

Bible Overview 3: The Patriarchs

(Patriarchs = Abraham, Isaac and Jacob –regarded as the ‘fathers of the faith’)

The covenant promises made to Abraham are repeated to Isaac and Jacob

To Isaac:

“Stay in this land for a while and I will be with you and will bless you. For to you and your descendants I will give all these lands and will confirm the oath I swore to your father Abraham. I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and will give them all these lands and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed” Genesis 26:3-4
To Isaac

To Jacob:

“I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you”
Genesis 28:13-15

Confirming and emphasising once again:

- The promise of the land
- Numerous descendants
- Through them to bring blessing to all nations on earth
- Through (Abraham) Isaac and Jacob and their ‘offspring’. See Galatians 3:16 – ‘offspring’ is singular – pointing to THE descendant who would bring blessing to all the nations.

Re-emphasising God’s covenant promises at the beginning of the Bible – as the Bible unfolds, we will see them all come to fulfilment in Christ.

Group Discussion - JONAH:

- Why did Jonah flee?
- What was Jonah angry about?
- If you had to pick one verse as the most important/significant in the book which would you choose?
- To whom did Jonah address the message that he preached?
- Who do you think the 'book' of Jonah was written to – to whom is the book addressed?
- What might be its significance in the Old Testament?
- What passages might this connect with in the New Testament

Snapshots in Genesis:

Jacob and Esau:

"Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other and **the older will serve the younger**" (25:23)

Group Discussion – Read chapter 27:1-29

Isaac Blesses Jacob – Genesis 27

Isaac old and wants to give his blessing to Esau (v4)

Rebekah persuades Jacob to deceive his father into giving the blessing to him

Rebekah reassures Jacob "let the curse fall on me" (v13)

Jacob clothed as Esau, (15-16,23) receives his father's blessing (not just any blessing – note covenant promises –v29)

(Sometimes we see the New Testament foreshadowed in the Old Testament through similarities/parallels – sometimes by way of contrast)

Rebekah – is so concerned for Jacob to receive the blessing that she is willing to receive the curse instead of him – v13

Gal 3:13-14 Jesus **does** become a curse because he wants his people to receive the blessing

Isaac is deceived but he does pronounce blessing upon Jacob, because he is dressed as Esau

God is not deceived but he does pronounce blessing upon sinners because we are clothed in Christ's righteousness

Isaac reaffirms covenant promises to Jacob then sends him away from the land to escape Esau (Gen 28:3-4) (note the constant repetition of the promise of numerous descendants – God's 'missionary-heart')

As he is about to depart from the Land of Promise, he has a dream

Group Discussion: Read Genesis 28:10-22

What are the reminders/pointers to the covenant?

What clue/s are there that Jacob (the deceiver) is beginning to change?

What is the point Jesus is making in John 1:47-51?

Any other New Testament references/echoes?

Jacob does eventually return = having married Leah and Rachel, and having prospered greatly. He returns fearful of Esau's response yet remembering God's promise to him unworthy though he was to receive it,

"I am unworthy of all the kindness and faithfulness you have shown your servant...save me from the hand of my brother Esau, for I am afraid he will come and attack me and also the mothers with their children. But you have said, "I will surely make you prosper and will make your descendants like the sand of the sea which cannot be counted" (Gen 32:10-12).

Group Discussions:

1) Read Genesis 32:22-32

- Who is Jacob wrestling with?
- What is the significance of this incident?
- Read Mark 14:32-36, Mark 15:33-34, remembering the Galatians verses from before – how do these verses connect with Genesis 32?

2) Read Genesis 49:2-38

- Who would you expect would receive the greatest blessing of all the sons of Jacob?
- Who do you think actually does?
- Can you think of any New Testament references relating to this?

3) Joseph

- Briefly (!) summarise what you know of the Joseph story (Joseph and his Amazing Technicolour Coat is not far off!)
- Read Genesis 50:15-21 – what is he referring to in v20?
- Read Philippians 2:5-11 – what are the parallels?
- What does v20 tell us about God's sovereignty, human suffering and human sin? See also Acts 2:23-24

FOR NEXT TIME:

Read Exodus 34:6-7 – What is strange about these verses? (see also Proverbs 17:15)

Read Romans 3:25-26 What does the cross demonstrate/show? Why does it need showing? How does it show it?

Read 1 John 4:7-12 What does the cross demonstrate/show? How?

