

Bible Survey – Genesis Part 2

Bible Survey 1.2 - Genesis Continued:

Progressive Progress of Human Depravity – flowing from Sin to Judgment to Grace:

1. **The Fall** - Cycle 1 of sin-judgment-grace [see earlier discussion of Bible Survey 1.2 – Genesis page 27 of 30 pages].
 - a. **Sin**
 - i. Satan had already chosen to defy God and subvert the perfect order God had ordained and created. Satan deceived Eve by appealing to her logic and intellect, and usurped Adam’s rightful role as ruler over earth.
 - ii. Eve acted on her own volition becoming a duped but willing participant in Satan’s duplicity. Eve questions God’s motive and impugns His character – the internal sin which preceded the external act.
 - iii. Adam watched passively while his wife was being tried and failed. His lack of leadership doomed them both. This internal act in failing to lead in his assigned role as ruler over earth preceded the external act.
 - b. **Judgment**
 - i. Satan was once an Archangel with access to Heaven’s Throne Room, he is now an outcast thrown down upon the earth he has spoiled and usurped.
 - ii. Adam and Eve are cast out of their earthly paradise and left on a corrupted earth upon which they will struggle to survive. Where earth was created to be responsive to humanity’s rule, now they will have to scratch out a living in an often hostile and unresponsive environment.
 - iii. Spiritual and physical death are now introduced as a result of the fall, along with pain and suffering.
 - c. **Grace**
 - i. God curses Satan directly, but humanity indirectly through the earth on which they will struggle to live.
 - ii. God introduces the promise that Messiah – the seed of humanity, will ultimately be wounded by Satan but will destroy Satan and restore creation.
 - iii. It is interesting that the pain and suffering humanity endured because of the Fall, would ultimately be experienced and purged by Messiah on the Cross... becoming the means of healing.
 - iv. Being cast out of Paradise was an act of grace – since humanity proved incapable of obedience, their eating of the tree of life would have doomed them to their imperfect state for eternity.
 - v. In the restored order... the Tree of Life becomes humanity’s heritage healing all of humanity and displaying God’s gracious intentions underlying His judgment.

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2. **Abel to Babel** – Cycle 2 of sin-judgment-grace – it is interesting to observe the meaning of names – scripture asserts there is power in identity and in a name: Cain = to acquire, to get, or to possess; Able = vapor, breath [both used of the spirit]; Seth = God appointed, God given, chosen seed.
- a. **Cain’s Sin – 4:1-8**
 - i. Failed worship – both brothers come as priests with offerings to present to God: Cain’s sin was not necessarily the type of offering [minchah = tribute], but rather the manner in which he gave it. Cain did not present the first and best as his brother had, but merely offered something “from” the fruit of the ground – a token, or a leftover... it was a poor effort and God recognized it as such. God graciously promised that if Cain made a better effort, that it would be blessed.
 - ii. Failed ethics – God’s rejection of his gift should have resulted in contrition and repentance, instead Cain became angry and jealous of his brother. Rather than accepting his own fault, he blames his problem on his brother. He resolved his problem by killing his brother. When confronted by God, Cain refused to accept responsibility for his action, instead he lied to God... something God cannot tolerate. It is interesting that Abel’s blood was ‘calling to God’ from the ground – the ground from which they were made testified against Cain. John Steinbeck’s classic East of Eden offers keen insight into sin’s desire to master us [“tishmo” - from “mashal” – to rule] and then rule over us. The challenge to those of faith is that we must not allow sin to master us, rather we must master it... we choose.
 - b. **Cain’s judgment – 4:9-16**
 - i. God’s Character is displayed in His asking questions to get to the truth He already knows... the exploration is for Cain’s benefit [and for ours]... God wants to get to the heart of the matter in confronting sin.
 - ii. Alienation – Cain is cursed from the ground – “it will no longer yield its strength to you, and you will be a vagrant and a wanderer...” [v12]. Vagrant & wanderer [na’ vanad = one who never finds rest, no where can he obtain a livelihood] – this speaks to Cain’s personal instability and constant wayward movement.
 - iii. There is an interesting symmetry in Adam and Cain’s judgment – Adam was driven from the Garden, Cain is driven away from men. Adam would toil to wrest sustenance from the earth, Cain fared even worse... the bounty he once enjoyed is now denied.
 - iv. Cain’s response – self pity rather than repentance; he fears physical and social exposure rather than the God who made him.
 - v. Scripture makes no attempt to explain where the ‘other people’ come from that Cain fears, and we should refrain from putting words of conjecture in place of

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God's revelation. This is a mystery that will be made known in God's own time. It is unimportant for the theological purpose of this story, and is hermeneutically invalid.

c. God's Grace – 4:15-16, 25

- i. God protects Cain so he can live out his years.**
- ii. God provides a new son for Adam & Eve [Seth] who will carry on their line in inheritance [seed].**
- iii. God's character is again demonstrated as He had every right to react violently or aggressively, instead God's action is kind in its sternness – not imposing a greater penalty than what is warranted.**

d. Cain's descendents – 4:17-24

- i. Cain's son builds the 1st city – it is filled with incredible culture, art and technological advances on the outside, but within it is filled with violence and alienation... it reflects Cain's nature and suggests that our modern city-life is a diversion from our alienation from God.**
- ii. Cain's 7th son – the tyrant Lamech**
 - 1. 7 is a number indicating perfect fulfillment, while Lamech's poem seeks to vindicate Cain, it rather vindicates God.**
 - 2. Lamech defines his wives' identity in terms of himself.**
 - 3. He glories in his brutal self-justified revenge on a boy who injured him – death for a wound... also strangely reminiscent of God judgment on Satan who will wound and suffer death.**
 - 4. He presumes his own self-protection – what was a gift from God for Cain, he seizes and multiplies for himself. This is brutal arrogance.**

e. The gift of a Godly Remnant – 4:25-26

- i. Adam's descendents:**
 - 1. Serpent's seed – Cain, Enoch, Irad, Mehujael, Methushael, Lamech.**
 - 2. God's seed – Seth, Enosh, Kenan, Mahalel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, Noah.**
- ii. From Cain – Lamech demonstrated pride, arrogance, and self-centeredness – he was far worse than Cain.**
 - 1. Lamech demonstrates the escalation of the consequences of the Fall - Driven by rage and anger he abused women and children.**
 - 2. He boasted of his misdeeds, and looked for provocation.**
 - 3. He was more a monster than a man.**
- iii. Enoch – in the meantime, walked with God whose son Noah would be the 1st to be used to miraculously deliver humanity and protect a remnant for God.**

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3. The Flood – Cycle 3 of sin-judgment-grace – Gen 6-9

- a. Sin – the deterioration of society reaches its ultimate depravity – intermarriage of the ‘sons of God’ with the ‘sons of men.’ Again, scripture doesn’t clarify exactly what this means... is it simply the offspring of Cain marrying the offspring of Seth, or something else? What the text doesn’t clarify we should not attempt solve with conjecture.
 - i. Something really horrific was going on here... whether it was angels mating with humans, or demons mating with humans, or blessed humans and cursed humans mating – the boundaries God had set were breached.
 - ii. Suffice it to say that God’s forbearance had come to an end – man’s depravity had reached a level that the provocation of man’s evil intent forced God to act.
- b. Judgment – creation is set to undergo a reversal from order back to chaos.
 - i. The scripture author has been giving hints connecting the sins of the fathers to the sins of the sons. The family is not merely worldly but spiritual... are we sons of God, or sons of Satan. This lands hard in the NT.
 - ii. God is demonstrating that He alone is Master of creation, and that creation and humanity exist at His pleasure. Humanity ignores God at their own peril.
- c. Grace – a remnant is preserved... Noah and his family are miraculously delivered.
 - i. This is a testimony against sinful humanity, and an affirmation for godliness.
 - ii. God will only tolerate so much before He is compelled to act, but will preserve the righteous and ultimately destroy the wicked... a repeated theme in Scripture.
- d. Literary outline of the flood – is Chiastic
 - A Violence in creation – 6:9-10
 - B 1st divine speech: resolved to destroy – 6:13-22
 - C 2nd divine speech: enter the ark – 7:1-10
 - D Beginning of the flood – 7:11-16
 - E The rising waters of the flood – 7:17-24
 - X God remembers Noah
 - E’ The receding waters of the flood – 8:1-5
 - D’ Ending of flood-drying of the earth – 8:6-14
 - C’ 3rd divine speech: leave the ark – 8:15-19
 - B’ 4th divine speech: Noahic covenant – 9:1-17
 - A’ Peace in creation – 9:18-19
- e. Order within chaos – the biblical author demonstrates that the chaos God has unleashed in the flood is in fact purposeful and orderly... this is a message given structurally by the author... this says something regarding God and the author is making a theological statement about Him – note the inherent Chiastic order in the timing of the events:
 - A 7 Days of waiting for the flood – 7:4

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- B 7 day wait is over – 7:10
 - C 40 days of waiting on flood – 7:17
 - D 150 days of the water advancing – 7:24
 - D' 150 days of water retreating – 8:3
 - C' 40 days of waiting over – 8:6
 - B' 7 day wait – 8:10
 - A' 7 day wait – 8:12
- f. God's Promise to Noah – 8:21-9:3
 - i. The earth will again produce its fruit – 8:21-31
 - ii. Humanity will be prolific – 9:1
 - iii. Humanity will have dominion over the rest of creation – 9:2-3
 - 1. Man's sinfulness merited destruction.
 - 2. God's Grace is intent to redeem humanity – but not all will be saved.
 - 3. God will never again destroy the earth until the end of history.
- g. God's command to Noah – 9:4-7
 - i. Not to eat blood – to learn the value of life – 9:4
 - ii. To execute justice [an eye for an eye] – because man has value being made in God's image – 9:5-6
 - iii. To populate the earth – to advance the cause of God and righteousness – 9:7
- h. Covenant and Sign – 9:8-13
 - i. A covenant is a formal commitment – a conditional promise that is different than a contract in that a covenant is personal, is based on gratitude, trust and hope. While a contract is impersonal, based on distrust and self-service.
 - 1. Unilateral – the greater party to a lesser party – most Biblical covenants are of this type. This is typical of Suzerain/vassal agreements.
 - 2. Bilateral – 2 equals to each other – Jonathan and David; also marriage.
 - ii. Every Biblical covenant had an external sign that accompanied it:

| <u>COVENANT</u> | <u>SIGN</u> |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| Noah | Rainbow |
| Abraham | Circumcision |
| Old Covenant [Sinai] | Sabbath - rest |
| Davidic | A Son – Messiah |
| New Covenant [Cross] | The Cup – communion |
- i. Epilogue – Noah's blessings and curses on his sons – 9:25-27 [translation by Robert Alter, Genesis – Translation and Commentary.]
 - i. "Cursed be Canaan – the lowliest slave shall he be to his brothers."
 - ii. "Blessed be the Lord the God of Shem – unto them shall Canaan be slave."

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- iii. “May God enlarge Japheth – may he dwell in the tents of Shem, and unto them shall Canaan be slave.”
- j. **Transitional Analysis** – these last verses resume the verbal formulas of the antediluvian genealogy in chapter 5. The story of Noah is given formal closure with the recording of his age, and the stage is set for the table of nations of the next chapter. This constitutes an historical divider between the flood story and the Tower of Babel story.
- k. **Theological Reflections: the flood serves as a paradigm for both salvation and judgment.**
 - i. **Salvation [1 Pet 3:20-21]** – as righteous Noah took refuge in the ark by faith and was saved, so we take refuge in Christ and are saved. As the floodwaters cleansed the earth, creating a new beginning so baptism is a symbol that we have been cleansed by faith.
 - ii. **Judgment[Mat 24:37-39; 2 Pet 3:3-7]** – the flood is a type of the great judgment to come:
 - 1. Judgment is due to God’s love for creation, for His desire to restore purity and wholeness to a formerly perfect but now imperfect world... thus His judgment purges and purifies.
 - 2. Judgment is due to humanities sin... it punishes wrong doing as well as wrong being.
 - 3. God gives extended warning before executing judgment – God is not capricious and He desires all to be saved... but only on His conditions.
 - 4. God waits patiently before finally executing judgment [2 Pet 3:10].
 - 5. God’s patience is not a bad thing, but an aspect of His Goodness.
- 4. **The Tower of Babel** – Cycle 4 of sin-judgment-grace – Gen 11
 - a. **Sin** – in search of a Name – “let us make for *ourselves* a name... lest we be scattered over the face of the earth.”
 - i. Humanity displayed their rebellious nature yet again – seeking a name for themselves independent from God.
 - ii. Instead of obeying God’s command to spread out and subdue the land, they banded together in a titanic self-assertion and proclamation against God and heaven.
 - iii. Inherent is the ultimate utopian dream of a united humanity independent of God... it is arrogance and audacity exemplified.
 - iv. Scripture states this was an objective decision on humanity’s part – it is part of the fallen nature of humanity needing renewal.
 - b. **Judgment** – confusion of languages and scattered population – Gen 11:5-9

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- i. God again demonstrates His Sovereignty and creative ability to thwart humanity's attempt to gain equal status with God. Independence is a means of establishing equality... of not having to obey any other will but your own.
 - ii. This again demonstrates that something is fundamentally wrong with fallen humanity... living in the context God called us to is the highest of callings, instead we resort to a lesser one of our own creation.
 - c. Grace Displayed
 - i. The alienation of the nations was a means of bringing man back to Himself [Acts 7:26-27].
 - ii. On the heels of another miraculous event, the stage is set for the calling of Abram, and a new movement of the redemptive process.
 - iii. Interestingly, God's people Israel desire separation from the nations... the Israel/Gentile rift.
 - d. Reflections on Spirituality
 - i. The Garden – the Garden is the basis of idealism.
 - ii. The Fall – sin is the basis of realism.
 - iii. Redemptive Grace – redemption is the basis of optimism.
- 5. Abraham's Story – Gen 12-22
 - a. Election
 - i. The call of Abraham is a major step forward in both redemption and revelation.
 - 1. New Revelation – God revealed Himself in a more advanced and extremely personal way to Abraham and Jacob... Abraham was "God's friend, Jacob saw God and yet lived."
 - 2. New redemption – election and promise are two major new themes introduced with Abraham and Jacob that will play out through scripture. "General Revelation" [universal disclosure of God through creation] is being replaced by Special Revelation [personal relational intimacy with called persons and a called people] that will become the repository of Scripture.
 - ii. The necessity of election
 - 1. Gen 3-11 has graphically depicted humanities inability to live rightly before God.
 - 2. Humanities repeated failure before a Holy God is a cycle with three phases:
 - a. Sin – the natural tendency of humanity to rebel against God.
 - b. Judgment – God's response is more than justified, humanities stubborn refusal requires God to act.

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- a. The call was not for selfish isolationism as Israel demonstrated... but to make knowledge of the available relationship with God known.
- b. The same holds true for the church age... a hyper-Calvinist perversion of election is as offensive to God as it is to humanity. Calling is not compulsion... it is an offer freely provided that changes everything.
- v. The people of God
 - 1. The election of Abraham introduces the concept of the people of God. God has started with a person, to a group, then radiating outward to a nation, then to all of humanity [Rev 21:3].
 - 2. Election is a glorious and wonderful thing, it is amazing to be related to the Living God in a context of relational intimacy... but with this comes also service and suffering. A small price to pay for the incomparable blessing bestowed.
- b. Literary outline of Abraham's life – Chiastic form – from this outline we see the center of the story [hence the author's primary point] is God's covenantal promises to Abraham.
 - A Genealogy of Terah – 11:27-32
 - B Promise of a son, and the start of Abraham's spiritual odyssey – 12"1-9
 - C Abraham lies about Sara, God protects her in a foreign palace – 12:10-20
 - D Lot settles in Sodom – 13:1-8
 - E Abraham interceded for Sodom & Lot militarily – 14:1-24
 - F Covenant with Abraham, annunciation of Ishmael – 15:1-16:16
 - F' Covenant with Abraham, annunciation of Isaac – 17:1-18:15
 - E' Abraham intercedes for Sodom & Lot in prayer – 18:16-33
 - D' Lot flees doomed Sodom & settles in Moab – 19:1-38
 - C' Abraham lies about Sara, God protects her in a foreign palace – 20:1-18
 - B' Birth of a son and climax of Abraham's spiritual odyssey – 21:1-22:19
 - A' Genealogy of Nahor – 22:20-24
- c. The election of Abraham – an invitation to a New Eden – 12:1-9
 - i. Abraham was called out of Ur to go to a land God would show him – 12:1
 - 1. There is no scriptural evidence that Abraham was compelled to obey God's invitation.
 - 2. The fact that Abraham "had faith" and "believed God" which was "credited to him as righteousness" would seem to indicate he had a choice in the matter... and that he made the right one.

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3. Abraham's father evidently heard a 'calling' as well, but only went part way. The lack of crediting him with faith is telling... his was inadequate.
- ii. One individual who would become a nation – with a common seed, land, constitution – 12:2
- iii. One nation that would become a universal blessing – 12:3
- iv. To have a nation you need:
 1. A people – or a common seed [lineage/heritage] – Gen-Exodus
 2. A land – an inheritance – Joshua
 3. A constitution – social/political organization – Deuteronomy
- v. To have a great nation you need"
 1. The promise is for a "great nation" – that is 'a very large population.'
 2. Great also required a renowned history and character – that would be understood and respected by other nations.
 3. A "great name" was what the builders of the tower of Babel sought apart from God, but here God is making the promise on His terms... which Abraham accepts by faith. Abraham didn't seek a great name, but rather God graciously bestowed it.
 4. Abraham is promised 'divine protection' – "those who bless you will be blessed, those who curse you will be cursed" – God personally vested Himself in Abraham's future... which Abraham accepted on faith.
- vi. Abraham's journey into this new land
 1. The journey takes place in stages that give shape to Abraham's spiritual development:
 - a. Tent [pilgrim/follower].
 - b. Altar [worshiper/committed believer].
 - c. Calling on the Lord's name [preaching/teaching].
 2. The journey takes him into enemy territory – 'Oak of Moreh' is a Canaanite Pagan shrine.
 3. The journey serves as a pattern for future stories – Jacob, Joshua, and Jesus – each take the same route through Shechem, Bethel, Ai, Negev [desert area south of Jerusalem].
- d. Covenant – Gen 17
 - i. God's Promise – Old Covenant
 1. Abraham will be the father of many nations – 17:4-6
 2. The promise includes a personal identity, a family identity, a national identity, and a spiritual identity.

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3. God will remain true to Abraham's descendents [the people or community of faith] – 17:7
 4. Land of Canaan will be his descendents everlasting possession – 17:8
- ii. Abraham's Response
1. Abraham took God at His Word, considering Him to be faithful to His promise – 15:6
 2. Ritual of circumcision is the required sign of identity as God's called out people – 17:9-14.
 - a. In Egypt circumcision was reserved only for the elite castes – the highest order of priests, divine warriors, and others seen as uniquely belonging to God.
 - b. Now the entire nation that would become known as Israel [God's people] was to have this identity.
 - c. Israel is to be a nation of priests [Gal 6] – elite within the world, or more appropriately 'called out of the world.'
- e. Theological development
- i. Covenants in the ANE were sealed in the blood of sacrificed animals. The animal was cut in two and the parties walked through the pieces to affirm "may it so happen to me if I fail to fulfill this commitment" – 15:8. God is revealing Himself through the cultural norms prevalent to the day in a manner that was significant to Abraham. God has always worked in the present toward a specific future.
 - ii. "Deep sleep" [15:12] signifies a spiritual visitation... here is a specific [implied] reminder that Abraham contributes nothing... Adam, Abraham, Jacob, Saul, and others each had a deep sleep where God acted supernaturally on their behalf.
 - iii. Identity is demonstrated in relational context – as a part of a 'family', part of a 'nation,' or part of the 'people of God,' etc.
 1. Identity comes with privileges and responsibilities.
 2. Rebellion is seen as a means to establish an individual identity apart from a corporate identity – rebellious youths thus want to establish their identity apart from their parents. Most end up realizing the benefit of the relational identity and return to it [the 'Prodigal Son']... though some do not.
 3. God is seen through time as a patient Father who remains faithful, and waits patiently for His people to return to Him... also demonstrated in the 'Prodigal Son.'

- iv. There is a theological tension between God’s sovereignty and man’s need to respond. Man is accountable and must make his own choices... and then live with the results.
- v. Faith trusts in a God who rewards those who purposefully and diligently seek Him [Heb 11:6]. Faith is the antecedent to obedience [Gen 15:6; Deut 6:5]. Faith must be tested to grow... at each step of faith, Abraham leaves something behind:
 - 1. Call to a new land meant loss of the land he knew [Gen 12:1; Heb 11:8]. He enters the land and loses his father.
 - 2. When he arrives he is confronted with famine, and almost loses his wife over his fear of men.
 - 3. When he receives a promise of fertility, he loses a nephew.
 - 4. When he finally receives the promised son, after 24 years he is asked to sacrifice him... his willingness to obey when he clearly doesn’t understand is the power of faith in the story. Abraham demonstrates his willingness to lose his son, but in the process he acquires both God and his son in a more powerful way.
- vi. Each OT promise is a physical reality that served as a shadow of a spiritual reality [John 8:56; Heb 11:10]. By letting go... it got it all... if he had held onto what he had, he would have lost everything... similarly Jesus told His disciples they had to leave mother, father, etc. to enter the Kingdom of God.
- vii. The ‘seed’ is an interesting promise... initially it goes through incredible growth, then is progressively narrowed... to a remnant... and ultimately to a person – Jesus. The value of the OT genealogy was to identify the Messiah... afterward it was useless. Growth of the ‘seed’ after Jesus takes the opposite tract, instead of narrowing it radiates out from 3, to 12, to 70, to multitudes through the ages.

6. The Isaac Story

a. Outline of Isaac’s life

- i. Conception and birth – unadulterated joy... he was a miracle baby.
 - 1. Conceived in laughter – Abraham’s [Gen 17:15-19] & Sarah’s (Gen 18:9-15).
 - 2. Born in laughter – Sarah’s [Gen 21:1-7]
- ii. Adolescence – was of silent obedience – [Gen 22] – passive obedience.
- iii. 40 years – a marriage made in heaven [Gen 24]
 - 1. Scene by the well – gift of prayer.
 - 2. Rebekah – the model of beauty and hospitality.
 - 3. Abraham’s servant was attentive to God as well as obedient to Abraham.

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- iv. 40-60 years – Spiritual integration... in the footsteps of his father [Gen 26:1-33] – everything Abraham does... Isaac does. Isaac's spiritual integration in Chiastic form:

A Isaac goes to Abimelech – king of the Philistines – 26:1

B The Lord appears to Isaac in Gerar – 26:2-6

Abrahamic covenant renewed

C Deception of the Philistines – sister/wife 26:7-11

X Isaac sows, prospers and gains wealth – 26:12-14

Philistines become envious & send Isaac away

C' Contention with the Philistines over the wells – 26:15-22

B' The Lord appears to Isaac in Beersheba – 26:15-22

A' Abimelech goes to Isaac – 26:26-33

- b. Dissonant note revealed concerning Isaac:

- i. Yitzak – 'he laughs' [noun] is used in contrast to 'to laugh' [verb]. The verb form is the theme word that ties Isaac's story together. It was 1st used by Abraham and Sarah to describe their laughter and disbelief [17:17; 18:12], and later transformed by God into ecstatic joy [21:6]. Isaac is born and his name – 'he laughs'... seals their happiness... and forms Isaac's identity.
- ii. In contrast to the 'pure joy' expressed in context with Isaac's birth, there is condescension in laughter expressed by Ishmael [21:9], indicating that the way you laugh is significant... there is laughter that mocks the gifts of God... as where Lot was 'joking' [19:14]. The way you laugh is an indication of how you respond to God and His promise... this will shape your destiny. For those of faith – 'laughter' is a joyous heart that yields indescribable joy. For those who do not believe – 'laughter' is derision that means exile and estrangement, even destruction [21:14; 19:24-25].
- iii. How will Isaac respond in this context? Will he embrace the faith of his parents so his own name is a precursor to his joyous destiny? Will he deride his calling and his laughter disdain his heritage as a laughing joke? The author reveals this tension in the original language in word play. Given Isaac's faith journey thus far, it is unclear what will happen.
- iv. The only time the verb form of 'to laugh' is used is when Isaac is attempting to hide his true identity, otherwise the noun form is used. Out of fear he lies about his true relationship to his wife Rebekah – as his father had also done, but Isaac is caught 'caressing' – fondling, tickling, maybe more [Gen 26:8]. Unable to control his sexual passion, Isaac is publically demonstrative with Rebekah. The author's word play is translated "Laughter was tickling" [yitzhag me tzaheq – laughter was

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casing to laugh] Rebekah. This is the last use of the verb form of his name... likely calling attention that Isaac's sensual appetites may be a problem and control this otherwise generally passive man.

c. Literary Outline of Isaac's life:

A Birth: God creates laughter – joyous praise for life out of certain death

B Teens: silent obedience on Mt Moriah

C Marriage: Isaac has affections for his wife – he loved Rebekah

X Isaac's last laugh – Isaac causes Rebekah to laugh...

Isaac embraces his own name in a public demonstration of sexual appetite.

C' Birth of children: Isaac's affections have changed... now based on Sensuality, "he loved Esau for the game in his mouth," where love was once focused on his wife its now his mouth – pleasure.

B' Old age: Isaac is now physically blind... indicative of his spiritual blindness, he speaks in disobedience.

A' Death and return of the son... no speech, silent resignation.

d. Theological implications

- i. While Abraham won the battle of priorities in obedience to God, Isaac lost the battle to his sensuality. Father and son are in contrast... not unlike King David and King Solomon are in contrast.
- ii. Sensuality – Isaac is blind... his 'ears' tell him it is Jacob, his 'touch' tells him its Esau... he relies on his nose [27:21-27]. In the OT the 'ear' was to be the most important organ of spiritual receptivity – Israel was to be governed by the ear [Deut 6:4] as people of the 'word.' The idolatrous pagan Canaanites were governed by the 'eye' [Ex 20:4].
- iii. The birthright that Esau previously sold, is now given under false conditions – the craftiness of the wife Isaac previously loved more than himself, thus the birth prophecy of Esau and Jacob is fulfilled.
- iv. Why would the author devote such a long complicated story as this to scripture? What is he telling us about God and his understanding of life?
 1. Isaac doesn't have a toledoth – a genealogy with his name on it.
 2. Isaac wants the right thing the wrong way.
 3. Rebekah wants the right thing the wrong way.
 4. Jacob wants the right thing the wrong way.
 5. Esau wants the wrong thing the wrong way.

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7. The Jacob Story

a. Literary outline of Jacob's life:

A Rebekah struggles in childbirth – seeks an oracle from God [25:19-34].

B Interlude – Rebekah in a foreign place – deception, covenant with neighbor [26:].

C Deception planned – the blessing, fear of Esau, flight [27:1-28:9].

D Encounter with angels and God at border [Bethel] – blessing [28:1-10].

E Struggling with Laban over wives for wages, Jacob deceived [29:1-30].

X Birth of children – [29:31-30:24] – when Rachel 'gives up' her womb is 'opened up'. Rachel's faith is a mirror to Jacob that blessing is a gift, not something to grasp. This is the turning point in the Jacob story.

E' Struggling with Laban over wages – Jacob victorious, flight, Laban deceived by Rachel [30:25-31:55].

D' Encounter with angel and God at the border [Jabbok] – blessing [32:].

C' Deception planned – fear of Esau, blessing gift returned, return to land [33:].

B' Interlude – Dinah in a foreign place – deception, covenant with foreigner [34:].

A' Rachel struggles in childbirth – oracle fulfilled, blessing, death [35:].

b. Theological implications:

- i. The interplay of Rachel & Leah – Rachel has love, but no children; Leah has children, but no love. When Rachel gives up, she receives... when you seize what you want, it goes badly... when you wait for God's gift it goes well. The focus is to concentrate on life as a gift, with character as more important than desires. The result is through faith God will bless in His time.
- ii. The Bible is not an instruction manual that simply contains principles of spirituality, philosophy or psychology... it is the unfolding story about God's plan for the redemption of humanity and the establishment of His Kingdom on earth. That the story has relevance to practical living makes it real... God enters our messy world/life where His 'Holy' work of redemption/transformation occurs in individual people who are used for greater purposes than they know.
- iii. God is with Jacob in every aspect of his travels, not just the epiphanies of the ladder, and the wrestling match... but in everyday life. The various stories indicate God's vigilant presence and soul nourishing events that shape Jacob's character.
- iv. Jacob is the first 'great lover' character revealed in scripture. His love for Rachel is a type of God's love for His people, and Jesus' love of His Church.

- v. **Jacob’s story is real... he lacked relational intimacy with his passive and emotionally detached father, he had comfort from his overbearing mother, and he had tension from his overpowering and threatening brother... his parents’ marriage displays more relational interplay directed to their favorite offspring than to each other... it is a messy complex family that all too often bears resemblance to our own lives or the lives of people we know and interact with. Dysfunctional families are repeated in Scripture [Adam’s family, Noah’s family, Abraham’s family, etc.] – but note the character traits of those God considers worthy... this principle is strongly characterized in wisdom literature.**
- vi. **Jacob’s story displays a man who has a great desire to know the blessing of God... the pursuit of blessing is the engine of faith in the story... it is a prize that is contested on many levels. Jacob does not wait passively – he is a man of action who pursues God purposefully. This intensity makes Jacob one who literally wrestles with God – he goes from ‘Jacob’ [heal grabber] to ‘Israel’ [he who prevails with God]. This is a not so subtle statement of what ought to be the priority of every person. The blessing of his earthly father takes second place to the blessing of his heavenly Father – this is the work of persistent faith.**
- c. **Jacob’s Ladder – Heaven on the move [Gen 28:10-22]**
 - i. **Literary structure – is parallel:**
 - 1. **Jacob sleeps – God descends – 28:1-15**
 - a. **Jacob arrives in a ‘no place’ – 28:10-11**
 - b. **Jacob’s dream – a ladder with angels and God – 28:12-13a**
 - c. **God’s oracle – 28:13b-15**
 - 2. **Jacob awake – he worships – 28:16-22**
 - a’ **Jacob’s awe in ‘that place’ – 28:16-17**
 - b’ **Jacob’s response to the dream – 28:18-19**
 - c’ **Jacob’s response to the oracle – 28:20-22**
 - **A vow – the longest in the OT – transforms his flight into a holy pilgrimage.**
 - **A cultic ritual – a ‘no place’ is sanctified into a ‘holy place’.**
 - **Tithes – transforms the ‘taker’ into a ‘giver’.**

This parallel structure suggests that this ordinary man [a fugitive] is now imitating God... in effect being transformed [restored] to the image of God that was lost in the garden.

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The 'no place' is an upgrade over the pagan Canaanite surroundings... God is employing a transformed man to bring cleansing to the land.

When the value of God experienced is known... the things of the world become less important.

- ii. Dynamic transformation
 - 1. God uses suffering in many forms as a means of connecting with people.
The message of this truth is that it is important to be honest with God and open with your life to Him.
 - 2. This story is filled with transformations due to God's presence:
 - a. A man running away runs into God.
 - b. A man afraid of his brother learns to fear God.
 - c. A certain place becomes God's place.
 - d. A rock becomes a temple.
 - e. Night turns to morning.
 - f. Canaanite 'Luz' becomes 'Bethel' [the house of God].
 - g. When the dream is fulfilled Jacob [heel-grabber] becomes Israel [one who prevails with God and humans].
- d. Jacob's Name Change – Israel – Identity Transformation – Gen 32
 - i. Literary outline is parallel – Two camps, two families, two meetings, two brothers – but there is a totally different approach born of humility and the hope of reconciliation:
 - A Jacob sends messengers to Esau - :3-6
 - B Jacob divides his family :7-8
 - C Jacob prays based on God's covenant promises :9-12
 - A' Jacob sends gifts to Esau :13-21
 - B' Jacob sends his family across Jabbok :22-23
 - C' Jacob prays as he wrestles the man-God :24-32
 - ii. Reconciliation – has many 'faces'
 - 1. 5 times 'face' [panah] is used as a play on words to describe Jacob's goal of reconciliation – 32:20-21
 - a. I will appease him [make atonement before his face]
 - b. With the present that goes before me [before his face]
 - c. Afterward I will see his face
 - d. Perhaps he will accept me [lift up my face]
 - e. The present [minhah] passed before him [before his face]

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2. The extremely difficult and complex work of reconciliation is boiled down to 3 related words in a play of words:
 - a. Mananeh [camp]; mahnaim [2 camps] – suggesting the task requires divine help.
 - b. Minhah [gift] – implying generous restitution.
 - c. Hen [favor or grace] – the gift the guilty party hopes to receive.
3. God’s work in Jacob transforms a grasper [one who takes] into a giver [one who receives].
 - a. Transformation always precedes reconciliation.
 - b. A brother’s face is a mirror for your own.
 - c. Open arms beg for reconciliation, where closed fists beg for confrontation.
4. NT landing – 2 Cor 3:18 we with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the Glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

8. The Joseph Story

a. Literary Outline of Joseph’s Life

A Introduction: beginning of Joseph story – 37:2-11

B Jacob mourns ‘death’ of Joseph – 37:12-36

C Interlude: Judah signified as leader – 38:1-30

D Joseph’s enslavement in Egypt – 39:1-23

E Joseph savior of Egypt through disfavor at Pharaoh’s court – 40:1-45:57

F Journeys of brothers to Egypt – 42:1-43:34

G Brothers pass Joseph’s test of love for brother – 44:1-34

G’ Joseph gives up power over his brothers – 45:1-34

F’ Migration of family to Egypt – 46:1-27

E’ Joseph savior of family through favor at Pharaoh’s court – 46:28-47:12

D’ Joseph’s enslavement of Egyptians – 47:13-31

C’ Interlude: Judah blessed as ruler 48:1-49:28

B’ Joseph mourns death of Jacob – 49:29-50:14

A’ Conclusion: end of Joseph story – 50:15-26

b. Literary outline of Judah’s life

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A Judah's birth to Leah – 'God be praised' from mouth of mother – Gen 29:35

B Judah suggests the plan to sell Joseph to the Ishmaelites for profit and then deceives his father. Judah leads brothers in jealous rage because of their father's favoritism – 37:25-28.

C Judah takes leave of his brothers and does business with a Canaanite. He is taken by the beauty of the daughter of Shua, and marries a Canaanite. She bears 3 sons – 38:1-5.

X After the loss of 2 sons, Judah fails to show covenant loyalty to Tamar. Judah is deceived by Tamar dressed as a harlot, and lies with her.

X' Judah's transformation: Judah confesses his own unrighteousness as he recognizes articles he gave Tamar as a 'pledge'... 'you are righteous, I am not.' Tamar conceives and bears twins – Perez & Zerah – 38:6-30.

C' Judah reunited with his brothers, 'wrestles' with his father, Jacob. Speaking the 'truth' and offering himself and the family fortune as a 'pledge' for the safe return of Benjamin. – 43:1-10.

B' When the cup is found in Benjamin's possession, Judah pleads to Joseph for the life of his brother offering himself in place of Benjamin as Joseph's slave. Judah is no longer governed by his father's favoritism, but seeks his welfare – 44:14-34.

A' Judah receives the firstborn blessing from Jacob – 'your brothers shall praise you' – 49:8-12.

c. Theological Themes

i. Different modes of revelation to the patriarchs from direct to distant: a paradigm for canon?

| <u>PATRIARCH</u> | <u>MODE OF REVELATION</u> | <u>OT CANON</u> | <u>NT CANON</u> |
|------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Abraham | Theophany [direct speech] | Moses-Torah | Jesus-Gospels |
| Jacob/Joseph | Dreams [more obscure] | Prophecy | Apostles-Acts |
| Joseph/brothers | Providence [most obscure] | Wisdom | Epistles-Rev |

Mode goes from most direct [Theophany – where God acts directly in creation] to more distant [God speaks to man in a dream who then reveal truth to others], to most distant [God's supernatural power directly and indirectly influences events that affect man and spiritual discernment is needed] ... and the same moves occur in OT and NT. Development of faith and maturity allows the faithful to hold fast by looking for evidence of God's work. God occasionally speaks directly, but most often He speaks through circumstances.

- ii. **The Theology of dreams and the development of wisdom – Spiritual Reality**
 - 1. **Joseph is engaged in 3 sets of dreams over a 13 year period – in each instance his ‘gift’ of prophetic interpreting remains constant, and the gift functions with perfect accuracy and consistency each time.**
 - a. **Brother’s dreams – Joseph has gift, but no wisdom – ends up in prison.**
 - b. **Prison dreams – Joseph is learning relational discretion – he has the gift and has gained wisdom.**
 - c. **Pharaoh’s dreams – Joseph’s gift is strong & wisdom is strong – God has forged the tool He needed for the proper time and place.**
 - d. **Brother’s disclosure – no dreams, all gifts [blessings].**
 - 2. **Wisdom Revealed [chokmah] – Von Rad writes “what is theologically noteworthy is the way in which the strong predestinarian content of [Joseph’s] speech is combined with a strong summons to actions.” The fact that God has revealed a course of action and is warning his prophet – invites a course of action from responsible leaders.**
 - 3. **Spiritual Reality – The Bible presumes that God is seeking to connect with humanity, and the Spiritual means of that connection is of great debate.**
 - a. **There are those that believe that God has ceased speaking outside of scripture [cessationist], and there are those that believe that God continues to connect spiritually even though we have become dull of perceiving.**
 - b. **Of the later, Charismatic is significantly different from both Pentecostal [where tongues is necessary evidence of spiritual gifts for all believers] and the ‘Signs and Wonders’ Vineyard movement [where signs and wonders are the norm, not the exception].**
 - c. **Charismatic acknowledges divine [spiritual] gifts are provided for the continuing edification and growth of the body... and that spiritual equipping continues, but without the pre-conditions of the Pentecostalism and Vineyardism ... not everyone must speak in tongues and not everyone will experience signs and wonders.**
 - 4. **Strength of the charismatic approach is that ‘gift’ and ‘wisdom’ are equal.**
 - 5. **Like Joseph, the refining of character complements God given gifts. Humility is an essential ingredient of all the OT & NT prophets and preachers, and should be our standard today as well.**
 - 6. **Divine gifts alone never commend someone for office in the church. Calling, character, equipping, and passion are all necessary components.**

d. Character Transformation: Joseph & Judah

i. Character traits God shaped in Joseph:

- 1. Humility – through years of suffering and forced contemplation in prison.**
- 2. Patience – through years of waiting on God to fulfill His promises His way.**
- 3. Obedience – through forced followership [submission] giving up power and control for the sake of intimacy.**
- 4. Emotional maturity – embracing feelings of compassion, tenderness, sensitivity, and forgiveness in a correct relational context.**
- 5. Brokenness – learning to bridge the distance guilt has created in others.. the greater/stronger person is always the bridging agent.**
- 6. Loyalty & self-sacrifice – the faithful stewardship in being willing to provide for others even when they have wronged you... recognizing God has given the ability to bless as well as the responsibility to care for.**
- 7. Healed heart and mind – allows for the expression of deep emotional feelings of love in spite of having been wronged by those you love.**

ii. Character traits God shaped in Judah:

- 1. Loyalty – submission to the needs and wants of your father and bothers... doing what is right, not what is expedient.**
- 2. Emotional maturity – the loss of his 2 sons broke his heart, and changed his nature... he learned compassion instead of being resentful.**
- 3. Obedience – submission to his father’s concerns and interests rather than focusing on his own wants & needs.**
- 4. Faithfulness – realizing that God is in control of the events surrounding him and doing greater/bigger things in the midst of painful circumstances.**
- 5. Brokenness – learning to own up to sin and failure, and learning to glorify God in the midst of them.**
- 6. Emotional maturity – realizing that love can be irrational, unequal, and at times unjust.**
- 7. Self-sacrifice – being willing to accept another’s penalty out of love and responsibility.**

iii. Practical applications

- 1. The Joseph story builds to the point when Joseph finally reveals himself to his brothers – in his self-disclosure finally the emotional/relational tension is released and joyful reunion occurs... through which healing occurs.**
- 2. Judah’s willingness for self-sacrifice proves he is a changed man and this is the final component that frees Joseph’s emotional heart and allows him to reveal/disclose himself to his brothers.**

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- 3. Joseph went to the Gentiles as a slave – he brought them salvation through his God-given leadership.**
- 4. Israel left Egypt as slaves – bringing the hope of salvation to a new people of God through the God-given leadership of Moses.**