they were greatly afraid.

**Joshua 5:2-9.** Joshua was commanded to take sharp knives and circumcise the sons of Israel. This had been neglected in the wilderness. This set apart Israel as God's people, for 'Gilgal' means 'rolling away' and God 'rolled away' the reproach of Egypt. To us it means applying God's word in self-judgement on our fleshly self-life (1 Corinthians 11:31; Philippians 3:3; Romans 2:28-29).

**Joshua 5:10.** The Passover was kept for the first time in the land of Canaan, and our redemption is in Christ our Passover (1 Corinthians 5:6-8).

**Joshua 5:11-12.** They then enjoyed the produce of the land and the manna ceased that had fed them for 40 years in the wilderness. Christ is the true bread from heaven, for He gives spiritual life to the world (read John Chapter 6).

### **Joshua Chapter 6.**

Joshua commanded his army to follow the Lord's instructions, and so by trusting in God and obeying His word Jericho was defeated. Only Rahab and her family were saved because she received the spies with peace. They were not to take the gold, silver, bronze and iron vessels, for these were devoted to the treasury of the Lord as God commanded Joshua (Joshua 6:18-19).

### **Joshua Chapter 7**

God had commanded that Israel were to take no spoil from Jericho. But Achan saw silver and gold and a beautiful Babylonian garment and he coveted these and hid them in his tent. His sin caused God's displeasure, and as a result, Israel were defeated at Ai, a small city, and 36 men of Israel died in battle.

Achan was exposed, he and his family were taken to the Valley of Achor and perished. Achor means 'trouble', and in a future day God will give Israel *'the valley of Achor as a door of hope'* (Hosea 2:15). They will pass through the great tribulation (trouble) but one third of the nation will be saved (Zechariah 13:8).

### **Joshua Chapter 8.**

This Chapter records the defeat of Ai. They were now allowed to take the spoils of battle. Moses built an altar to the Lord on Mount Ebal and read to the people the law, while some of the people stood on Mount Gerizim (Read Deuteronomy 11:29; 27:11-13). The whole land was claimed for God and placed under His law.

### **Joshua Chapter 9.**

Joshua unwisely made a treaty with the Gibeonites, for these people deceived him and he failed to consult the Lord. These nations were to be destroyed, but Joshua recognised his mistake and bound them over to the Lord to be servants to Israel, and they did not cause problems in future years. Perhaps the Lord overruled and recognised the faith of these Gibeonites who feared Israel and their God.

### **Joshua Chapters 10 to 21.**

These chapters record the conquest of the land and how Joshua divided it by lot and each tribe were given their inheritance. *"Not a word failed of any good which the Lord had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass"* (Joshua 21:45)..

### **Joshua Chapter 22.**

The tribes of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh had inherited their land east of the Jordan. They had helped Joshua in the wars, and were now dismissed to return to their own lands. On their way home they built an altar near the Jordan as a

reminder to all Israel that they were part of the nation. This nearly led to a civil war, but on inquiry the truth was established and peace reigned.

### **Joshua Chapter 23.**

Israel were spread throughout the land, yet many of the Canaanites remained and Joshua called all the leaders of the tribes and exhorted them to trust in the Lord and to possess all the land and expel the remaining Canaanites. He warned them to be obedient, lest the Lord deliver them over to their enemies. Their failure to obey later led to Israel being oppressed by these people.

### **Joshua Chapter 24.**

**Joshua 24:1-13.** Joshua in his old age called together the tribes of Israel with their leaders, and reminded them of their history from God calling Abraham, taking him to Canaan, and Israel taken from Egypt to giving them their land.

**Joshua 24:14-33.** This records Joshua's parting words. He challenged all Israel to choose whom they would serve; the false god's of the nations or the Lord God of Israel, *"And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve.... But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD"* (Joshua 24:15). We also need determination like Joshua to serve the Lord all the days of our lives and to avoid worldly ways.

The influence of Joshua: *"Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had known all the works of the LORD which He had done for Israel"* (Joshua 24:31).

This book closes with the burial of Joshua in his allotted land, and the bones of Josheph buried in Shechem on the land Jacob had bought (Genesis 50:50:25, Exodus 13:19). We only have a few short years to live for Christ, so may we learn from all that is recorded in His word (Read 1 Corinthians 10:1-11).

**The next Book of Judges records the cycle of Israel's departure from the Lord in serving idols, God's chastening upon them and their repentance. The peoples they failed to expel were thorns in their sides and led to their captivity. These are important lessons for us to learn from Israel's history.**

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