Abraham’s journey of faith: Part 1 - Genesis 12

Genesis 12 starts Abraham’s journey of faith with God’s call to him:

“Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”

Abram left his father’s home in obedience to God and with his wife Sarai and his nephew Lot and his household they set out on pilgrimage to the Promised Land of Canaan.

“The Lord appeared to Abram and said, ‘To your offspring I will give this land.’ So he built an altar there to the Lord, had had appeared to him.”

A famine came into the land and so Abram went down to Egypt to live there awhile. Abram became fearful – telling his wife to act as his sister not his wife. He told the Pharaoh that Sarai was his sister out of fear of the Pharaoh wanting to take such a beautiful woman into his house. So he instructed Sarai to go along with his lie, and she ended up in Pharaoh’s house as his wife. “God inflicted serious diseases on Pharaoh and his household because of Abram’s wife.”

So Pharaoh found out that Sarai was Abram’s wife, but how he found out the Scripture does not say. He called Abram in to rebuke him and command him to go with his wife and all his belongings. Abram was humiliated by Pharaoh as he sent them all on their way with everything Pharaoh had given Abram for his offense with Sarai.

The result of Abram’s fear was cowardice in doing that which is right; that which of faith and not of fear.

What comes to me is the question: Have Christians in America (the Lord’s people) made decisions for their families based on fear of what they think the government will do to them if they stand up and speak the truth? Maybe all that has been happening in our land is because God’s people, for the most part, have been living in fear (lying to themselves) instead of living by faith in God, holding firm to the truth and speaking the truth on all occasions; afraid of what will happen to their physical life and possessions. Why not leave the results in God’s hands for our obedience and courage? Has the Lord’s church in America become like Abram and Sarai when they first started on their journey of faith?

I wonder what Abram was willing to see happen to his wife in the house of Pharaoh, as one more wife of the Pharaoh? Why does a man use his wife, or children, to protect himself from what he thinks ‘might’ happen, if not because of the lies of the devil to put fear in all of us?

Abram’s lie only humiliated him, but it caused a plague of infertility in the whole land and a disgust for the people of God, so that they were all glad to see Abram leave with everything that belonged to him. Is this what we have brought on America as well because we as God’s people have cowered down with fear and unbelief in our God?

Pregnancy being prevented - was the plague that came because of Abram’s fear. Marriage with infertility is not God’s design. Marriage and fertility IS God’s design, and if anyone or anyone’s plan of disobedience to God’s natural design – tries to come against God’s natural designs – bad things happen.

Of course, God was in control of this plague of infertility to put fear into the king because of taking another man’s wife into his house, but the devil can put fear in people also, but for an evil agenda. When God puts fear in us – it is for a very good purpose in our life; it will always have a good outcome to bless us. But when the devil puts fear in us – it is for evil; it will always have a bad outcome to hurt us and to harm others by what we do out of fear.

Here in America birth control and abortion is a plague in our land because the devil has been able to put fear in women and men: fear of not being financially capable of or emotionally qualified to raise a child or another child, fear of raising the child alone, fear of having a ‘not so perfect’ child, fear of what our kids do behind our backs, fear of ‘what will people think?’, etc. and I’m sure the devil has many more lies and schemes than I’ve mentioned.

When we live by fear instead of by faith in God and His Word, the result is not good: self-deception, sickness, distress, depression, paranoia, indifference, selfishness, unnecessary hardships, relationship problems and divisions, broken marriages, children confused and fearful, drug and alcohol addiction, suicide, crime, etc. (as if this wasn’t enough).

Abram feared man, instead of God in the early part of his journey, but God was still with him to raise him up to be exactly what God told Abram he’d be.

Job 28:28 “And to man God said, ‘Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.’”

Abraham’s journey of faith – Part 2 – Genesis 13-15

Born-again believers in Jesus Christ are to have Abraham’s faith in God, not Abraham’s fear of man.

Pray out of faith, not worry, not fear, but out of faith in what God has directly said ‘to you’ in His Word by His Spirit.

Abraham did some dumb things along the way but the Scriptures say that at the end Abraham believed and it was credited to him as “righteousness.”

Abraham and Lot had to separate because of the size of their herds; there just wasn’t enough land for food living with each other. As the story goes Lot chose to go live in Sodom, while Abram remained in the hills overlooking the cities. When four kings allied to overtake the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, and 3 other kings (four kings against five kings) they succeeded and seized all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their food, and they carried off Abram’s nephew Lot and his possessions since he was living there. Abram found out about it and during the night with his men – he recovered all that these kings had taken. (Chapter 14)

God gave Abram victory in defending the city of Sodom and Gomorrah only because of Abram’s concern and responsibility over his family (Lot’s clan) who came with Abram when the Lord called Abram to the Promised Land. When the king of Sodom wanted to basically pay Abram for what he did, Abram said: “With raised hand I have sworn an oath to the Lord, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, that I will accept nothing belonging to you, not even a thread or the strap of a sandal, so that you will never be able to say, ‘I made Abram rich.’” (vs. 22-23)

Then the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward.” Genesis 15:1

I wonder how many of God’s people here in America are looking to the president and the government for what they need and want. I wonder how much longer it will be until God’s people no longer get their non-profit tax relief from the government if they preach against certain things that God calls evil. Who makes the people of God to prosper anyway? Who gives God’s people the freedom to live the way that pleases Him? Man? Man can try to prevent it – but “it is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the LIVING GOD!”

We know God and Abram were not defending the wicked lifestyles in the societies of Sodom and Gomorrah because later we see that God sent His angels to Abram with the warning of judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrah and for the increasing torment upon Lot and his family there. Lot sat at the city gate each day to welcome visitors into his home so they would be protected from hostility. God favored Lot for this. (Chapters 18 and 19)

In America we (of the Christian faith) have slowly (progressively) been brought into slavery by America’s enemies, those who have been elected and placed into powerful positions of our governing branches that are NOT God-fearing and that are working against America’s Constitution. God is not going to defend the wicked lifestyles of our culture today. God will although defend His people who have repented of their own wicked ways and returned to Him, trusting in Him and what He says to them directly.

Then the Lord made His covenant with Abram, and you can read about it in chapter 15. But in a nutshell God ‘sealed’ His promise to Abram. Do you have a promise from God? Did our founding fathers have a promise from God? From what I have seen in the Bible, a promise from God always follows what He is asking us to do, or commanding us to do. When we are faithful to God – God rewards the faithful. When God is pleased – God is generous. And God was certainly generous to Abraham.

“Abram believed the Lord, and He credited it to Abram as righteousness.” (15:6)

Lot and his family were told by the angels of the Lord who came to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah - to leave Sodom, but where on earth can the righteous flee today and be free to live out their faith in the Lord without any hindrance or enemies. America was pretty much the last place of religious freedom.

God said to Abram in a dream that “his descendants would be strangers in a country not their own and that they would be enslaved and mistreated there.” And He went on to say: “But I will punish the nation you serve as slaves, and you will come out with great wealth.” Genesis 15:13-14 (“you” meaning Abram’s descendants who became Egypt’s slaves)

Are we losing our country as it was? Old America is being transformed into a new America with strange thinking and abnormal lifestyles that never used to make up our culture. We are fast becoming the strangers in our own country, enslaved by a government that has removed Jesus Christ and the Bible out of everything – with the thinking that they are gods in control of how to live, who lives and who dies, and even the future of mankind.

Do we as disciples of Jesus Christ have a land with a promise from God?

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By His great mercy, He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, reserved in heaven for you, who through faith are protected by God’s power for the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.” 1 Peter 1:3-5

Abraham’s journey of faith – Part 3 – Genesis 16

Forfeiting God’s Best For What?

Continuing in my quiet time in Genesis with Abraham’s journey of faith I saw a “daughter of Eve” giving in to the same temptation of the devil that Eve fell for in the Garden of Eden.

Note: All women are “daughters of Eve” in that we are created as “mothers of all living” and that we can be so “easily deceived.”

God made a covenant with Abram (Abraham) for the land of Canaan to belong to his descendants. (Genesis 15) Abram and Sarai did not have any children at this time. After they had been living in Canaan 10 years, Sarai gave in to the devil’s temptation to “offer” her husband the “forbidden fruit,” as Eve did Adam. In this case the forbidden fruit was Sarai’s Egyptian maidservant Hagar that she offered to Abram to have a child for him in fulfilling what God said directly to Abram.

Questions I have: Why didn’t Sarai believe that God would open her own womb, Abram’s true wife, for that promise to be fulfilled? Concubines are not God’s perfect way. Surrogates aren’t either. Why didn’t Abram remember what happened when he offered Sarai to the Pharaoh in a peace-deal? Why didn’t Abram remember who Sarai is to God so that Abram saw Sarai as God’s means for giving him the son of God’s promise to him? Did Sarai have a low opinion of herself because she was barren for so long, and because off how Abram used her with the Pharaoh? These are all questions that come to me as I ponder “between the lines” of what is recorded in Scriptures; for we know that so much more is true that has not been written in the Bible. But, at the same time we are not to make a doctrine or religion out of what we can only imagine.

Abram could’ve shown his wife that he cherished her only by praying for God to open her womb, and then waiting ‘by faith’ for God to do so since God can open and shut wombs. We saw this with Pharaoh’s people when God sent the plague of infertility because Pharaoh took Sarai, another man’s wife, into his house. Note: If you think your adulterous ways, or pre-marital sexual activities won’t have unwanted consequences, you’re wrong. When we go against God’s natural design – bad things happen sooner or later.

Sarai might not have offered Hagar to her husband then if Abram stood on the character of God of the word from God. What difference it can make when husbands/fathers are the true “coverings” for their wives and children - that God has called them to be. Maybe there wouldn’t be any divorces and broken homes, and children out doing things they should never be doing. Maybe there would be more wives as true helpmates for husbands. Maybe there would be more children respecting their fathers, listening intently to their fathers, and even following in their father’s footsteps.

God has always spoken to the man first about His plans because God has made the man responsible with His direct Word, and responsible for his wife and children. Adam was made first and then the woman as his helpmate. A “worldly” wife will have a different outcome in a man’s family than a “godly” wife has in a man’s family.

The devil’s temptations will always sound pleasing, reasonable and wise, but we will regret it if we cooperate or unite with the methods, organizations and schemes of the devil who continually comes up with new ways to go against God’s natural design and laws.

When I saw the number 10 (10 years living in Canaan) it came to me that God was going to open Sarai’s womb because the number 10 in God’s definition of numbers has in its meaning: the end of suffering. The devil got to Sarai at just the right time when she was very discouraged. All God’s servants grow weary of waiting on what they have heard directly from the Lord in His Word. It’s our weakness, but God understands it. No wonder God has spoken to us all through His servant Isaiah the prophet:

*“Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable. He gives strength to the weary, and to him who lacks might He increases power.”* Isaiah 40:28-29

Just like when God spoke to Adam about His will, God spoke to Abram about His will for his family’s future. And just like Eve, Sarai listened to the tempter and did exactly what he wanted her to do. The outcome of both not only affected them but all their descendants.

Note: When we come to the Cross of our Lord’s forgiveness and surrender ourselves to God’s will, every hereditary curse upon us is broken.

With Adam’s disobedience came God’s curse on all men and the earth. With Eve’s disobedience came God’s curse on all women. (Genesis 3) With Abram’s disobedience came God’s curse of hostility with Ishmael (Abram’s son with Hagar) against Abram’s son Isaac (born to Sarai) and all his descendants. (Genesis 16:12)

In the end God will set straight which line is the true line of God’s covenant with Abraham; for that battle is still raging today.

What really stands out to me about Sarai is that she blames Abram for the strife now in their house with Hagar having a son for Abram. First Sarai says to Abram, “The Lord has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my slave; perhaps I can build a family through her.” (Genesis 16:2) Abram agreed. (Just like Adam agreed with Eve about the fruit.) Then later after Hagar copped a superior attitude – Sarai says to her husband, “You are responsible for the wrong I am suffering!” To which Abram replies, “Do with her whatever you think best.”

Note: When we resort to worldly means of getting pregnant or preventing pregnancy – we invite unnecessary trouble and curses into our lives and into the lives of our children. The world’s ways are not God’s ways; for His ways never bring on us unnecessary trouble and hardship. God is very capable of opening or closing our wombs. I speak out of personal experience of seeing Him do so for me.

After Abram tells Sarai to do what she thinks best, Sarai *mistreats* Hagar and Hagar flees from Sarai. Hagar couldn’t depend on Abram’s support or protection from the effects of Sarai’s angry jealousy. But the Lord protected and supported Hagar. He spoke to Hagar near a spring in the desert: *“Go back to your mistress and submit to her. I will increase your descendants so that they will be too numerous to count.”* Both Sarai and Hagar were wrong in how they handled their situations, but God’s promise to Abram was with Sarai, not Hagar.

What Sarai said to Abram is somewhat true, in that he was “responsible for her suffering” under Hagar’s conceited ways in the home of Abram. God has made the man responsible for what happens to his wife and children. The husband/father is to listen to God about important family and national matters. Abram went along with Sarai’s offer of another way for him to bear a son, and they all suffered for it, them and all their descendants.

We forfeit the best from God by taking the tempter up on his ‘ungodly’ suggestions. We will live out ‘the best’ from God by going to God and waiting on Him to fulfill what He says to us personally by His Spirit’s revelation, whatever it might be. God’s word to us is for ‘hearing’ what our faith needs to hear - that we are to move with and act on - so that we will come into our blessed insurance and eternal inheritance with Christ.

*“So do not throw away your confidence; it holds a great reward. You need to persevere, so that after you have done God’s will, you will receive what He has promised. For, ‘in just a very while little, He who is coming will come and will not delay. But My righteous one will live by faith; and if he shrinks back, I will take no pleasure in him.’ But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.”* Hebrews 10:35-39

Abraham’s journey of faith – Part 4

Continuing on in my quiet time with Abraham’s journey I saw a correlation with Lot in Sodom and the Lord’s people in America - where homosexuality is pushing forward with our lawmakers giving in to their demands, which in turn results with the increasing propaganda that ‘biblical’ Christianity is evil and destructive to a “progressive” society and must be stopped as well as shamed and punished.

America is guilty before God of abortion, and because we have not stopped the progression of this evil industry – the progression of evil has continued with homosexuality making more and more demands. What’s next on the list of the “progressive movement?” Can a society/nation take the outcome/results? I believe it can’t!

How does a city or nation come to the place where the LORD says: “The outcry against this is so great and their sin so grievous that I will do down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached Me.” Genesis 18:20

The result of man’s uncontrolled sin nature causes a great outcry up to God from those who have been harmed and terrorized by it.

There were 3 men that came from heaven: one was the LORD and the two with Him were His angels of destruction. The LORD remained with Abraham as He sent His two angels on to Sodom because the LORD considered Abraham in His plan to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. The LORD said to His two angels before sending them on, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?” (Genesis 18:17) The LORD knows when His servants need to have a truthful conversation with Him. God does nothing that will affect a whole city or nation or world, without telling His servants first; for our God wants the warning to go out to all His children, even though most will cast it off with unbelief, as some of Lot’s family did.

After Lot brought the two visitors (angels of the LORD) into his home, the biblical record says that all the men of the city, young and old, surrounded his house and demanded Lot to give over his visitors so that they could have sex with them. (Genesis 19:4-5) Now it doesn’t take much thought to understand that the reason God was destroying these cities was because of open homosexuality which God calls “sexually immorality,” in Leviticus 18, and that the LORD states in the last book of His Word (Revelation 22): “Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the City of God. OUTSIDE are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.” (vs. 14-15 – these are the very words of JESUS CHRIST – KING ETERNAL)

Our King says, “Look, I am coming soon! My reward (those who are faithful to Him) is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done. I am the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.” (vs. 12-13)

There are people today who call themselves Christians that believe homosexuality and transgendering is not evil or a sin. They have believed the lie of Satan who convinces people that evil is good and good is evil so that they become self-deceived refusing the truth that would set them free. Jesus said, “The truth shall set you free.” “I am the Truth, the Way and the Life.” “No one comes to the Father except by Me.”

If God calls having sexual relations with the same sex, sexually immoral, then it is! God has a lot more to say about what sexual immorality is in Levitcus chapter 18. God did not create you to be one sex, just to have you think that a mistake was made in how you were formed in your mother’s womb. That thinking comes from who raises you and controls what you learn.

Conception and the womb have been tampered with by evil men and women and this has brought harm and destruction to not only marriage and the family (as God designed) but to the individual who practices falsehood of any kind. They may not get it now how they are being harmed and deceived, but in the end they will - when it's too late.

What really spoke to me in the Word was what Lot said to the men of Sodom (to the demand of homosexuals): “No, my friends. Don’t do this wicked thing. Look, I have two daughters who have never slept with a man. Let me bring them out to you, and you can do what you like with them. But don’t do anything to these men, for they have come under the protection of my roof.”

The compromise of Lot’s faith in God - was seen in that he first calls them “friends,” and then second of all, offers them his virgin daughters instead of the two men (angels of the LORD). Had Lot become friends with these men? God says that a friend of the world is an enemy of His, and that the Spirit He puts in us wants us to be His own. (James 4:4-5)

Where is Lot’s courage of faith in God to stand up to these evil men and make ‘no deal’ and refusing to compromise in any way? Where is his priority to protect his daughters and their virginity - trusting in God to help him? Why was he more afraid of these homosexuals than he was of facing God in the end? I believe the answer is why these Sodomites didn’t fear Lot’s God. Here we have the reason for why Christianity in America is not taken seriously either. The Church has compromised in too many ways, working to be friendly to the world instead of faithful to God.

Why did Lot think that by answering his enemies with, “No, my friends. Don’t do this wicked thing,” that they would respect him and leave? Instead, the young and old Sodomites yelled, “Get out of our way. This fellow Lot wants to play judge in our city. We’ll treat you worse than them!” (Genesis 19:9)

We are being made to think that homosexuality is harmless and that we need to treat homosexuals and transgender people as normal peaceful people. But, the devil has a secret, and we see what he’s up to and why the LORD came in response to the outcry against the hostility of homosexuality. This lifestyle is NOT harmless or peaceful. Because it is abnormal and unnatural it is destructive to life, and because it is destructive to natural life – it is hostile towards those who stand against it with God’s laws in their hearts.

“The Holy Spirit testifies: ‘This is the covenant I will make with them, says the LORD. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds….Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more.’” Hebrews 10:16-17

What should we do now, as the Lord’s people? Jesus said, “Be holy as God is holy – speak the truth about Me, and let the love of God be seen in you.”

My husband Mike tells all his children and grandchildren to be “heads not tails.” Do what is right no matter what; don’t follow the crowd but be a leader of the love, truth and righteousness of God in whom we love and obey.”

What will the LORD do for His people who will not compromise? God will act on behalf of the faithful:

“The men (the LORD’s two angels) inside Lot’s house reached out and pulled Lot back into the house and SHUT THE DOOR. Then they struck the men who were at the door of the house, young and old, with blindness so that they could not find the door.” Genesis 19:10-11

These wicked men had never felt the fear of God before this. When the Lord’s people “compromise” the results are that the wicked have no respect for God’s people and no fear of God as they should. These men did not fear Lot, but they did fear these 2 men (angels of the Lord) who came in the Name of the Lord with the consequence for their cup full of inequity in these cities.

God will act on behalf of His people when they are representing Him truthfully and confidently, without compromise. He tells us over and over in the Bible to not be afraid of our enemies but to face them with the truth and love of God, no matter what they threaten us with. If we entrust ourselves to our Savior – we will live out His promises to us – rejoicing. We need to take courage and persevere with truth and righteousness so that when we have done the will of God we will receive what He has promised. (Hebrews 10:36a)

God was faithful and not because Lot was faithful, but because of God’s Word to his chosen servant Abraham. We can always trust that God will be right on time to fulfill His Word to us.

“In just a little while, He who is coming will come and will not delay……My righteous one will live by faith. And I take NO pleasure in the one who shrinks back.” Hebrews 10: 36b-38

These two angels of the LORD struck these men with physical blindness because of their spiritual blindness in what they had become and where they were headed with such wickedness. The devil keeps people in spiritual blindness and only by hearing the truth and then putting our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, can we be delivered from spiritual blindness and be healed for wholeness of life.

The LORD told Abraham that He would not destroy the city where Lot lived if 10 righteous remained there, but obviously there weren’t 10 because:

“The two men (angels of the LORD) said to Lot, ‘Do you have anyone else here – sons-in-law, sons or daughters, or anyone else in this city that belongs to you? Get them out of here, because WE ARE GOING TO DESTROY THIS PLACE. The OUTCRY to the LORD against its people is so great that HE HAS SENT US TO DESTROY IT.’” Genesis 19:12-13

But Lot’s sons-in-law thought he was joking, and they remained there with their wives and children as the angels led Lot, his wife and two virgin daughters out of town – telling them all “not to look back – or be turned into a pillar of salt,” (Genesis 19:26) which Lot’s wife did not obey – and remains a lesson for us all.

“So when God destroyed the cities of the plain, He remembered Abraham, and He brought Lot out of the catastrophe that overthrew the cities where Lot had live.” Genesis 19:29

This whole story – remains a lesson for us all here in America!

What is God saying to His people here in America? What does HE require of us? Is it too late to ward off HIS judgment on all the millions of abortions and the ungodly laws made to protect this destructive way of life, promoting the secret agenda of homosexuality?

Does God hear an "outcry" that is against all this wickedness rapidly increasing? How loud does it have to get? Has HE come down to deal with it? If so, how? What is God wanting to accomplish with “His own people” in America?

Unlike what the two angels told Lot and his family, we can NOT flee and go somewhere else to start over like he did with his daughters, or like Noah and his family after the flood. Our founding fathers fled and started here with their uncompromising faith in God, and founded this great nation upon His truth and love, and biblical righteousness and justice. But there is no place left on earth with open frontier that is not under the control of a government or the rule of a dictator. So we either get our courage to stand up and do what is right, being faithful to God, or we continue as we have “compromising” more and more as “friends of the world.”

“Do you now know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore, whoever chooses to be a friends of the world renders himself an enemy of God.” James 4:4

God is eager to show His favor and power again on behalf of the united prayers of His faithful people who have repented and turned from their own wicked ways.

Abraham’s journey of faith – Part 5

Abraham and Lot.

*“With the coming of dawn, the angels urged Lot, saying ‘Hurry! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or you will be swept away when the city is punished. When Lot hesitated, the men grasped his hand and the hands of his wife and of his two daughters and led them safely out of the city, for the LORD was merciful to them.”* Genesis 19:15-16

What stands out to me are two things: Lot hesitated, and the LORD was merciful to them.

Sodom was their home and home is hard to leave, especially for the woman who understands the true meaning of “home.” No matter how bad it is outside – home should be the family’s refuge of peace, fellowship, rest, comfort, encouragement, sharing from the heart, serving one another, etc. A real woman makes her home the best place on earth that her family has ever been.

God in heaven saw how bad it was in Sodom where Lot and his family lived. I wonder how much contact Abraham had with his nephew Lot, and how often Lot had talked to his uncle about the intense evil in Sodom. Somehow I don’t think that Abraham was ignorant of Lot’s adversities because of how the LORD (one of the 3 men) came first to Abraham’s tent and how the LORD stayed with Abraham while He sent His two angels (two men) on to Sodom to do what they came down to do. I love that about our LORD; that He cares about the families of His faithful servants; He watches out for our children, and family members that we love and pray for. The LORD showed Abraham honor by staying with Abraham in conversation about it, and reassuring Abraham that his nephew and family would be taken out before the city was destroyed by fire. God honors the faithful (His close friends) by telling them what He is planning to do in their lifetime, as well as in the distant future. God enjoys and esteems friendship with those who live before Him day and night – acknowledging Him in all their ways.

It is stated that Lot was righteous, not because he was a perfect man without sin, but because he trusted in the God of Abraham. *“Abraham obeyed God and it was credited to him as righteousness.”* Our children are called “righteous” by the Lord when they obey their godly parents. Lot was now going to see the Lord move on Lot’s behalf.

Noah was the only righteous man left ‘in the world’ before God moved on Noah’s cries to Him; leading him to build the Ark and bringing the flood to destroy all the wickedness pressing in around Noah and his family. God waited in Noah’s day to destroy evil until evil filled the whole world, except Noah’s home and remaining property. After the flood and the Ark rested on dry ground, God had promised Noah that He would never again destroy the whole world like that again. The rainbow being God’s sign of His promise to Noah. I find it interesting that the homosexuals in our day have perverted the meaning of the rainbow to mean something else: their freedom to proudly come out of their closets, parade and promote themselves, teach their perversions to children and eventually take over cities, states and nations. Don’t be fooled; they are NOT a peaceful people. Satan has many secrets.

With Lot in the city of Sodom (the area of Sodom and Gomorrah) God responded to the cries of the righteous. I believe God heard the cries of the righteous in America recently with our 2016 presidential election. May we praise God for hearing our cries and become strong in warfare prayer against the plans and works of Satan in America; praying for all these lost souls to turn to the truth and salvation of Jesus Christ. May God’s mercy and grace still bless America on behalf of the righteous praying and standing in the truth of God’s Word.

I have to admit that with the way our culture in America has been headed – we need to be prepared for more and more hostility and opposition to our faith in Jesus Christ and God’s Word. And, unlike Lot, we should not hesitate when given an instruction from the Lord, who is the Spirit, whatever it is – knowing it is for the good of our families. God knows what is ahead for His people, and so we can continue with His works – He will show us what to ‘practically’ do so that we CAN continue doing the works of our Father that He prepared in advance that we should do.

And, unlike Lot’s wife who preferred to stay at home in Sodom, and was left behind to turn into a pillar of salt, we better be quick to obey the leadership of the Holy Spirit, who is the Lord. We are to be ‘pillars’ in society as we stand strong where He has placed us – representing ‘God’s’ way of life which blesses everyone. We are to be like ‘salt’ in the land preserving the good and the true; like ‘salt’ being tasteful about the way we present the Gospel of Jesus Christ to people, like ‘salt’ that draws people to taste and see that the LORD IS GOOD!

But, we can become too salty, being overly ‘emotional’ so that we scare people away. We can become too ‘passionate,’ a blinding light, so that we miss ‘God’s’ way in their life. What we want to see happen with someone isn’t always right or timely. How we want God to bless people isn’t always within God’s plan. Our emotion and passion can work against the work of Christ. We need to have the Lord’s passion, not our own. We need to control our emotions, not letting people’s drama and threats – lead us off track with the Lord. Letting our emotions lead us will keep us from speaking and acting wisely with the pure wisdom of God – to finish HIS works through us.

Abraham’s journey of faith – Part 6

Genesis 20 - King Abimelek and Abraham

Abraham and Sarah moved on after the Lord set Sodom and Gomorrah on fire – knowing the LORD had brought his nephew Lot out to safety. This truly encourages me when I see all the rapidly increasing disasters happening in our nation today: fires, weather storms, racial hostility, terrorism, and worse – a president taking America down to her knees to serve other gods.

When Abraham came to Gerar, Abraham didn’t think he could trust this man (the king of Gerar) as they all journeyed through his land. For, Abraham thought to himself “Surely there is no fear of God in this place and they will kill me because of my wife.” (Sarah being a beautiful woman without any children.) Once again Abraham had Sarah agree to be known as just his sister and not his wife. (Sarah was his half-sister, same father but different mothers.) You’d think Abraham would’ve remembered the last time he did the same fool thing with Pharaoh of Egypt, and how it turned out to shame Abraham.

Here we get another glimpse of Abraham’s early walk with the Lord before learning how true and faithful his God is to finish what He starts with His word of promise to us.

Isn’t that like us all when we first come to the Lord? I remember the wicked things that I ‘continued’ to do after I invited Jesus into my heart, but as the Holy Spirit in me began to work in me against the fool things I did (by consequences) – I began to walk without stumbling so much. After we are forgiven at the cross of Jesus, it is God’s Word and Spirit in us that begins the healing in us from that which compels us to sin. His love, truth and promises about our future in Christ sets us free from all those inner destructive agents and trains us up to stand firm against all of the devil’s schemes against us.

As it goes, King Abimelek DID fear God, maybe more than Abraham did. Abraham ‘assumed’ there was no fear in the king or in the country - by what he could see as to lifestyles and culture. Instead of going to God about it, he made an ass out of himself and put his wife in harm’s way – again! Assume: ASS out of U and ME.

How can a man say that he loves his wife when he expects his wife to lie for him? Out of fear of the king, not out of faith in God, Abraham says to Sarah: “This is how you can show your love to me: ‘Everywhere we go, say of me, “He is my brother.”’” (Genesis 20:13) Sarah went along with it in obedience and love for her husband, not out of fear like Abraham. In fact, Sarah is commended by the Apostle Peter (and God) for her humble obedience as her husband’s helpmate/servant. Sarah did not fear what would happen to her because she entrusted herself to God. God delivered her from Pharaoh, the first time Abraham treated her this way, and from King Abimelek now before either men had taken her as their wives, into their beds.

1 Peter 3:5- 7 “For this is how the holy women of the past adorned themselves. They put their hope in God and were subject to their husbands, [just as](http://biblehub.com/greek/5613.htm) [Sarah](http://biblehub.com/greek/4564.htm) [obeyed](http://biblehub.com/greek/5219.htm) [Abraham](http://biblehub.com/greek/11.htm) [and called](http://biblehub.com/greek/2564.htm) [him](http://biblehub.com/greek/846.htm) [lord.](http://biblehub.com/greek/2962.htm) [You are](http://biblehub.com/greek/1096.htm) [her](http://biblehub.com/greek/3739.htm) daughters [if you do what is right](http://biblehub.com/greek/15.htm) [and](http://biblehub.com/greek/2532.htm) [refuse](http://biblehub.com/greek/3361.htm) [to quiver](http://biblehub.com/greek/4423.htm) [in fear.](http://biblehub.com/greek/5399.htm) Husbands, in the same way, treat your wives with consideration as a delicate vessel, and with honor as fellow heirs of the gracious gift of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.”

Men today still think this way about their wives, or about women altogether; that in order to prove their love to their husband or boyfriend - they must serve them in ways that go against their true femininity and self-respect. Why do little girls give up their self-respect and virginity just to have a boyfriend? Where are their daddies that will protect their daughter’s femininity, virginity and self-respect, and show their little daughters the proper affection they need from their daddies? They are few and far between!

Women and young girls don’t know what’s true and false anymore; having given in to what God calls “whoredom” but the world calls “liberation.” Commercials, movies, songs, books, public streets and places of business, the whole culture is filled with the convincing lies of the devil about male and female. Women and girls have learned to do the same so that girls and women expect their boyfriends and husbands to prove their live by serving them with what they want in life. Sex for material things; even using their sexuality to gain power. This unnatural training and now with the unraveling of God’s design of genders – are destroying agents to ‘true’ marriage and the ‘true’ family which is to be a nation’s backbone.

God came to King Abimelek in a dream saying: “You are as good as dead because of the woman you have taken; she is a married woman.” (Genesis 20:3) Here we see how angry God is about adultery and sexual immorality. Abimelek had not gone near her as of yet, so he said to the Lord in the dream, “Will you destroy an innocent nation? Did he not say to me, ‘She is my sister,’ and didn’t she say, ‘He is my brother?’ I have done this with a clear conscience and clean hands.” (verses 4 and 5) Then God said to him in the dream, “Yes, I know you did this with a clear conscience, and so I have kept you from sinning against Me. That is why I did not let you touch her. Now return the man’s wife, for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you will live.” (verses 6 and 7)

Abimelek and all his officials were very much afraid and so the king called Abraham in to give an account of all this. The king was very humble in even asking Abraham what he (the king) had done to wrong Abraham that he had brought such guilt upon the king and the nation. Abraham told the king his fear; that he assumed there was no fear of God in this country.

Abimelek made restitution and gave Abraham and Sarah lots of wealth: cattle, sheep, slaves, silver to cover the offense of just taking Sarah, without having touched her. The king told Abraham he was free to go anywhere he wanted in the country and to live anywhere he wanted in the land - without harm. (verses 13-16) Wow, now that’s the kind of restitution that comes from a man who certainly DOES FEAR GOD.

Then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelek’s wife and his female slaves from the plague of infertility; “for the Lord had kept all the women in Abimelek’s household from conceiving because of Abraham’s wife Sarah.” (verse 18)

Then God was gracious to Sarah, and He opened Sarah’s womb; she became fertile and pregnant with Isaac, the son God had told them a while back, that He would give them in fulfilling God’s promise to Abraham.

I see some very important things here in this part of Abraham’s journey of faith that we can all learn from:

First, that God who created our wombs - opens and closes our wombs, so why not go to Him and wait on Him to do it either way? Why go to the world and do it their way with birth control, abortion and artificial insemination, etc.? These all have side effects which add unnecessary trouble and regrets. God’s way has no harmful side effects.

Second, lying is rooted in fear. We lie because we are afraid of whatever. The devil lies to us to make us fearful. Lying never has a good ending. Sometimes telling the truth can have a bad ending too, but when we are truthful people – we will be at peace within ourselves. Jesus told the truth and it had different results: good results with His disciples and harmful results with His enemies. But, even when He was killed for telling the truth – He accomplished salvation for us.

Third, even after Abraham did what he did, God told him to pray for the king so that God would heal the king and his wife and female slaves would continue to bear children. As God’s people, we are not perfect or innocent by any means, just forgiven and clothed with Christ’s righteousness, having none of our own. If we turn from our own wicked ways, God will hear our prayers and heal the land we live in.

Fourth, God saw what Abraham would become, not what he was at the beginning of his journey. God called Abraham His prophet because Abraham would obey God and pray for the king’s healing. I’m certain that this also made Abraham feel ashamed of what he did to the king in lying to him. God doesn’t need a perfect man in order to use him; just a teachable man who will walk humbly before Him and obey Him.

Fifth, and to me this lesson really speaks today in America (especially God’s people) choosing a new president this November 2016. Don’t assume, like Abraham did, that the fear of God is not in a candidate because of the way he talks and what he’s done in the past. Be careful not to make a false judgment of what you hear from the biased media who have an agenda of their own. You don’t see what God sees, and you don’t know how God wants to use a man, even an immoral man, on behalf of His people.

King Abimelek feared *God’s favor on Abraham*, His servant, because God came to the king in a dream with these haunting words: “You are as good as dead because of the woman you have taken; she is a married woman…now return her to Abraham or you and all who belong to you will surely die.” (Genesis 20:3-7 in part)

God can turn a man in any direction He wants to take him, even to his death. Even if a man is not God-fearing – God can make it so that he is!

Is God in politics? Well, if HE raises up kings/presidents and takes them down, then I’d have to say that God IS in politics, but not in the way most men and women are in politics. God has laws and government too. We’re all going to see it! When God steps in to a nation’s election with HIS vote – He has His people in mind; whether to bring them under His painful discipline or to answer their humble prayers, to heal and bless them. By the way, God’s vote takes precedence over the whole voting system. He can manipulate the voting system just like any one party can, and that have.

Does God answer the prayers of His people when they have repented and turned from their wicked ways? Well He did for Abraham and Sarah. God surprised them both with what this king did for them as they journeyed through.

Abraham’s journey of faith – Genesis 21:1-21

God opens Sarah’s womb, after Abraham obeys God and sends Hagar and Ishmael away. This is key about God’s wisdom, and the wisdom we need to have.

Abraham is 100 years old when Isaac is born. God fulfills His promise to them. (Genesis 21: 1-2) Isaac was chosen as the fruit of God’s unstoppable grace working in opposition to the natural; our physical bodies in this case. We should never forget that God is the only one who can get away with “going against nature” since He is the Creator. When man tries to work in opposition to God’s natural design – it falls into destruction. For example: birth control, abortion, artificial insemination, surrogates, homosexuality, transgender surgeries, cloning; it’s all evil to our God because it does not acknowledge the natural order of life that God designed for the good of mankind. It has no faith in God. Faith must wait on God to do what we’re asking of Him.

God created us male and female. God is the sustainer of human life. Satan is the destroyer of life and all things good.

Sarah hated the result of her bad choice of having a “surrogate” and the distress it eventually brought to Abraham and his descendants. God allows us to make our own choices, and also to learn from the results/consequences.

The industry of surrogacy is packaged as the “gift of life.” Sounds noble, but God calls it evil and unfaithful. The industry explains surrogacy as “planned parent matching.” Sounds wise, but God’s calls it the devil’s plan to deceive people. Satan is quick to tell us anything we want to hear; his voice is the first one to speak – so that his fine-sounding reasons and solutions are the first to reach people. Billboards, commercials, media, public schools and universities, are all his means to make his voice heard. I thank my Lord for putting His Spirit in me – that discerns lie and truth, evil and good, wickedness and righteousness, fear and faith.

A surrogate is a woman who agrees to use her womb for another woman whose womb is closed for whatever reason. A surrogate often does it for money and this has become an industry of greed. A surrogate uses her body to give birth to a child – resulting from being inseminated with a man’s sperm, or the implantation of an already fertilized egg from another woman’s body – and who must surrender her parental right to the third party. How sad to be so deceived this way, as the first party, second party and third party.

How evil these industries are that work in opposition to God’s natural design of the body and human life; which prevent us from putting our faith in God who created our bodies for having children. If you think God has told you or given you peace in going an “unnatural way;” whether it is to prevent birth by unnatural means and abortion, or to become pregnant with artificial insemination or surrogacy, or to believe that you are female in a male body (or male in a female body), to go after transgender surgery, or to believe in cloning of human life – you have come to believe the lies of Satan.

A cloned human is an artificial human. It won’t be made in the image of God with a soul and spirit that lives forever. If you have chosen any of these means then YOU HAVE BEEN DECEIVED.

God's blessing is upon children created His way. His blessing is upon faithful parents, upon godly households, upon the natural nursing of children and training our children up in the love and admonition of the Lord our God. God’s blessing is upon the preservation of human life “His Way,” through natural conception within marriage, womb life, infant age, toddler stage, through all the dangers in growing up - all through life to God’s appointed time of death. And, during all this time in our life He is working so that we are given every opportunity to know the truth and to spend eternity with Him by way of His Son.

“[For](http://biblehub.com/greek/1063.htm) [God](http://biblehub.com/greek/2316.htm) [so](http://biblehub.com/greek/3779.htm) [loved](http://biblehub.com/greek/25.htm) [the](http://biblehub.com/greek/3588.htm) [world](http://biblehub.com/greek/2889.htm) [that](http://biblehub.com/greek/5620.htm) [He gave](http://biblehub.com/greek/1325.htm) [His](http://biblehub.com/greek/3588.htm) [one and only](http://biblehub.com/greek/3439.htm) [Son,](http://biblehub.com/greek/5207.htm) [that](http://biblehub.com/greek/2443.htm) [everyone](http://biblehub.com/greek/3956.htm) [who](http://biblehub.com/greek/3588.htm) [believes](http://biblehub.com/greek/4100.htm) [in](http://biblehub.com/greek/1519.htm) [Him](http://biblehub.com/greek/846.htm) [shall not perish](http://biblehub.com/greek/622.htm) [but](http://biblehub.com/greek/235.htm) [have](http://biblehub.com/greek/2192.htm) [eternal](http://biblehub.com/greek/166.htm) [life.](http://biblehub.com/greek/2222.htm)” John 3:16

When Isaac was weaned Abraham held a great feast, as was custom. The infant was usually weaned in the second or third year. ([1 Samuel 1:22-24](http://biblehub.com/1_samuel/1-22.htm); [2 Chronicles 31:16](http://biblehub.com/2_chronicles/31-16.htm)) Children remained for the first five years under the special care of the mother. ([Leviticus 27:6](http://biblehub.com/leviticus/27-6.htm)) The son then came under the management of his father.

Ishmael, Abraham’s first born of Hagar the slave woman, was jealous and verbally belittled this event for his half-brother Isaac. Sarah saw it and became angered, saying to Abraham, “Get rid of that slave woman and her son. For that woman’s son will never share in the inheritance with my son Isaac.” (Genesis 21:10)

As the father of Ishmael this greatly distressed Abraham. Here we see how our bad choices (unfaithful choices) result in painful ways. “BUT GOD,” I so love those two words, “But God said to Abraham, ‘Do not be so distressed about the boy and your slave woman. Listen to whatever Sarah tells you, because it is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned. I will make the son of the slave into a nation also, because he is your offspring.’” (Genesis 21:12-13) Here we see who our God is; that even when we make bad decisions that eventually catch up to hurt us, being we are in “covenant with the Lord our God,” He comforts us with words of encouragement so that we will turn from our wicked way and get back on course with God’s Word to us.

The future belongs to Him; the present belongs to us; the past belongs under the blood.

Abraham didn’t obey Sarah, he obeyed the Lord. I don’t believe Abraham would’ve done what Sarah wanted him to do, if the Lord didn’t tell him the same thing to get Hagar and Ishmael out of his house. This was very hard for Abraham, but this is what made Abraham the man that God would later say of, “Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness.” Romans 4:1

I can just imagine how hard this was for Abraham to let his son go off with his mother with just enough food and water that they could both carry. Yet, at the same time Abraham had God’s Word that He would take care of Ishmael and make him into a great nation. (vs. 13 God said to Abraham and vs. 18 God said to Hagar his mother)

God comforted Hagar and Ishmael in the desert after they ran out of food and water and then laid down to die. I love this part: “God heard the boy crying…” Then the angel of God said to Hagar, “Do not be afraid; God has heard the boy crying as he lies there…..then God opened Hagar’s eyes and she saw a well of water.” (Genesis 21:15-19) And on their way they went, filled and hopeful!

God will do this for anyone who will call on Him, and trust in Him, and wait on Him to do what we are asking of Him.

“God was with the boy as he grew up. He lived in the desert and became an archer.” (vs. 20) The line of Ishmael has always been against the line of Isaac, and his son Jacob and his twelve sons (the tribes of Israel) and all generations of Abraham since, yet God showed mercy to Hagar and her son Ishmael, and showed grace to Abraham as he learned to walk by faith, not by fear.

Abraham’s journey of faith – Part 8

As Abraham continued to live in the land of the Philistines under the king’s favor (King Abimelek), the king noticed how Abraham was being blessed by his God in everything he did, and he became concerned that Abraham might turn on him. (The king remembered how Abraham’s God came to him in a dream with the distressing threat that if the king didn’t return Sarah to Abraham he was a good as dead.) So he and his commander of forces approached Abraham in order to make a verbal peace treaty with him. The king said, “Show to me and the country you now reside as a foreigner the same kindness I have shown to you.” Abraham agreed that he would.

The king had told Abraham that he and his household (family and livestock) could settle in the land peacefully, but some of the king’s servants had tried to seize a well Abraham had dug for himself. After the king and Abraham made their peace treaty Abraham told the king about the well. King Abimelek knew nothing about his servants doing this. Abraham secured the well by paying for it and he offered the king 7 eye lambs for his ownership of the well so that there would be no more trouble. The king accepted it and Abraham called that place Beersheba, because the two men swore an oath there.

Abraham planted a tamarisk tree there and called on the Name of the Lord, the Eternal God. At the end of Genesis 21 it states that Abraham stayed on in the land of the Philistines for a long time.

What comes to me out of this passage is how Abraham learned to trust in His God and not fear what man (or the king) could do. Abraham learned to believe what God said to him, and to faithfully keep going according to God’s instructions and promises, and to be a good husband and father.

God favored Abraham because Abraham believed God, and so God blessed him both in the present life and the life to come. We will all make many bad decisions and choices out of fear or lust or pride or whatever, but if we acknowledge and confess our sins to the Lord, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Then we can pick ourselves up and get back on His good and perfect path – forgetting what is behind.

God forgets that which God forgives - because He has surpassing GLORIES to reveal to His humble children.

America has ‘progressively’ become a land of many gods where it was a land of the One True God, under God’s favor and blessings. Our godly forefathers had many battles to fight as they brought America into being the land of the free, using God’s systems of justice and righteousness as they established our government. But we are seeing this all quickly cast aside so that leaders of progressive modernism can redefine America. We see the fruition (results) of this all over the land: All forms of sexual immorality being taught as normal and respectable, impurity, debauchery, worship of created and material things, witchcraft, lawlessness, hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and the like. Those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

America used to be a melting pot of different races fleeing here to come under the covering of the goodness of the One True God; the God of our founding fathers. But America has been neglected by God’s people and so she has evolved to become a melting pot of many gods coming in from all over the world. Now we are seeing other national flags working together to replace America’s one flag. But one thing is sure, all this progression has stirred up people to turn to the One True God. All the unrest and lawlessness in our nation has caused peaceful law-abiding citizens to rise up and support what America’s flag stands for; to speak up, gather for prayer, and especially to vote.

What would happen in America if we had a president (with his cabinet) that feared the One True God, the way King Abimelek did after seeing the power and authority of Abraham’s God? Our nation isn’t anything like it was 50 or 100 or 200 years ago because of how each generation has failed to represent the One True God in the way He tells us to, to conduct our personal lives in the way He expects us to and to govern this nation in the way He requires men to do.

King Abimelech was certain that the promises of God would be fulfilled to Abraham because of how God defended and blessed Abraham and his family. Abraham was not a perfect man, and neither was his wife a perfect woman. They loved the Lord, but both doubted and temporarily lost faith in Him and resorted to human effort to gain what God said He would give them and do for them and for the future of their descendants. They suffered the consequences of their unfaithfulness, but they repented and got back on track with their God. God is always ready to forgive His people and heal them.

Our current president does not see God’s people the way King Abimelek saw Abraham. But, do any of the upcoming candidates fear God in the way this ‘worldly’ king feared the God of Abraham? Remember, the king’s respect of Abraham’s God allowed Abraham to stay on in the land without any conflict or disrespect. And therefore Abraham continued to have freedom to worship and openly profess his faith in God.

Which upcoming candidate truly fears what God will do in answer to the united humble prayers of His true sons and daughters in the land of America? We would do well to vote for that one.

Does God still have a purpose for the America He started with our founding fathers? Our current president, and people like him, foolishly think that America’s ongoing purpose is to be determined by them; that our Constitution is like any marriage contract today that can be ripped up and thrown away, but they are forgetting who God truly is and what He will do to a nation because its government makes slaves of the people who have returned to Him in faith, hope and love.

“I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great wealth.” Genesis 15:14

Abraham’s journey of Faith – Part 9 – Abraham Tested

Here in Chapter 22 of Genesis Abraham is now in Hittite country in the land of Canaan, after living a while in Philistine country in the land of Canaan. Abraham has been tested by God (Genesis 22) when God commands Abraham to take his son Isaac and go up the mountain in the region of Moriah to sacrifice his son there. God never intended Abraham to kill his son. This is not at all in our Father’s character; it’s in Satan’s character to make men believe that they are serving and obeying God this way.

We see it happening today with the terrorizing religion of Islam, where greatly deceived men use their wives and sons for murdering in the name of their god “Allah.” But Allah is not the Creator: the One True God, Abraham’s God. They terrorize even their own wives and children by making them believe the threats they themselves have come to believe by the same method of terrorism. They believe the lies about *honor and reward of jihad* that have been passed down generation to generation. They do not follow the One True God at all; they follow the great deceiver and father of lies: Satan.

Young men all over the world are joining the rebels of jihad, why? What makes a young man or old man think that this is right and honorable? Did he grow up with a father that threatened him and terrorized him? Did he not have a father that cared about him – leaving him on his own – to figure out life as a gang member or joining some other extreme radical group. What about the military or special forces that are honorable because they protect innocent life, people’s groups, etc.? Men come out of these lifestyles with all kinds of mental problems; some eventually commit suicide because they can’t get the torment out of their minds. My point being: Terrorism is learned early in life and if not overcome – will have very bad effects on human life.

Satan is a liar, the father of lies, and these terrorists are his faithful sons who are holding their own wives and children in slavery *to be used* by them for what they believe is good, honorable and praiseworthy. Their god is one who controls by fear and threats of death and disgrace. Our God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob controls by His love and protecting innocent life.

The One True God, Abraham’s God, sent His only Son Jesus Christ as the perfect sacrifice – once and for all – to forgive sin, such as jihad or any type of holocaust: Jewish, abortion, racial hatred, etc. and all the slaveries of wicked men under the control of “the liar.” God forgives it all and if anyone will come to the “truth” and bow before the cross of Jesus Christ in true repentance of their sins – asking Him for the help they need to turn from their wicked ways – God will hear their prayer and heal them from the inside out. God will pour His love into them by His Holy Spirit. God’s Word tells us this. God’s Word is the light for our path; His Word (the Bible) keeps us in right thinking; the true thoughts and ways of God Almighty. (Romans 12:2)

I believe Abraham knew that God had a plan other than Isaac being the sacrifice because after God told Abraham to go up the mountain to sacrifice his son, Abraham said to his servants that went along with them, “Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you.” (Chapter 22:5) The sacrifice was not to be Isaac, but rather Abraham’s own heart offered to God, a LIVING sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God. This is what God was working here; not a form of “jihad” in any way!

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16

God’s own Son ‘willingly’ fulfilled the Father’s wrath on all sin, not some sin, but ALL. This is just how strong and powerful the love of God is. You’ll never know how strong and powerful His love is until you put all your faith in Jesus Christ and what He accomplished on the earth. Read the true records of God’s Son on the earth by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John (the gospels). Jesus Christ is coming again too! Read Revelation the Prophets of the Old Testament in the Bible, and especially read Revelation 19 – 22 for what HE will accomplish when He returns. GLORY TO OUR KING!

Have you ever been in a place like this, similar to Abraham, where God has told you to do something **out of** your comfort zone or belief system, but you didn’t know how to do it until it came to doing it and then God showed you right then how to do it; He did it for you or through you – with you? God tests all His true sons and daughters for their most holy faith to grow and work for His good purpose on the earth for mankind.

Can you imagine how his son Isaac felt when his father “bound him” and put him up on the wood pile and then brought out his knife to slit Isaac’s throat? Man, that boy sure had some faith in his father’s love and in his father’s God! Note that it says Abraham “bound” Isaac with rope. Isaac didn’t crawl up on the wood pile on his own. Maybe Isaac said to his father, “What are you doing father?!” Isaac had asked his father before this where the animal was that they were to use to sacrifice. Abraham knew God would provide one too, because Abraham told his servants that both he and Isaac would return to them, and they did. What an experience of faith being tested!

The Lord called out to Abraham just as Abraham was bringing the knife to Isaac’s throat, “Abraham! Abraham! Do not lay a hand on the boy….now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son.” (22:10-12) I don’t believe anyone since Abraham has ever been tested like this by God. This makes Abraham distinct and extraordinary; his faith in God – as pure as gold. No wonder God calls Abraham, the father of nations.

As it is written: “I have made you a father of many nations.” He is our father in the presence of God, in whom he believed, the God who gives life to the dead and calls into being what does not yet exist. [Against](http://biblehub.com/greek/3844.htm) [all hope,](http://biblehub.com/greek/1680.htm) [Abraham](http://biblehub.com/greek/3739.htm) [in](http://biblehub.com/greek/1909.htm) [hope](http://biblehub.com/greek/1680.htm) [believed](http://biblehub.com/greek/4100.htm) [and so](http://biblehub.com/greek/1519.htm) [became](http://biblehub.com/greek/1096.htm) [the father](http://biblehub.com/greek/3962.htm) [of many](http://biblehub.com/greek/4183.htm) [nations,](http://biblehub.com/greek/1484.htm) [just as](http://biblehub.com/greek/2596.htm) [he had been told,](http://biblehub.com/greek/2046.htm) [“So](http://biblehub.com/greek/3779.htm) [shall your](http://biblehub.com/greek/4771.htm) [offspring](http://biblehub.com/greek/4690.htm) [be.”](http://biblehub.com/greek/1510.htm) Romans 4:17-18

The Lord called Isaac Abraham’s “only son,” but we know that Abraham had another son named Ishmael, Sarah’s maidservant’s son with Abraham. (Remember how Sarah got tired of waiting on God for a son out of her own old body, and told her husband to use young Hagar instead, in surrogate style?) I find it interesting the Lord does not acknowledge Ishmael here as Abraham’s son. I believe this is important to see about God.

The only thing that pleases our God is our faith in Him, in what He says about everything, and our faith in what He instructs us to do; our faith in that He not only exists as God Almighty Creator, but that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him in truth and spirit. Anything belief outside this – is not a part of His Kingdom; they or it – won’t be remembered by the Lord our God.

The Lord showed Hagar and Ishmael His compassion after the Lord told Abraham to send them away. When they were in the desert about to die the Lord showed them water and assured Hagar that her son would become a father of many nations, although God did not tell her that these nations would continually be against God's chosen servant Abraham and Sarah, and all their descendants of God's promise to Abraham concerning the Promised Land. God only told Hagar what she needed to know that would bring her comfort in her time of suffering. Those whom God chooses, God confides in.

Worldly people are only concerned for the here and now, and what effects them in their lifetime. God’s people are more concerned for eternal life; that our short 3 score and 10 (give or take) is all we get to make our decision of what we will do with God's Son, Jesus Christ, Savior of the world and hope of all the nations. Understanding that “though our outer self is wasting away, yet our inner self is being renewed day by day. [For](http://biblehub.com/greek/1063.htm) [our](http://biblehub.com/greek/1473.htm) [light](http://biblehub.com/greek/1645.htm) [and temporary](http://biblehub.com/greek/3910.htm) [affliction](http://biblehub.com/greek/2347.htm) [is producing](http://biblehub.com/greek/2716.htm) [for us](http://biblehub.com/greek/1473.htm) [an eternal](http://biblehub.com/greek/166.htm) [glory](http://biblehub.com/greek/1391.htm) [that far](http://biblehub.com/greek/2596.htm) [outweighs our troubles.](http://biblehub.com/greek/922.htm) So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.” (2 Corinthians 4:16-18)

Abraham’s journey of Faith – Part 10 – Chapter 23

In Genesis chapter 23 Abraham is now living among Hittites with all his great wealth: family, livestock and material possessions. Abraham’s wife Sarah just died at the age of 127 (23:1-2) and Abraham needed a burial site for her. He asked some Hittites there with him who were also mourning her death if he could buy some property for a burial site. The Hittites wouldn’t hear of Abraham paying them for property; they wanted to give it to him. They all agreed and said: “Sir, listen to us. You are a mighty prince among us. Bury your dead in the choicest of our tombs. None of us will refuse you his tomb for burying your dead.” (vs. 5-6) Then Abraham rose and bowed down before the people and asked them for the piece of land that had the cave of Machpelah on it but that he must pay them full price for it. The Hittite who owned that land spoke up strongly saying over and over again, “I give it to, I give it to you, I give you this field – in the presence of my people!” (vs. 10-11) But Abraham insisted on buying it, and Ephron the Hittite agreed to sell the field and the cave in it, and all the trees within the borders of the field to Abraham. (vs. 14-20)

What keeps coming out to me about Abraham is that he not only had God’s favor on him, but he had great favor with the people in the land of Canaan: the Philistines and now the Hittites. We see this in the way the Hittites were there with Abraham mourning his wife’s death, and by the way they refer to him as a “prince among us.”

Abraham’s life experiences in his journey of faith assured him that God would show him what to do when it was time to do it. Meanwhile, he simply lived in the land in the way that pleased God and gained the favor of others.

In Abraham’s case, living a godly life in the land of Canaan won the favor of the people. As I consider our land of America what is it about Christians that seems to have done the opposite? Has the church compromised and caused our own shame and marginalization? Have the Lord’s people surrendered to the gods in the land: religion, works, government assistance, child sacrifice, sexual immorality, divorce, greed, entertainment and pleasure, etc.?

Gaining favor with people isn’t always the outcome of our pleasing God in how we live and in what He instructs us to do. Sometimes our obedient lifestyle to God can make people really angry, even make enemies that try to shame God’s people or hurt them in some way.

Jesus taught us: “Whoever acknowledges Me before others, I will also acknowledge before My Father in heaven. But whoever disowns Me before others, I will disown before My Father in heaven. Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to turn ‘a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law—a man’s enemies will be the members of his own household.’ Anyone who loves their father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. Whoever does not take up their cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me. Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for My sake will find it.” Matthew 10:33-35

Jesus is revealing how our love and obedience to Him will naturally cause divisions and hostility by those who hate God’s Son. When Jesus talks about “losing our life” He is NOT talking about taking our own physical life like in committing suicide for whatever reason, or like jihad with their suicide bombers. He means that we will enter His Kingdom if we have died living for Him and for His purpose, even if it’s on our death bed that we have surrendered to Him. We know this by what Jesus said to the other man hanging on a cross beside Him. When this guilty man surrendered to who Jesus claimed to be, Jesus said to him: “I tell you the truth, today you will be with Me in paradise.” (Luke 23:42-43)

When Jesus says that we should carry our own cross, He means that we surrender our own selfish will to do the Father’s good will on earth, like Jesus did – finishing was what HIS TO DO ALONE. Losing this life for His sake means we see this earthly life and our physical bodies in a new way because of the eternal life with our Savior. In union with Him – we can give up worldly and material things and relationships that we used to cling to. We can give up thinking that we are better than others, and give up getting our own selfish way, and give up lying/cheating/stealing, and give up seeking to harm or control others, and give up satisfying the desires of our fleshly lusts, etc. We can give up all this – as we walk with our Savior and grow up in His love and truth about all things.

Carrying our own cross means that we do what Jesus did, think like Jesus thinks, work like Jesus worked and love like Jesus loves – for the glory of His Kingdom that He will bring to the earth when He comes again. His Kingdom starts ‘in us’ with our own repentance and with His gifting us with His indwelling Holy Spirit.

Simply by living our lives in the way that pleases God – can ‘convict’ people without us saying a thing to them. What these people feel is the conviction of the Holy Spirit coming upon them, for their own good future with the Lord, yet so much of the time people attack God’s people for how they ‘feel’ around them instead of surrendering to God’s Good Spirit who is drawing them to the truth and love of Jesus Christ. How increasingly miserable these people become when they refuse the prompting of the Holy Spirit. Of course, they won’t admit how miserable they are; they will just work around it with others of like-mind with pseudo ideas of how to be happy and fulfilled in life – without surrendering to God. But they will have to surrender to God eventually; better now while He stills offers them salvation, than later when it’s too late.

How angry God gets with these miserable people when they lash out and try to shame or ruin God’s people – envying their peace, joy, love, hope and trust in the Lord as they live by God’s laws and principles in the land. Everyone gets to choose how to believe and to live like they want, but in the end – we will all stand before our God with it all, and He will grant entrance into His glorious Kingdom or cast into everlasting torment, because of our choice in how we treated the Son of the Living God.

Abraham knew that God had given him and his descendants the whole land of Canaan, but it appears that Abraham was very wise to wait on God to show him how to possess it. His children, Isaac his son, and then Jacob his grandson, needed to learn from Abraham how to hear God’s voice and wait on God’s timing as well.

Abraham to me is the perfect example of when God calls us to do something – how crucial it is that we wait on God to lead us each step of the way in accomplishing His will. If we get hasty we will miss His way of getting it done. We can make trouble for ourselves that was not necessary. Or, we can become fearful about it and not accomplish God’s will at all in the land.

Abraham walked with the Lord. The Lord personally visited Abraham. The Lord spoke to him many times so that Abraham would not fear or give up. Abraham was a true leader, father, friend and a gentleman in the way he and his family lived among others – as they waited on God to fulfill His promise to them. This is why the Hittites called him a “prince among us.”

The Lord says of Abraham:

“By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.” Hebrews 11:8-10

What would God say about your faith? What do your neighbors think of you? How are Christians treated in the land of America? Are we mourned over like Sarah was – when we die? Are we respected and favored like Abraham was among the Philistines and Hittites? Are Christians allowed to worship Jesus Christ when, how and where they want, like Abraham was free to among the Philistines and Hittites? The Philistines and Hittites believed very differently than Abraham about God. As Christians now living in a nation of ‘many’ gods (America) what can we learn from Abraham’s journey of faith?

When God is pleased with the way His people think, live at home, conduct themselves at work and in leisure, with the way they treat their neighbors, with then way they serve in their communities, with the way they pray and minister the truth and love of God – what happens? What ‘could’ happen? I wonder.

Abraham’s journey of faith – Part 11

Here at the end of Abraham’s life (Genesis 24) Sarah is buried and their son Isaac is ready for a wife and family. Living in Canaan as they were by God’s instruction and Abraham’s faithfulness, Abraham said to his faithful senior servant, “Put your hand under my thigh. I want you to swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you will not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I am living, but will go to my country and my own relatives and get a wife for my son Isaac.” And then Abraham said, “Make sure that you do not take my son back there to live. The Lord, the God of heaven, who brought me out of my father’s household and my native land and who spoke to me and promised me on oath, ‘To you offspring I will give this land’ he will send his angel before you so that you can get a wife for my son from there.” So Abraham’s servant agreed, and off he went with his servants and all the wealth Abraham gave him to give to the family of Isaac’s bride.

Imagine that; imagine marriage taking place like it did then with God’s people. Takes me back to how Mike (my hubby) and I met. We didn’t know it then, but it was DEFINITELY the Lord our God who brought us together. Of course Mike’s parents and my mother and step-father had nothing to do with us connecting, as it was with Abraham and Isaac. But our heavenly Father hand-picked the two of us and worked the details of ‘when’ we’d meet and ‘why’ we would be attracted to each other, imagine that.

We met at a nightclub by God’s manipulation. I was attracted to him and he was attracted to me – because of outer appearance, what else; for we didn’t know a thing about each other yet. He was living at home then with his widowed mother and younger sister, but wanted to move out, so I found a condo right across the street from where I lived with my sister and two girlfriends. Eventually, all my things were transferred over to his condo where we then lived together. (Neither of us proud of this.) Eventually he asked me to marry him and we began planning our wedding which was postponed twice. We didn’t know it then but we knew it later why the wedding was twice postponed: we were to be “equally yoked,” meaning that God wanted us both to be right with Him when we said our vows; for God had a plan for the two of us becoming one in all things true and good.

This came about when Mike’s brother Frank and his wife Anneli came home to visit Frank’s family in California. They were missionaries living on the ship Doulos with Operation Mobilization at the time. Frank was the director of the ship. When seeing Mike - he asked Mike if I was saved, knowing we were living together unmarried. Frank knew Mike had received the Lord as a young boy, but was not living for the Lord at this time. I was not saved and living the worldly life, the empty way of life passed down to me, as the Apostle Peter puts it. (1 Peter 1:18) As Frank began to take Mike under his wing and talk to him about his relationship with Christ, Mike became seriously convicted. Mike came home one day and told me he was going to start living the way God wanted him to and that he was moving out to go live back home with his mother and sister until we were married. And he did. My sister moved in with me.

Mike wanted to start going to church and so we ended up at his family’s church. Many things happened there that led me to my salvation with Jesus Christ. (You can read about it in my book: Just Walk With Me.) Frank and Anneli were God’s key servants in leading Mike and myself to being right with Jesus Christ, starting our marriage being “equally yoked.” To this day, 42 years later, the four of us are very close and serving the Lord as He has called them and us. Mike refers to Frank, his brother, as his faithful “friend” in Proverbs 18:24:

“One who has unreliable friends soon comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.”

I tend to see Frank and Anneli as the senior servant of the Lord, like Abraham’s senior servant in charge of finding a wife for Isaac. Of course Frank and Anneli didn’t go looking for me, I was already there, by the doing of the Lord, but they were both responsible in the two of us becoming “equally yoked” before we married, just like Isaac and Rebekah were. Back then being “equally yoked” meant that you each came from the same godly heritage, the same upbringing of faith in God. Rebekah was the daughter of Bethuel son of Milkah, wife of Nahor who was Abraham’s brother.

With our third date for a wedding (May 3, 1975) we started our life together as “one in Christ.” God has been faithful to us as we’ve worked through many things that could’ve separated us in the first 7 – 10 years of marriage. The key was that we remained faithful to our vows to each other and to God as our witness.

We left it to our heavenly Father how many children HE wanted us to have and we ended up with four. But our first pregnancy was a miscarriage because of all the birth control pills I had taken prior to our marriage since I was 18 years old. (I met Mike when I was almost 22 years old.)

This was a sorrowful day for Mike and me when our first baby died in my womb from our sinful lifestyles prior to marriage. Reminds me of what happened to King David and his wife Bathsheba with their first son that died after being born. King David had Bathsheba’s husband Uriah killed on the battle field after David took his wife into his bed and she became pregnant with David’s child. (2 Samuel 11:1-26) We can come up with all kinds of reasons for things happening to us that make us feel better about our bad choices and sinful lifestyles, but the truth is truth to God. Sin will always have an outcome in our lives, but what we do about it, that is right and healing, is what God is after and so that He can go on to bless us in all sorts of ways.

Mike originally wanted two children and I wanted six, but the Lord gave us four. After two different tubal pregnancies I was unable to have any more children, with both tubes gone. And now each of our children are married to the people we prayed to God for, like Abraham prayed to God for; that they would be “equally yoked.” We now have 11 precious grandchildren from ages 15 – 1 year old.

God worked it out just like He worked it out for Mike and I that each of our children be married “equally yoked;” equally in their relationship with the Lord and their understanding of who God is. They each, each couple that is, are growing together as one in Christ; growing up together overcoming all their personal struggles in life, and raising our grandchildren for the Lord. Oh how blessed Mike and I are!

Thank You Father for all You’ve done for us! What a future too!!!

Abraham’s journey of faith – Part 12

Abraham’s senior servant was faithful as the one Abraham put in charge of all that Abraham owned; for the Lord had blessed Abraham in every way. (Genesis 24:1-2) What comes out to me about Abraham’s “head servant” is how this servant went to the Lord for his success in what his employer instructed him to do in going back to Abraham’s family to find his son Isaac the ‘right’ wife, not just any wife, and especially not a Canaanite wife in the land where Abraham’s family lived.

What really impresses me is that this servant understood the importance of what his employer was expecting of him and how it would greatly affect the future of his employer’s family.

Abraham being the man that he was, no doubt paid his head servant very well for how it pleased and comforted Abraham to have a man like this in his service. What comes out to me, in how to relate this in our day and culture, is in what I’ve heard from so many employers, my husband included, that it is getting harder and harder to find “competence and integrity” in people who apply for jobs. People want more from the employer today than they did in times past, and in return for more from the employer – the employer gets less from the worker than an employer in times past. We have a wicked government to thank for this.

In Abraham’s day there was no government that he was accountable to, except God’s government. So Abraham’s employee had to prove competence and integrity – or else. Men used to serve their employers like Abraham’s servant served Abraham: putting the interests of his employer first and doing his best to succeed in all that was expected of him; even going to God for HIS help in pleasing his employer. Who does this anymore?! Well, I ‘personally’ know a few men that do! And I’m sure there are more out there in our culture within this dying breed of competence with integrity.

I like how Abraham’s head employee called on God to help him make the right selection on behalf of his employer. He put out a fleece to God; he set up a scenario before the Lord and asked Him to make the situation happen, and in seeing it actually take place – he became confident and successful in the assignment he was given. Now this servant had great faith – I’d say. To believe that you can do this with the Lord God is certainly FAITH.

Getting specific with our expectations – builds faith in God when we see God honor it by doing what we have asked of Him. Being indefinite or open-ended with our prayer to God doesn’t please God because we don’t understand the importance of the goal to be reached, and what our success means to our employer. An employer that believes he can completely trust and depend on his employee benefits both of them, and many others too.

We can turn this to what our Master Employer gives a man to do for Him. Does the Lord call a man to a specific assignment knowing he is incompetent and dishonest? Does the Lord favor (bless and reward) the man who gets specific and expectant with what he needs from the Lord in order to be successful in his assignment? YES! God understands our weakness because He created us with weakness: the need for our heavenly Father’s strength and faithfulness to us.

God builds our confidence in many ways, but integrity is either in us or it’s not. We choose to be honest or dishonest.

After Abraham’s head servant saw God do exactly what he asked God to do, he bowed down and worshiped the Lord, saying, “Praise be to the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who has not abandoned his kindness and faithfulness to my master. As for me, the Lord has led me on the journey to the house of master’s relatives.” Genesis 24:26-27

As the story goes, after the head servant told Rebekah’s father and uncle the whole account of his assignment and how the Lord had confirmed it – Rebekah was favorably sent back with Abraham’s trustworthy competent employee. Even Rebekah favored the way her new husband came into her life because when her mother and brother asked her if she wanted to leave the next day with Abraham’s head servant or wait 10 days – to have a proper bridal preparation as was custom – she made the choice to leave the next day with these men that were strangers to her, putting faith in her God; the same God of Abraham and Isaac.

I love how this mission ends for this faithful servant of Abraham’s. Upon approaching the field where Isaac was there meditating: “The servant told Isaac all he had done. Isaac brought Rebekah into the tent of his mother Sarah, and he married Rebekah. So she became his wife, and he loved her, and Isaac was comforted after his mother’s death.” Genesis 24:66-67

I can only imagine how Abraham felt as he laid on his death bed knowing his son Isaac had a good wife from the Lord. I can only imagine how this faithful employee of Abraham’s felt seeing his master at peace. How ‘fulfilled’ this man must’ve been doing such a good job for his employer. I know that not all employers are like Abraham, but the Lord tells us: “Slaves (servants), obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but as slaves (servants) of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free.” Ephesians 6:5-8

“And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that He who is both their Master and yours in heaven, that there is no favoritism with Him.” Ephesians 6:9

I can only imagine how Sarah felt on her death bed knowing that her precious son Isaac was being comforted and loved dearly by Rebekah, the Lord’s servant. I’m taken back to how Rebekah even served Abraham’s head servant at the spring when she first met him. For, she not only gave the man and his men water to drink, but she went further in serving – watering all their camels till the camels had enough water. (Genesis 24:46) Do you know how much water just one camel holds?!

Abraham’s family (servants included) was one highly functional family, because they all trusted in God and could depend on each other in so many ways. Abraham’s senior servant’s ‘name’ is not mentioned – but his faith in God and his uprightness with his master/employer – is the perfect example and role model for employees today, or for those looking to be hired today.

Fathers are to teach their sons by example in how to work hard and serve from their heart the way God tells us to so that in benefitting others, they themselves are benefitted. Mothers are to teach their daughters by example in how to trust God and be a good helpmate to their husband so that their family is a pillar in society to the glory of God.

Abraham’s son, Isaac, with Isaac’s journey of faith – Part 1 – Genesis 25

Abraham died at the age of 175 years. Abraham left everything he owned to Isaac, the son of God’s promise to him through Sarah. Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah, the woman God chose for him through Abraham’s faithful senior servant. Twenty years later Rebekah became pregnant with twins. For twenty years Isaac prayed to the Lord for his wife to become pregnant. Isaac and Rebekah ‘waited on God’ to answer their prayer.

Isaac did not resort to having a child in any other way, but to wait on God who opens and shuts wombs. God created us and the way children come into our lives. He creates a child in the womb by honoring the union vows between a man and woman when they marry; His natural process. When we go against the natural processes that He has designed – we will suffer for it; maybe not immediately but we will surely suffer it.

I find it interesting that Rebekah, like Sarah, was barren a long time. But Rebekah did not offer Isaac her handmaiden to have a child with, like Sarah did Abraham and suffered all the problems it brought on.

I find it interesting that God is teaching us here that when we wait on Him for ‘whatever’ – we are free to enjoy all His blessings with it. When we resort to human ways – we bind ourselves to hardships: bondage/slavery. Whether we’re talking about having children or not having children, immunizations and vaccinations, health/life/auto/home/property insurances, etc. it’s always BEST to hear from our Father God on everything before making a decision that will affect us in so many unwanted ways. The Word of God is full of His promises to those who put their faith, hope and love in Him.

Isaac did not consider any other way but to wait on God to do what God said He would do – by obedient faith alone.

Back then they didn’t have all the artificial ways of getting pregnant that we have today. They didn’t have the schemes we have today in preventing birth either. People back then would never consider NOT having children. To them children are a blessing - not a curse like we see today in why birth control is a great money making industry, along with abortion. Back then husbands and wives wanted large families because it was a sign of strength, wealth, joy and the blessing of the Lord upon them. Oh how far we’ve come from the truth and full blessing of God!

Wow, how many of us would wait on God as long as Isaac and Rebekah did - instead of resorting to man’s progressive ways of getting pregnant? Today we can have a child the way YOU want a child. You can induce labor; stop short the growth of the baby. You can have the legal right to end the life of your baby in your womb for any reason. What about what GOD says about the baby in your womb? You won’t stand before the doctor who suggested you have an abortion - on the Day of Judgment! We will all stand before our Creator of life.

The only people I know who would wait on God no matter how long it took are those who have learned to trust God at His word; those who have heard from the Lord and are committed to wait on Him till HE PERFORMS what only HE CAN DO for us. When we depend on man instead of God we invite unnecessary trouble or physical harm on ourselves, and even on our children who come from our bodies and who learn to think and live as we do.

When we trust in those things that man has made to substitute for what God says He will do, we invite the unnatural harmful side effects of those substitutes. Side effects show up later. When we wait on God and do things HIS WAY – there are NO harmful side effects. When we wait on God we, and our children, get all the added blessings of our faith in Him and trust in His word.

God rewards those who eagerly seek after Him and wait on Him to work and act – just as He promised!

Isaac’s journey of faith – Part 2 – Genesis 26

Just like his father Abraham, Isaac was not a perfect man either; just a man through whom God wanted to work. Just like his father Abraham, Isaac did and said foolish things that he later regretted. For example: Here Isaac and his family are in the same place Abraham and Sarah were in the land of the Philistines under King Abimelek. There was a famine again, but the Lord appeared to Isaac and said, “Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land where I tell you to live. Stay in this land for a while, and I will be with you and will bless you.” (26:2-3) Then the Lord continued on to remind Isaac of what He promised his father Abraham and all of Abraham’s descendants through his wife Sarah. (26:4-5)

As God’s people, can we also expect the Lord to be with us and bless us in the land when drought, earthquake, hurricane, tornado, pestilence, disease, famine or even war – comes? Or, do we flee to some other place that looks safe and calm at the moment? False peace and false hope will lead you wrong!

Jesus tells us in His Word that as time moves on things will only get worse – as His Day approaches. What is “His Day?” The Day of His second coming as the King of kings and Lord of lords; the Day when He returns with His saints and all evil is conquered forever and God’s creation restored to its original purpose. His Day on earth lasts one thousand years. (Psalms 90:4, 2 Peter 3:8, Revelation 20:2-6)

As God’s people in America, should we look to the president when civil wars break out? As God’s people, should we depend on the government when drought, pestilence and famine comes? As God’s people, should we look to our friends when natural disasters come? As God’s people, should we run to the organized churches – when America’s foundation cracks and starts to crumble? Like David cried out, “What do the righteous do then?!!!!!”

God spoke to Isaac’s fear and He will speak to the fear in His people today in the same way. “Hear what the Spirit of God is saying!” God’s voice is the only voice we should want to hear in times of tribulation and persecution. His voice is the ONLY VOICE that can be trusted! His WORD is the only word that gives us true peace beyond our understanding of things happening. His promises are the ONLY PROMISES that we can rest with and push forward with, no matter what is happening all around us or to us personally.

Just like his father Abraham, Isaac feared for his life because of his beautiful wife Rebekah. So, like his father did, Isaac said of his wife, “She is my sister,” when the king’s men asked him about Rebekah thinking the men of this place might kill him and take her. After a while, the king saw Isaac caressing his wife and he summoned Isaac and confronted him about it. Isaac confessed his fear, and the king replied, “What is this you have done to us? One of the men might well have slept with your wife, and you would have brought guilt upon us.” Then the king gave the orders to all the people in his land: “Anyone who harms this man or his wife shall surely be put to death.” This ungodly king feared God more than Isaac did it seems. This king had a conscience it seems, and common sense. This is the same king that Abraham was humiliated by for doing the very same thing with Sarah! But God continued to be with Isaac because of His promise to Abraham and Sarah.

We should not fear man. We should not even fear our sin being exposed. We should FEAR GOD who overpowers man, and who sent His own Son to cover our sinfulness forever; meaning: He no longer holds sin against us, but works in and through us for His good purpose to be accomplished.

After Jesus condemned the men who were ready to stone an adulterous woman, sending them all away in personal shame for their own sins exposed by Jesus, He looked at this woman and said, “Who is here to condemn you now? I do not condemn you either, now go and sin no more.” When we have been forgiven of Jesus Christ Himself, we are inwardly changed and renewed. But, we must walk it out day by day with confidence in the love God has for us; that no matter what we’ve done, past and present – we can put it behind us – because of what JESUS has done for us on Calvary’s Cross.

God put His fear in this king who exposed both Abraham’s and Isaac’s lie about their wives, even putting their wives in an adulterous situation. How could God still use these two men?! BUT HE DOES! God’s thoughts and ways are SO MUCH HIGHER than ours. God’s faithfulness to those He makes a covenant with is beyond our deserving, but this is what His grace and mercy are all about.

“Isaac planted crops in that land and the same year reaped a hundredfold, because the Lord bless him. Isaac became rich and his wealth continued to grow until he became very wealthy. He had so much wealth: flocks, herds, servants – that the Philistines envied him.” Genesis 26:12-14

Because the Philistines envied Isaac, they tried to move him out of the land by filling the wells with dirt that Isaac’s servants dug for water. They plugged up one well, and Isaac moved on. They plugged up the next well, and Isaac moved on. “He moved on from there and dug another well (#3), and no one quarreled over it. He named it Rehoboth, saying, ‘Now the Lord has given us room and we will flourish in the land.’” (Genesis 26:17-22)

Isaac moved on to Beersheba and that night the Lord appeared to him and said, “I am the God of your father Abraham. Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bless you and will increase the number of your descendants for the sake of my servant Abraham.” God knew Isaac’s fear of the Philistines, and came to him to encourage him on his journey. God even put it on the king’s heart to go to Isaac and make a peace treaty with him because the king saw how God had blessed Isaac, just like God did for Abraham. This king had some common sense about him. He knew better than to make God angry, unlike most of our nation’s leaders today in America.

The king said to Isaac, “We saw clearly that the Lord was with you. Let us make a treaty with you that you will do us no harm….” (26:28-29) Isaac made a feast for them. Early the next morning the men swore an oath to each other, and Isaac sent them on their way peacefully.

When we have God on our side, what is there to be afraid of? But if God is NOT on our side there is MUCH to be afraid of! Here with Abraham and his son Isaac we see that “sin” is not what puts God off, rather it is our rejection of following Him on the path He has set for us. We can do really foolish things along the way and say untruthful self-protective things because of our fears, but this won’t put God against us. He understands our weakness and our little strength. We need only to confess our sins and He is faithful to forgive and cleanse us each time. He will always show us the way of escape; an open door of opportunity for us to move through and work with.

Thank You Lord for telling Your people: “I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept My Word and have not denied My Name. I will make [your enemies]….fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you. Since you have kept My command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to happen on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth. I AM COMING SOON! Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown.” Revelation 3:8-11

Isaac’s journey of faith – Part 3 – Genesis 27

It was time for Isaac to die and pass the blessing on to his son that was passed on to him by his father Abraham. Tradition was that the first born son was to receive the blessing, but here we see God overruling the order of birth-rights because of what He knew about Esau and Jacob, the twins Isaac and Rebekah had. Isaac who had a taste for wild game, favored his first born Esau, a skillful hunter. Jacob was favored by Rebekah because of what the Lord said to her while she was pregnant with the twins: “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)

Jacob was always content to stay at home and help his mother manage the household, the servants and to help his mother with his father. At home Esau was used to being served by Jacob. One day when Esau came in from the open country he said to Jacob, “Quick, let me have some of that red stew! I’m famished!” What Jacob says to him is quite interesting: “First sell me your birthright.” What put that into his head?

Well, the only two answers there could be is either God put it in his head or his mother did because of what the Lord told her when she was pregnant. What comes out to me about Jacob here is that he saw an opportunity and he grabbed it! (Remember what is said about the two boys when they came out of the womb? Jacob grabbed the heal of Esau.)

What else comes out to me about Esau here is that his ‘heart’ was exposed concerning the blessing that his grandfather passed down to his father and that would traditionally be passed down to him. Here we see something about Esau that God sees in why God chose Jacob for the blessing and not Esau.

The Lord said of Esau after he let go of the blessing for some food: “So Esau despised his birthright.” (25:34) How many of the Lord’s people have let go of their good purpose in exchange for something of the flesh or of the world? I’m sure that is why America is in the mess she’s in today!

Jacob had a good conscience; for when Rebekah tells him how to trick his old and blind father for the blessing - Jacob questions his mother’s instructions, fearful that God would bring down a curse on him for doing so. But his mother says to him, “My son, let the curse fall on me. Just do what I say…” (27:13) The question comes to me if God would’ve done it differently, or if this was God’s way of Isaac blessing Jacob instead of Esau. I’m sure God could’ve done it differently, so that no one lied or tricked anyone, but it is what it is. God will get His will done one way or another; He can use anything or anyone for His good purpose.

What also comes to me is how Isaac didn’t seem to know, or if he knew, didn’t care that the Lord had chosen Jacob not Esau for the blessing. Did Rebekah tell her husband Isaac what the Lord told her when she was pregnant, that Esau the older would serve Jacob the younger? What also comes to me is why the Lord told Rebekah and not Isaac. What did God know about Isaac in his old age that would prevent God’s anointing on Jacob the younger?

I would assume Rebekah knew that at this point in Isaac’s life that Isaac was not going to give the blessing to Jacob because in Isaac’s old age to enjoy food was important to him, and he really like the way Esau lived as a skillful hunter; a real man’s man you might say.

As we all approach the end of our lives there are fewer and fewer physical things to enjoy in life, but if we stay committed to what God called each of us to do, no matter how old we get as we continue to grow up our most holy faith in God, the eternal glory that waits for us begins to out-taste and out-weigh physical and temporal things like food and hardships.

Old Isaac admired Esau the “skillful hunter” over Jacob the “faithful servant in the home.” Surely he loved both his boys, but for some reason Isaac either didn’t see that God’s anointing was on Jacob not Esau; that Rebekah never shared that with him, or that Isaac didn’t want to believe it even after hearing what the Lord said to Rebekah. Did Isaac come to believe that Rebekah ‘imagined’ hearing this? Or, did Isaac in his old age become spiritually as weak as his eyes had become?

So, did God regard it as ‘wrong’ for Rebekah and Jacob to trick Isaac for the blessing? How did God feel about Esau’s forfeit of the blessing over a plate of food for his empty stomach? It is obvious what was more important to Esau.

This is something we each are faced with many times on our journey of faith. The choices we make greatly affect our future and the next generation and all future generations.

Is it wrong for God to allow the devil to deceive us if we, His children, don’t care about God’s purpose in our lives and live for this world instead?

Who was faithful, Isaac or Rebekah? Who honored the blessing of God on Abraham (their grandfather), Esau or Jacob?

You’ve heard it said that “the end justifies the means.” But this is only true when God does it; when it’s God’s “end” and God’s “means.” When man tries to reach his own agenda or goal by dishonest or deceptive ways – God condemns him for it. It’s evil. There is no evil in God, although there is a supreme hatred in God for the evil men do out of conceit, greed, racial hatred, resentment, envy, jealousy, etc. And God has a time for His judgment on all evil-doers who refuse to repent.

There’s one more thing that comes to me and that I will end this part with and that is: Be careful about judging someone by what you see and know if God has anointed that person for His good purpose. Be careful that you do not define God through your own self-righteousness or your own limited understanding of God Almighty. When we judge how God will work and through whom He’ll work – He will always surprise us. Do not test Him this way. You won’t like the outcome of being humiliated. For God upholds the humble and brings down low the proud.

This part ends with both Isaac and Esau surprised and humiliated. They both blamed Jacob, but the blame really laid on them both. Somehow Esau didn’t take his birthright very seriously, and I have to say that this had something to do with Isaac’s fathering.

Esau is quick to turn the blame on Jacob. He screams out to his father, “This is the second time Jacob has taken advantage of me: he took my birthright, and now he’s taken by blessing from you!” (27:37) Then Esau asks if his father reserved any blessing for him, to which Isaac replies, “I have made Jacob lord over you and have made all his relatives his servants, and I have sustained him with grain and new wine.” Then Esau wept loudly.

Isaac, now being led by the Spirit of God answers Esau, “Your dwelling will be away from the earth’s richness, away from the dew of heaven above. You will live by the sword and you will serve your brother. But when you grow restless, you will throw his yoke from off your neck.” (27:39-40) Wow, what a curse God put on him, and yet with some relief later in his life – as the story goes on.

Do you think that Esau regretted what he did with his birthright? No, he refused to see his own fault and felt justified in hating his brother with a vengeance. Rebekah heard Esau saying to himself that after his father was dead he was going to kill his brother. Are you getting why God rejected Esau and chose Jacob for the blessing; why God even allowed trickery to bring His righteous plan about for the good future of Abraham’s descendants?

It’s not up to us to determine who is fit or unfit for God to use in accomplishing His great plan for His people, and not even in His plan for America in the days ahead. God knows who He can get something done through that will be ‘in line’ with what HE plans to do.

Isaac’s journey of faith – Part 4 – Genesis 28

Rebekah told Jacob her son that his brother was going to kill him because Esau felt tricked out of his birthright and father’s blessing by his brother Jacob. But we saw in the last part how Esau despised his birthright and brought this upon himself what he is accusing his brother of. Rebekah wanted Jacob to leave and go live in the land of her brother Laban until Esau’s fury subsided and then she would send word to Jacob when Esau was no longer angry and it was safe for him to return to the land.

Rebekah convinced Isaac her husband that Jacob should leave in order to find a wife from among her own people, and not from among the Canaanite women in the land they lived. (The Hittites did not worship the One True God, they worshipped false gods.) So Isaac blessed his son Jacob and commanded him not to marry a Canaanite woman but to go to Rebekah’s brother’s household and find a wife there. Isaac blessed Jacob: “May God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and increase your numbers until you become a community of peoples. May God give you and your descendants the blessing given to Abraham, so that you make take possession of the land where you now reside as a foreigner, the land God gave to Abraham.” (Genesis 28:4) God has never changed His mind about this land belonging to the sons of Abraham “and Sarah,” and not to any son of a maidservant or concubine. God’s promise was to the son of Abraham and Sarah, Isaac, and Isaac’s son Jacob, and later we will see how God’s promise is continued down to Jacob’s twelve sons.

Again, we see here why God rejected Esau and chose Jacob for the blessing. When Esau learned that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him away to Laban, Rebekah’s brother, to find a wife instead of finding a Canaanite wife where they lived, Esau disrespected his father Isaac and his mother Rebekah and took many Canaanite wives because it went against his parent’s faith in God. (28:8-9) Therefore, that line of Esau’s descendants, as well as Ishmael’s descendants (Hagar’s son, Sarah’s maidservant), have always been the enemies of those in the line of God’s promise and blessing, as it still is today.

When God makes a covenant with us and gives us His blessing and Word of promise – we will be hated by those who have no covenant with God. The “have nots” hate with a vengeance - the “haves.”

We see this same attitude in our nation today with the liberal progressives in government, or running for positions in government, wanting to take from “the haves” and give to the “have nots.” Of course I’m talking about “the haves” being those who work and pay their increasing taxes so that the government can give to the “have nots.” Our wicked leaders continue to raise taxes as they progressively promise the “have nots” more and more. This is all evil and not at all God’s way of prospering anyone or blessing a nation economically.

Freedom to compete in business and prosper individually without an over-controlling greedy government in our way – is part of what “capitalism” is about. Add faith in God and obeying His laws of life and liberty to that – and you have GREATNESS and SUPERIORITY. Ah, but we have all those people today that believe this is not fair when some rise above others this way. Yet, this is how God shows a distinction between those who love and obey Him and those who do not. Those who “have” God on their side will rise in personal strength and wealth above those who “do not have” God on their side. Working hard and skillfully, even cleverly, for what you want in life – is of God. If your work benefits others – it will benefit you even more. This is wisdom.

If your work is about hurting people and their businesses and about denying people their God-given right to live and flourish, and to protect their families – it will hurt you in the long run and God will deny you any help or reward.

When God has made a promise to you and you receive it as your own to walk in it and live it out, God will fight for you like a mighty warrior, and no one and no government can stand against Him or change His mind.

May God Almighty bless His covenant people as we return to Him and His ways, and to make us fruitful in all sorts of ways so that we can be a blessing to others. May God’s true sons and daughters become helpful – instead of helpless dependents of our nation’s government which has become more than it should ever be. May we see God’s wisdom for our day and break free from worldly systems that only enslave people. May we turn from worshipping things and people – to trust and depend on the One True Living God: the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Wouldn’t you love to hear the Lord God Almighty say to you what He said to “faithful” Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? “I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.” Our “faithful” founding fathers formed our Constitution on the promises and principles of God. Our Constitution and religious freedom is under attack by those who claim to know God, but are liars.

Has God done all that He promised our founding fathers? Do you even know what God said to them? Has God left before doing all that He had hoped to do in and for America? Do you even know what God promises to those who trust and obey Him? Because it’s NOT what we’re being promised today by a government that has spiraled out of what a government is actually supposed to do – according to God.

The Lord God told “faithful” Jacob, like He told “faithful” Abraham and Isaac, “I am with you and will watch over you so that all peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring.” (Genesis 28:14-15) I believe our faithful founding fathers heard the same kind of promise from the same God. It’s NOT about God making the ‘government’ fruitful but ‘individual people’ fruitful – so that they can be a blessing to others. Government is supposed to protect this, not prevent this, which is what our government is doing by raising taxes and putting more regulations on business, trade, etc.

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were under God’s governing. Wherever they lived He helped them to prosper in every way so that even the king in the land they lived feared them, seeing how they were so blessed by their God.

We can learn a lot from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob’s journey of faith.

Jacob’s journey of faith – Part 5 – Genesis 28

The Lord appeared to Jacob in a dream and restated the promise to him that He gave to his father Isaac and grand-father Abraham about the land that God was giving them and all their descendants. I just love that about our God; that with each generation that is to do His will – He personally restates it in order to give each generation the confidence and strength to persevere and endure all that comes against them to stop them from following through. Even though our children need to hear it from us – they need to hear it directly from the Lord. We should never apply our faith to what people say whether it’s your parents, your pastor, or your president – who are all supposed to look out for your good future, according to God. It’s God’s Word that we are to apply our faith, and it is His Spirit in us that quickens that direct word from God to our heart so that we take ownership of it. God will hold each of us accountable to what He has specifically said to us, whatever it is.

God speaks to His people in dreams and visions as well as when we are reading His written Word. A dream or vision from God will always be in agreement with what God has said in His written Word. This goes for any way we believe we have heard from God outside of God’s written Word.

In Jacob’s dream the Lord showed Jacob something that he would never forget. There was a stairway coming down from heaven to the earth where Jacob was at this time. Angels of God were ascending and descending on this stairway, and at the top of the stairway stood the Lord Jesus Christ who restated the promise to Jacob.

Part of what the Lord said to Jacob was that He would not leave Jacob until the Lord had done what He promised Jacob, as well as Isaac and Abraham. (28:15)

The ‘means’ will change, and will require us to make personal adjustments all along the way. The path will twist and turn too so that our faith in God’s guidance and wisdom keeps growing stronger. But, the goal will never change – if it’s God’s goal/purpose/promise. Are you on the Lord’s path with His goal? What makes you so sure of it? Have you heard directly from the Lord about it? It’s important that you do – your good future and your children’s good future depends on it.

What the Lord started with His disciples – He will finish with His disciples, generation after generation until His plan and promise is fulfilled. And there’s nothing that can prevent this or change God’s mind.

As to Jacob’s dream, what comes to me is that the Lord God uses His holy angels to “watch over us” so that we accomplish God’s purpose in our lives. In God’s Word it says: “He makes His angels winds, His servants flames of fire; ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation.” (Hebrews 1:7 and 14) Imagine that; think about how wonderful our Father is to make sure we finish what the Lord has given us each to do by assigning His holy angels to us.

Other spirits are also at work ‘against’ the will of God and against God’s servants, but God is greater and even though God allows the devil to do what he does – God still works for good to come out of it. God has the last word on everything!

When Jacob woke from his dream he said, “Surely the Lord is in this place, and I was not aware of it.” He was afraid and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God’ this is the gate of heaven.” Genesis 28:16-17

Then Jacob responded to the Lord with a vow. “If God will be with me and will watch over me on this journey I am taking and will give me food to eat and clothes to wear so that I return safely to my father’s household, then the Lord will be my God….and of all that YOU give me I will give YOU a tenth.” (28:20-22)

Who are you looking to for your needs to be met? Who are you trusting in for protection and provision?

Christians need to get back into their Bibles on their own each day in order to know what they should know that God expects us to know, and that He will hold His people accountable for in each generation, rewarding us for our faithfulness. When God is pleased – God is generous!

When extreme persecution comes against God’s people here in America, and it will, we need to hold fast without compromise - to what GOD has said, and not deny His Word or His Son who finished His hard course for our good future with Him.

Jacob called the place where God spoke directly to him: “the House of God; gateway of heaven” because he saw the Lord at the top of this stairway where God’s angels ascended and descended between heaven and earth. The Lord Jesus Christ stands at the entrance of heaven as “gate-keeper.” No one comes to the Father’s House except by the Son’s permission. Remember what Jesus said to His disciples?

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God believe in Me as well. In My Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and welcome you into My presence, so that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going. ‘Lord,’ said Thomas, ‘we do not know where You are going, so how can we know the way?’ Jesus answered, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. If you had known Me, you would know My Father as well. From now on you do know Him and have seen Him.” John 14:1-7

“My sheep listen to My voice; I know them, and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one can snatch them out of My hand. My Father who has given them to Me is greater than all. No one can snatch them out of My Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.” John 10:27-30

Has God given you something specific to do? It matters more than you realize – that you not give up and that you also pass it on to your children. Pray for them that the day will come when the Lord speaks to them directly so they will not give up. Remember what the Lord said to Jacob, because it is for us today as well if God has confided in us and called us to do something extremely important for His Kingdom:

“I will watch over you wherever you go….I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.” Genesis 28:15

Jacob’s journey – Part 5 – Genesis 28 and 29

I thought about passing this matter of giving by – but the Lord kept bringing it back to me and so I must believe that to the Lord it’s important because of what He taught His disciples:

“[Give,](http://biblehub.com/greek/1325.htm) [and](http://biblehub.com/greek/2532.htm) [it will be given](http://biblehub.com/greek/1325.htm) [to you.](http://biblehub.com/greek/4771.htm) [A good](http://biblehub.com/greek/2570.htm) [measure,](http://biblehub.com/greek/3358.htm) [pressed down,](http://biblehub.com/greek/4085.htm) [shaken together,](http://biblehub.com/greek/4531.htm) [and running over](http://biblehub.com/greek/5240.htm) [will be poured](http://biblehub.com/greek/1325.htm) [into](http://biblehub.com/greek/1519.htm) [your](http://biblehub.com/greek/4771.htm) [lap.](http://biblehub.com/greek/2859.htm) [For](http://biblehub.com/greek/1063.htm) [with the](http://biblehub.com/greek/3739.htm) [measure](http://biblehub.com/greek/3358.htm) [you use,](http://biblehub.com/greek/3354.htm) [it will be measured back](http://biblehub.com/greek/488.htm) [to you.”](http://biblehub.com/greek/4771.htm) Luke 6:38

I was raised in the church to believe that giving 1/10th of your income to the church was biblical and godly, but as Mike and I grew more in our faith in the Lord – the Spirit of the Lord began to show us things about how we were taught to think about giving.

Here on Jacob’s journey of faith (still in chapter 28) we see how after this awesome dream that the Lord gave him - Jacob made a vow to the Lord:

“If God will be with me and will watch over me on this journey I am taking and will give me food to eat and clothes to wear so that I return safely to my father’s household, then the Lord will be my God and this stone that I have set up as a pillar will be God’s house, and of all that YOU GIVE ME - I WILL GIVE YOU A TENTH.” (28:20-22)

I see two very important parts to “giving:” One: that we understand that it is the Lord who gives to us first. What do we have that the Lord didn’t give us? Everything belongs to our Creator, and we are only to be good stewards of it. Two: to whom or to what we give is to be prompted by the Spirit of the Lord ONLY. What the Lord blesses us with – we don’t want to waste. (I know I’ve wasted too much.)

Much of the giving in the church is NOT prompted by the Spirit of the Lord, but by the spirit of religion, or the spirit of pride, or the spirit of greed or luxury, or the spirit of competition, or the spirit of guilt/fear, or the spirit of human acceptance. What the Lord blesses us with is not only for our earthly living but also for eternal life with the Lord.

We are told in the Bible, by the Apostle Paul, that the gifts are to be laid at the feet of the apostles. I believe this is because the apostles have a world view as to where the great needs are – as they travel around with the Lord to further His ministry. Here in America we see the greater percentage of donations from the congregations remaining within their local organizations, not going out to the Lord’s mission fields.

Some years ago the Lord showed Mike and I that faithfully giving is not a check written each month to the organized church or to a mission’s organization, although giving this way is still between you and the Lord, but it can prevent us from being sensitive to what the Lord wants to do through our giving. It can become a religious duty instead of a relationship response.

When the Lord/Spirit prompts us to give it might be more or less that 10% of your monthly income and given to a specific need that the Lord reveals to us and gives us the burden for. We have been all so used to passing our monetary giving through “the organized church” so that we can get a tax write-off, and where we trust those who handle where it goes. Now we see that the government’s non-profit tax exemption for churches is being used by the government to control what is preached from the pulpits.

I believe the Lord began showing us what giving is about because of where our country is headed with the persecution of God’s people to suppress the truth, silence pastors on God’s judgment on sin and rebellion. The systems in America that we used to benefit from – are NOT going to benefit the disciples of Christ who won’t be silenced from sharing their personal testimonies of Jesus Christ and from talking about good and evil and God’s judgment coming. But Jesus told us this would happen before He returns – and that we just need to stand firm in faith in Him and not allow fear to make our love grow cold.

We keep talking about the church getting back to being like the first church that we read about in the book of Acts, but in America with what is inevitably coming – it won’t be a matter of talk, but reality very soon. We will not be free to live in the way we’ve been used to in America, as the “mark of the beast” takes over, and in some places this chip is already being implanted in the forehead or hand. Like I’ve said before, if you don’t understand what it’s all about (the truth) then you will believe what you’re told about this chip, or whatever it will be called. But the Lord has told His people they are not to take it at all, and entrust themselves to Him. God is preparing a way of provision for His children who will refuse the chip out of obedience to Him, of which many will be our loved ones who will be left behind to endure this time on earth. His way of provision will be done with and through those who are hearing from God’s Spirit about it now. Our giving into how the Spirit is showing us to prepare provision for those living through the great tribulation, who won’t be able to buy or sell – is going to be a far greater help to the kingdom of our Lord than much of where our giving goes today.

The Bible records how the persecuted ‘first’ church sold possessions so that they could help each other survive persecution in their day. They gave to the apostles who visited all the fellowships they started to see how they were all doing. They shared with each other so that no one went without. We have an obligation to those “coming in behind us” for what they will be denied to live on during the great tribulation.

Jacob was so filled with joy and hope after the Lord spoke to him in this dream that Jacob wanted to bless the Lord with the first part of all that the Lord would give him from here on out. How did Jacob give back to the Lord? Like I said, it’s not always about money. In the next chapter (29) we see how Jacob worked for his uncle Laban the first month without payment. I believe Jacob saw Laban as God’s way of meeting Jacob’s needs after he left home, or rather, was forced to leave home because of Esau hatred towards him. (Esau despised his birthright but he blamed Jacob for ending up with it, and getting their father’s blessing - the one with the firstborn-birthright.)

Jacob worked for Laban 7 years for his daughter Rachel in marriage. We know the story how Laban deceived Jacob and slipped in his older daughter Leah into the marriage bed so that Jacob thought he was with Rachel on the wedding night. Jacob had deceived his older brother Esau for his firstborn birthright and now Laban has deceived Jacob with a marriage right that the older one goes first in marriage. Jacob worked for Laban another 7 years for Rachel. I believe Jacob saw Laban’s deception as “reaping what we sow,” and so he just “gave it to the Lord” as part in what would come later. I believe this was Jacob’s way of giving back to the Lord.

“[Give,](http://biblehub.com/greek/1325.htm) [and](http://biblehub.com/greek/2532.htm) [it will be given](http://biblehub.com/greek/1325.htm) [to you.](http://biblehub.com/greek/4771.htm) [A good](http://biblehub.com/greek/2570.htm) [measure,](http://biblehub.com/greek/3358.htm) [pressed down,](http://biblehub.com/greek/4085.htm) [shaken together,](http://biblehub.com/greek/4531.htm) [and running over](http://biblehub.com/greek/5240.htm) [will be poured](http://biblehub.com/greek/1325.htm) [into](http://biblehub.com/greek/1519.htm) [your](http://biblehub.com/greek/4771.htm) [lap.](http://biblehub.com/greek/2859.htm) [For](http://biblehub.com/greek/1063.htm) [with the](http://biblehub.com/greek/3739.htm) [measure](http://biblehub.com/greek/3358.htm) [you use,](http://biblehub.com/greek/3354.htm) [it will be measured back](http://biblehub.com/greek/488.htm) [to you.”](http://biblehub.com/greek/4771.htm) Luke 6:38

God bless Jacob in the biggest way!

Jacob’s journey of faith – Part 6 – Genesis 29

After Jacob was fooled by his uncle Laban with the wife Jacob ended up with, Jacob worked ‘another’ 7 years for Laban’s youngest daughter Rachel, the one he thought he had slept with on his wedding night. Wow, what a scheme of Laban’s to marry off his ‘oldest’ daughter first: Leah with weak eyes.

Even though Jacob had obeyed his mother Rebekah in deceiving his father Isaac for the blessing of the ‘firstborn’ which was naturally Esau’s, God let Jacob and Rebekah’s deception come back upon Jacob. Mothers: be careful what you teach your children by example and instruction, no matter what you think about the father of your children. Our sin will revisit us, and come back to bite us. If the “bite” comes from our children that we influenced in a wrong way – that bite will hurt far worse.

God doesn’t need us to work out His plan by our own schemes. He’s perfectly capable of getting His good will done by His own means, so that we have no regrets or unnecessary trouble later. Waiting on God always turns out good for us and our family.

Laban’s “firstborn” daughter (he only had two daughters) according to their custom, was to be married off first. I find it interesting that Leah had weak eyes like Jacob’s father had weak eyes, and is why Rebekah and Jacob got away with their deception of fooling Isaac on his death bed to believe that he was blessing Esau with the rights of the firstborn. Here we also see that in both scenarios of being deceiving – it was about the firstborn and the second born being exchanged.

It’s true that Jesus died on the cross to forgive our sins, but that doesn’t mean that we won’t suffer some consequences of our sins. God uses consequences of our sins to shape our character. (I speak from experience.)

I like what is said about the second set of 7 years that Jacob worked to get the woman of his dreams: Rachel. “So Jacob served seven years to get Rachel, but they seemed like only a few days to him because of his love for her.” (Genesis 29:20) Love makes life’s hardships and disappointments so much easier to go through. (Again, I speak from experience.)

Marriage unites a man and a woman with their obvious differences – so that life is not lonely or too hard to deal with. Men and women (as God designed) each have different strengths and weaknesses. Love and commitment (marriage) is what unites them in purpose and blends their strengths to make them “one.”

If you have a wife or a husband who doesn’t love you like they promised in their vows – this can be extremely hard day to day; harder than being alone. You will be tempted to end that marriage, but if you hang in there waiting on the Lord to work in both of you, you won’t be disappointed at all in the result of faithfulness. In fact, you’ll be so very thankful to God for how He brought you both through it all.

God commends and blesses the wife who sticks it out with a positive outlook - married to a mean self-centered man – entrusting herself and her marriage to her heavenly Father, and waiting on God to honor her prayers for her husband and their marriage. God will deal with that mean man so that his faithful wife isn’t hurt by how God deals with the man’s self-centeredness. The Lord tells the husband that he is to love his wife as he loves his own body. Why does God say it this way? I tend to believe that a man is ‘naturally’ inclined to put his own desires first. Partly because of how God created the man first and then woman, the wife who is to help him with the responsibilities God gave to the man. Note: Helping the man does NOT mean taking the man’s God-given position and responsibility from him; for this is the work of a jezebel-spirit in a woman.

Nothing is impossible for God to do; He only needs us to believe it and wait on Him. God also commends the husband who is faithful to his vows, even when married to a controlling nagging wife – entrusting his marriage to his heavenly Father as he waits on God to honor his loving prayers for his wife. An honorable man will not turn his wife away no matter how hard she is to live with. If he will keep loving her as the Lord tells him to – love will not fail him or her. God says that love never fails, and truth will set us free also.

There’s always a root reason why a man is so mean to his wife, or a woman wants to control her husband. God will show us the truth – if we earnestly seek after it ‘from Him’ who knows all things about all people. Marriage counselors aren’t always right and can make things worse. Be careful who you share your complaints with. God is the only one who sees the truth about us; what makes us do what we do, say what we say, think what we think and believe what we believe.

Love comes from God, for GOD IS LOVE. God understands our weakness and He will comfort us in times of hardship, persecution and physical suffering because He loves us with an unconditional everlasting love. He will – if we acknowledge that part of His awesome character.

Jacob married Rachel after he paid Laban with 7 more years of working for him. I’ll bet more marriages wouldn’t end if it cost us more; if it required more waiting with abstinence prior to marriage.

After Jacob worked 7 years for Rachel, he worked another 7 years, 21 years in all. The 3rd set of 7 years were not required by Laban. I believe Jacob gave it as unto the Lord, as he waited on the Lord to direct him back home.

It was obvious to Leah that Jacob loved Rachel and not her. But God saw that Leah was not loved, and guess what God did? He opened Leah’s womb and shut Rachel’s. Rachel had the love of Jacob, but Leah had Jacob’s 4 sons, one right after the other. She named them: Reuben, because the Lord ‘saw’ her misery of not being loved by her husband. Simeon, because the Lord ‘heard’ that she was not loved by her husband. Levi, because the Lord gave her strength and favor to bear Jacob 3 sons, hoping that Jacob would now become attached to her. Then their fourth son she named Judah, because, no matter what she had to live with as Jacob’s ‘unloved’ wife, she was going to praise the Lord. Then Leah stopped having children; the Lord shut her womb.

Jesus Christ came from the line of Judah. One of Christ’s names is: LION OF JUDAH for He is coming again but not as the Lamb of God this time!

Jacob’s journey of faith – part 7 – Genesis 30

Rachel saw that she was not bearing Jacob any children and she became jealous of her sister Leah because of the four sons Leah had born to Jacob out of her own body. What does Rachel’s jealousy do? It attacks and takes control of her situation. For, she cries out to Jacob, “Give me children, or I’ll die!” (Genesis 30:1) Rachel decided she wasn’t going to wait any longer on God to open her womb. She was fed up with feeling humiliated. She had enough of her sister’s pride in how God had opened Leah’s womb.

I’m sure that Rachel had been asking the Lord all these years to open her own womb, but here we see Rachel giving up and taking the matter into her own hands. She acts unfaithfully to both Jacob and to God. She does the very same thing that Sarah did with Abraham: she applies pressure with guilt. Sarah blamed Abraham in the same way Rachel is blaming Jacob.

I’m wondering what the real reason was with Rachel wanting to have a son from her own body, and might that have been why God waited so long to open her womb? Was there something God wanted to change in Rachel – that could only be done in this way? There’s so much that we’ll never really know or understand, but we still need to trust the Lord and submit to His ways to be blessed and high favored by Him.

Now get this, because of what Rachel does on her own we can see how this relates to what so many women do today in trying to have a child (or not). They don’t look to God and wait on God; they look at what is available, legal and possible in the flesh. Just because it’s possible doesn’t mean that it’s right. Just because it’s available doesn’t mean it’s worth it. Just because it’s legal doesn’t mean there won’t be regrets later. Women today use unnatural artificial ways as well; human ideas and inventions that go against God’s design and blessings.

Rachel resorted to human ways and used her servant Bilhah to get herself a son; for Rachel says, “God has vindicated me; he has listened to my plea and given me a son.” Rachel named Bilhah’s son Dan. Bilhah didn’t have any right to her own son. What comes out to me here is how detached Rachel was to Bilhah’s feelings. Rachel’s jealousy and competitive spirit caused her to be wickedly insensitive to Bilhah. This son was Bilhah’s not Rachel’s, but because Bilhah was Rachel’s servant Rachel took advantage of this power over the body of a servant. But what really amazes me is that later after all of Rachel’s conniving God opens her womb for Joseph to be born to Jacob. This was going to happen in God’s plan; God was simply testing Rachel’s faith in Him and forming her character. For some of us this is a very long process depending on how long we’ll wait on God to fulfill His word to us. Waiting on God and going His way - saves us from the results of going our own wicked ways.

Joseph whom God gave through opening Rachel’s womb – became key to Jacob’s whole family surviving a great famine in Canaan later in Jacob’s life. What Joseph’s brothers intended for evil against him – God turned for good with Joseph to bless Jacob’s family later when they began to suffer the famine. Joseph was Jacob’s favorite and rightly so because he came from Rachel’s own body – which was God’s way. All of Leah’s sons became jealous of Joseph because of all the attention Jacob gave Joseph, but God used it all to accomplish His plan. God’s ways are higher than our ways; His thoughts way beyond our own. We will despise what comes from our being unfaithful, but we are free to enjoy what comes from our faithfulness.

What God had in mind, His way, in opening Rachel’s womb and in what happened to Joseph later has direct correlation for how God’s people during the ‘coming great tribulation’ will be able to survive - by what God leads some of His children to do in our day, like He did with Joseph in his day, in preparing provision for them. These living during the world’s great tribulation that Jesus and all His prophets wrote about - when the last Anti-Christ is in world power - will NOT be able to buy or sell without the “mark of the beast:” the implant of Satan sealing all people for his ownership and army against the second coming of Jesus Christ. God help you if you refuse it, but God WILL be faithful to the faithful in that time.

God is always preparing for His children in the future, as well as providing for His children here and now. God’s love is ETERNAL and far greater than our puny love which generally reaches as far as what we can naturally see. When God gives you a vision for something in the future that He needs you to practically prepare for – you better do it – because of your loved ones that will benefit from it as they are coming into His Kingdom behind you. Joseph’s alienation, wisdom, favor and prosperity teaches us this.

I find it interesting that Rachel names her firstborn son from her own body, Joseph, which means: May the Lord add to me another son.” Later in Jacob’s old age, God opens Rachel’s womb again and they have Benjamin whom Jacob was extremely close to after he was told that Joseph was dead, or so they all thought.

Jacob’s journey of faith – part 8

The Old Testament stories of God’s people naming their children teaches us the importance of the names that children are given. Names were given by the Lord in some cases, some by honoring parents and relatives, or given because of what the parent/parents saw that God was doing in their lives at the time, as we see here with Jacob’s children by both Leah and Rachel. (Genesis 29 and 30)

Today people simply give their babies names that they like the sound of – and sometimes without going into the meaning (definition) of the name. Or, as we did with our four children, we prayed to God about each of their first names being biblical names but their middle names after our parents or grandparents, or brothers or sisters. Maybe it’s not that important to name our children after someone in the family or in the Bible, in case we apply the wrong labels to our children. One of our children we named because of the meaning of the name; that had nothing to do with someone in the Bible or in the family. We were prompted by the meaning of the name: God’s gift. But in any case, who but our Creator knows the right name for us? Do you believe a name makes no difference in the way a child grows up? Do you believe that children take after people in their family?

I believe it’s important to allow our children to grow up without our “labels,” because labeling them is harmful and can cause self-deception in so many ways.

I have learned from God not to even say that “I have” something that the doctor says I have because once I ‘name it and claim it’ – it’s mine! I have learned to go to the Lord for ‘His Report.’ “Whose report will I believe? I WILL believe the report of the Lord!” Who but our Creator and Sustainer in life knows us the best?

Labeling our children with a name because of its meaning can be damaging or encouraging in the growth of children, it just depends on the meaning. If you haven’t cared about the meaning of a name and not gone after the name’s meaning – does ‘not knowing’ prevent the meaning of the name from having any application or claim?

I remember hearing about a little girl being given the name Jezebel. Knowing what I know about Israel’s Queen Jezebel who married King Ahab – there’s no way I’d ever consider a name like that for my daughter. It would be interesting with what is available today with the internet to go “in search” of all the women who were given that name to see what kind of life they lived or are living; what sort of person they were or are now. I don't think there have been very many female babies given that name by their mother or father because of how evil Queen Jezebel was. Whether you are a Bible scholar or not, that name (Jezebel) has always had a negative meaning.

Have you ever thought about your name and its meaning? Have you ever asked your parents why they gave that name to you? What I find so very interesting today is that people, for the most part, aren’t concerned about “the meaning of things.”

The true meaning of things in life has changed so dramatically. Definitions of words are not what they were before. I am amazed at the definitions of words that modern dictionaries give in comparison to the first dictionary of Noah Webster. I have the 1906 version of Noah Webster’s dictionary. It’s an antique that was passed on to me when my mother-in law died. I believe the Lord wanted me to have it because I refuse to conform to man working to change the meaning of things in our lives. I refuse to accept new definitions of old words, or new definitions of things God created. I even refuse the new meaning of what ‘it’ is in a woman’s womb that grows into a human being.

Truth comes from God. Meanings come from God. Our future comes to God. You come from God and you will return to God, and stand before God to give an account of your life.

More and more people don’t care about ‘what was’ in the past, or ‘what God said’ in the beginning. They are moving forward with their own ideas and plans that have nothing to do with the past, or with God’s will - except that they have foolishly chosen to reject it. This is what God kicked Lucifer out of heaven for and created the eternal lake of fire. This is why God destroyed the world with the flood and saved one man and his family with the Ark that God told him to build. Only one man was left in the world holding on to the truth of God and the true meaning of all things in life.

Genesis 6:5-9 “The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. The LORD said, ‘I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them.’ But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD. These are *the records of* the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time; Noah walked with God.”

Matthew 24:37-38 37 “[As it was](http://biblehub.com/greek/5618.htm) [in the](http://biblehub.com/greek/3588.htm) [days](http://biblehub.com/greek/2250.htm) [of](http://biblehub.com/greek/3588.htm) [Noah,](http://biblehub.com/greek/3575.htm) [so](http://biblehub.com/greek/3779.htm) [will it be](http://biblehub.com/greek/1510.htm) [at the](http://biblehub.com/greek/3588.htm) [coming](http://biblehub.com/greek/3952.htm) [of the](http://biblehub.com/greek/3588.htm) [Son](http://biblehub.com/greek/5207.htm) [of Man.](http://biblehub.com/greek/444.htm) For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark.”

How important is it that we do not lose sight of God’s truth and the true meanings He gives? Just how important is it to you to know the true meaning of a word, a name, of life and love, and the true meaning of what Jesus Christ did for us on that Cross?

Jacob’s journey of faith – part 9

Jacob had paid his uncle Laban for his two daughters, one that Jacob loved and that he believed he had slept with on their wedding night, and the other that Jacob didn’t love that Laban deceived Jacob by slipping her in on the wedding night because “the oldest gets married first,” as was their custom. Jacob paid Laban by shepherding and increasing Laban’s flocks over a period of 14 years (7 years for each).

Now Jacob talks to his uncle about leaving with his wives and children to return to his homeland, but Laban doesn’t want this “golden goose” to leave. (Referring to the goose that laid gold eggs in “Jack and the Beanstalk.”)

So Laban says, “If I have found favor in your eyes, please stay. I have learned that the Lord has blessed me because of you. Name your wages, and I will pay them.”

Note: Here we see what God said to Abraham bearing some fruit; that of being a blessing to others. “I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.” (Genesis 12:1-3)

It was God that blessed Jacob – so that Jacob could be a blessing to Laban, so much that Laban knew it was not natural.

There wasn’t anything about Jacob himself that caused Laban’s flocks to increase in abnormal measure; it was because of the Lord’s favor with Jacob that the Lord caused this to happen while Jacob was working for Laban. Isn’t this what the Lord desires to do with His own people wherever they go, whomever they work for, and whatever they acquire from the work of their own hands?

In America, have God’s people had this same favor and blessing from God on us that was on Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? How has it been made known in our land, or in our workplace, or in our families? What distinction has God made – if it be so that His favor and blessing are upon us? If you have seen yourself being a blessing to others because of how they praise you or reward you for it – do you give God the glory before them, or take the credit to yourself?

“Abraham believe God and it was credited to him as righteousness.” Jacob is now learning this. Believing that what God says to you directly from His Word will come true is faith at work. Waiting on God to bless you and prosper you like He said He would, or waiting on God to open or close your womb, or waiting on God to move you on from where you’ve been – is faith at work under the favor and blessings of God. Following through with your commitment (marriage vow, business agreement, saying you’ll do something for someone, etc.) no matter how hard it gets to follow through to the end – is holy faith – as long as it’s the Lord you are trusting in all the way through. God holds us to our word to someone, to our vows, to our agreements, etc. knowing full well that we will not be able to always fulfill our promises, vows, agreements, etc. But as long as we are honest with Him about it, and ask Him for help along the way so that we fulfill our promises, He blesses this and rewards this and honors it, now and later when we see stand before Him.

This faithfulness has been rapidly declining in America; it’s really hard to find examples in our society of faithfulness. It’s even a rare find with God’s own people today. Maybe that is why God has not blessed us in the way He would love to, as He did in the beginning with our founding fathers. In America today, for the most part, Christians are not acknowledged as Laban acknowledged Jacob, or like King Abimelek did Abraham, saying, “God is with you in everything you do,” or like Abraham’s senior servant going to find Isaac a wife saw God’s favor and blessing on Abraham, and then Rebekah even saw the blessing on Abraham’s senior servant. Abraham’s senior servant was blessed by God because he served Abraham. (Genesis 20 and 24) Wow, how far we have strayed from the Word of God – when God’s people don’t have this favor and anointing from God as they should, nor the respect from the people around them – where they live.

Some people who see God’s blessing on certain Christians – will draw close to know their God. Others will feel threatened by Christians who are walking with the Lord being blessed. Pharaoh felt threatened by Abraham, even though Abraham sinned against the Pharaoh – telling him Sarah was his sister and not his wife – so that Pharaoh took Sarah into house to be another one of his wives. But the Lord rescued Sarah, and made Abraham a fool as the Pharaoh shamed him for what he did. None the less, Pharaoh respected the favor and blessing of God on Abraham and Sarah because of what God threatened to do to the Pharaoh and in the land, in a dream God gave him.

God’s people, His true sons and daughters, should be a blessing in the land where they live, not a curse. Why do people curse God’s people? Either they envy the favor of God on His people, instead of letting it draw them to the Lord for the same relationship. Or they hate God with a vengeance, like Satan does, and therefore they hate that which God loves and blesses. Others, don’t envy or feel threatened having not been around God’s true sons or daughters; never seeing what God wants them to see. When God calls us to something, or to some place or person – it’s because God desires to make Himself known in order to bless and save people.

God blesses those who walk with Him by faith in what He has said to them. God blesses true justice and righteousness within the governing body in the land – with peace. God blesses husbands and wives who remain faithful to each other and to the Lord – with godly children of the same faith, hope and love in God. What a lasting inheritance and heritage that can be!

Jacob stays on with Laban, as per agreement, tending Laban’s flocks and having Laban pay him with the sheep and goats that are not purely one color, but are either speckled, spotted or dark colored (less valuable). Laban like this deal. How Jacob conjures up an idea to “increase” his own flocks – is even blessed by God, which leaves me shaking my head in wonder.

Is it true that if you put light and darker stripes before the eyes of mating sheep and goats – that most of their babies will be born with speckles or spots, or dark in color? Well if it’s not, then God did a miracle for Jacob. But, if it is true, then God still did a miracle for Jacob by causing the greater majority to be speckled, spotted and dark in color.

What really comes out to me in this part of Jacob’s journey of faith, is how faithful God was to him – as Jacob was learning how to walk with the Lord trusting in Him, instead of Jacob trusting in his own schemes and natural abilities. God shows how faithful and true He will be to Jacob – not holding Jacob’s lack of faith against him. God saw Jacob a finished man with persevering faith; a man that would stay the course; a man God could count on to work His blessings through.

Jacob’s journey of faith – part 10

While Jacob was with Laban God blessed Jacob with great wealth: children, male and female servants, sheep, goats, camels and donkeys. When it was time for Jacob to leave Laban, Laban found that Jacob’s God was not to be challenged. Laban lost what Laban thought he had gained by deceiving Jacob.

As the story goes, Jacob had caught wind that his uncle Laban’s sons were saying that Jacob had taken everything their father owned, and Jacob also noticed that Laban’s attitude toward him was not like it was. (Genesis 31:1-2)

‘Conflict of interest’ causes turmoil and even division. Laban’s “interest” was in Jacob’s God blessing Jacob so that Laban would become rich in every way. Jacob’s “interest” was in finding a wife from his mother’s relatives (Laban’s household) and returning home with her. But, God had an “interest” too. He wanted to bless Jacob in so many ways. And this is what all God’s true sons and daughters can expect from our heavenly Father, BUT…we must keep to the path of the Lord, step by step with faith in God’s Word to us.

During this of 20 years that Jacob agreed to work for Laban – his father-in-law had deceptively changed Jacob’s wages 10 times. Laban did this as he saw how Jacob’s livestock was increasing far more than his, which was God’s doing to bless Jacob in spite of how many times Laban deceived Jacob. This really speaks to me because of what is happening in America with so much against our occupations and the continual tax increases of our incomes and inheritances. Government keeps taking more and more to spend it out on what government has no right to do. Our government is like Laban and we, the hard-working people in America, are like Jacob. Every time we think we might get ahead – they increase our taxes and put more regulations (new policies) on businesses. But, when I read what God did for Jacob in spite of Laban’s interest in Jacob – I know that God’s interest in what He has called us to do with His promise – will overtake the government’s interest in hard working ‘legal’ citizens.

The Lord told Jacob it was time to leave his uncle Laban and go back to the land of his father’s. God assured Jacob saying, “I will be with you.”

Jacob talked to Leah and Rachel about leaving their father and how Jacob felt about the way their father had cheated him 10 times, but also how the Lord had blessed Jacob through it all. Both Leah and Rachel wondered about their father’s attitude about them his own daughters: “Not only has he sold us, but he has used up what was paid for us. Surely all the wealth that God took away from our father belongs to us and our children. So do whatever God has told you.” (Genesis 31:15-16)

Now with his wives on board with departure, Jacob leaves Laban without telling him. After 3 days gone Laban learns they were gone, and as Laban became angry enough to harm Jacob for it, the Lord spoke to Laban in a dream: “Be careful not to say anything to Jacob, either good or bad.” Laban and his relatives saddled up to go after them. When they caught up, Laban questioned Jacob as if Laban had done nothing wrong to Jacob, and as if Jacob had no reason to flee without telling Laban. Laban said to Jacob, “I have the power to harm you, but last night the God of your father said to me, ‘Be careful not to say anything to Jacob, either good or bad.’”

God warned Laban to “be careful” with Jacob. I just love that about my heavenly Father! He’s the protector and provider of those He has great interest in. If God has “chosen you” for His purpose by “speaking to you directly” about it – then you better believe that He’s not going to let “His interest” fail or come up short in any way.

Laban had an interest. Jacob had an interest. But God’s interest was superior, and it still is.

Conflict of interest causes turmoil, and even hostility. Here in America we see increasing hostility and turmoil in our nation because of “conflict of interests.” The overpowering government has an interest. The legal citizens upholding our Constitution have their interest. The illegal aliens breaking our law have their interest. Our enemies seeking to overtake us have their interest. America’s ‘once’ good standing has been threatened and compromised by deceivers and lawbreakers with their own interests. Therefore, because we are so divided in so many different ways – our nation is in great trouble. But who’s “interest” do you think will win out, and why? What interest did our founding fathers have in forming our Constitution? What interest did God have in blessing our founding fathers?

Sometimes “turmoil” is good, like in Jacob’s case when building hostility towards him became a sign for Jacob – that it was time to return home, just as God instructed. If you belong to the Lord - the Lord is in control of building hostility towards you. He sees what the wicked say and do in secret. He will only allow as much to come against you as is good for your journey of faith with Him. Our Father knows exactly how much we can take before we give up. He won’t let us fall or fail as long our desire to keep to ‘His’ path only.

When Laban caught up with Jacob he accused Jacob of stealing his household gods – that Rachel had actually stolen without Jacob knowing it. Laban went looking for his idols but Rachel hid them so that Laban never found them.

Jacob told Laban that the reason he fled secretly was out of fear that Laban would take his daughters back from Jacob, and not because Jacob had stolen anything.

Jacob unloaded his pent up resentment toward Laban with his long record of Laban’s dishonest dealings with him. “How have I wronged you that you hunt me down?! (Genesis 31:36-42) Then Laban says to Jacob: “The women are my daughters, the children are my children, and the flocks are my flocks. All you see is mine…..come now let’s make a covenant between us.” We see here the secret desire of Laban in his interest in Jacob all throughout these 20 years. Laban hoped that Jacob would never leave because of Laban’s interest in Jacob’s great ability and success – in making Laban rich and famous. But Laban now had heard God speak to him and Laban knew he’d better let Jacob go, or fall into the hands of the One True God. “It’s a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” if you keep going against His will and against His people.

With a heap of rocks Jacob compiled a “pillar of remembrance” and as God as their witness both men promised neither would harm the other. Jacob offered a sacrifice to the Lord, taking an oath in the Name of the Fear of his father Isaac, and they all ate together and spent the night there. (Genesis 31:45-54) In the morning they departed for home in peace.

Note: If we have a strong faith in God and His Word, in His protection and provision over us, then we don’t have to lie and deceive. If we are doing God’s will – then we have God’s full-on favor and vengeance towards our enemies as we keep to God’s path in our life.

After all Laban saw of Jacob’s God I would imagine that it had some good effect on him throughout the rest of Laban’s life.

Since Laban never found his idols – Rachel carries off her father’s idolatry without Jacob’s knowledge. Why did Rachel think these idols were worth taking for herself? What value or power did she see in them? Why did she not tell Jacob she took them?

Here we see another “conflict of interest.” Jacob vs. Rachel, the wife he loved. (Maybe that is why God blessed Leah with so many sons and daughters for Jacob. Leah didn’t want a thing from her father.) Rachel still had a lot to learn about Jacob’s God and Jacob’s journey of faith.

Is your interest in life the same as God’s interest in your life? Do you see your marriage and family like God sees them? Do you have idols in your life that you value? God sees the idols in our lives, and the conflict of interest those idols will cause. Like I said, sometimes turmoil in our life works for good in our life. It can bring us to agree and unite with God’s good and fruitful interest in our lives.

Jacob’s journey of faith – part 11 – Genesis 32 and 33

Jacob was now on his way back home with all the Lord had blessed him with; for the Lord instructed him to leave his uncle Laban after being tricked by his uncle 10 times during the 20 years, and to go back to the land of his father Isaac and grandfather Abraham; the land God had given them (Canaan). God put Jacob with a man far more scheming and dishonest than Jacob was, but during this time God blessed Jacob to fulfill His promise to Jacob.

In great fear and distress of seeing his brother Esau - Jacob works out a plan of action before praying to God. How many of us do the same? (I’m guilty!) We should never expect or ask God to bless what we plan and then do out of fear. Go to God and hear from Him first, then God will bless our plan and what we do out of faith in Him.

Jacob wanting to appease or at least soften the blow by sending ahead first to meet Esau a gift of livestock. Jacob then divides his family, servants and remaining possessions into two camps with his male servants in charge, fearing that Esau would attack one group and then the other group would escape. Why did Jacob fear meeting up with his brother Esau?

Over twenty years had passed since Jacob had infuriated his brother Esau by taking the birthright of the firstborn (Esau) by way of deceiving their elderly father Isaac with very weak eyes. (Genesis 27) Jacob was probably wondering (sweating with fear) if Esau still held a grudge.

Esau had given up what he had the right to: the blessing given to the firstborn son as the whole family’s watchman of protection and provision, with submission and honor from all the families. Esau was to be that, but Esau didn’t regard that position as he should’ve, and was flippant about it when he so easily gave it up to fill his empty belly with some good food he demanded from Jacob. God saw the heart of each son of Isaac’s, and chose Jacob instead of Esau for the family blessing and generational inheritance of the land of Canaan.

NOTE: We should be careful not to judge someone’s God-given purpose in life by what we can see with outer appearance, personality and ability, family order, or worldliness. God’s ways and thoughts are much higher than ours. God enjoys surprising us with His supreme wisdom, ability and order. (We have seen this in America’s 2016 election.)

When Jacob finally went to God about his fear – Jacob was reminded what God had said to him previously: “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….All peoples of the earth will 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 the land. I will not leave you until I HAVE DONE WHAT I HAVE PROMISED YOU.’” (Genesis 28:12-15)

Why would the Lord bless Jacob with family and worldly wealth (servants, livestock and possessions) just to take Jacob into a trap where he would lose it? We foolishly tend to see others, or even to see God Himself as ‘we’ are. To the wicked – God appears wicked. To the righteous – God appears righteous. To the faithful – God is faithful. But even if it looks like God is against us, or that He has deceived us, it will eventually have a good work in our lives to bless us. God’s thoughts and ways are so much higher than ours, and so we would do very well to simply trust and obey Him.

We need to act out of faith and not fear. We’ll save ourselves a lot of trouble, wasted energy and loss of resources by going to the Lord first with our fears and problems. What can man (or governments) do anyway – unless God allows it for a good purpose in the lives of His people?

God does not hold Jacob’s character flaws and weakness against him. I just love that about my Father God! He understands our weakness because of how He created us to “NEED” His strength and wisdom in our lives. He understands the flaws of our sinful flesh, and is why He sent His Son to forgive and heal us. If God put weakness in man – then why would He hold it against us when we struggle over it? If God sent His Son to forgive our sinful flesh – then why would God use us, or not use us – based on our sinful nature?

After Jacob had finished sending all his family across the stream of the Jabbok, Jacob now was completely alone. The perfect place to hear from God. Here Jacob was met by an angel of the Lord (a man) who began to wrestle with Jacob. Struggling (wrestling) is both physical and spiritual. When the angel saw that Jacob was not going to give up on being desperate with God – he touched the socket of Jacob’s hip so that his hip was wrenched. Jacob was not going to give up until the angel of the Lord “blessed him.” So here we see Jacob’s journey of faith reaching a pinnacle of his journey of faith for the Lord says to Jacob, “Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome.” (Genesis 32:28) Jacob the “heel catcher of the firstborn right” now is given the name: ISRAEL with all its meaning from God that has never changed.

Jacob in awe, names this pinnacle place Peniel, saying, “It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared.” (32:30)

“The sun rose above Jacob as he passed Peniel, and he was limping because of his hip. Therefore to this day the Israelites do not eat the tendon attached to the socket of the hip, because the socket of Jacob’s hip was TOUCHED near the tendon.” (32:31-32)

When God teaches us a truth for our life – it often comes through injury and wounding; something that will always remind us of what God said and how we overcame our fear with faith in God’s Word and promise to us. It’s important to have a physical reminder of our spiritual growth of faith in God.

As Jacob went on to meet up with his brother he saw Esau coming with four hundred men. Now Jacob was certain that Esau was still angry so he went ahead of his family and bowed down to the ground seven times as he approached his brother. This is a sign of humility, not surrender. Esau surprised Jacob; Jacob’s fear DID NOT come upon him. “Esau ran to meet Jacob and embraced him; he threw his arms around his neck and kissed him. And they wept.” (Genesis 33:4) Can you feel it? Can you imagine how thankful to God both brothers were?

All that Jacob planned and did out of fear, was worthless. God blessed Jacob and not because of anything else but that God was ‘bound by His own Word’ to bless Jacob because of His promise to Abraham and all his descendants.

All of Jacob’s family bowed downed to Esau in humility too. Then Esau praised all Jacob’s family and possessions, and asked, “What’s the meaning of all these flocks and herds I met?” Jacob replies, “To find favor in your eyes, my lord.” But Esau says, “I already have plenty, my brother. Keep what you have!” But Jacob insists, and Esau accepts the gift of livestock – seeing how much it meant to Jacob to have his brother back. The two brothers then separate; Esau returns to Seir and Jacob moves on to Sukkoth where he built a home for his family and shelters for all his remaining livestock; camping in view of the city of Shechem in Canaan. There he set up an altar in honor of his God, and called it “El Elohe Israel,” which means “the MIGHTY GOD OF ISRAEL.”

Is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Israel) – your Mighty God? He sure is mine!

Jacob’s journey of faith – part 12 – Genesis 34

Jacob and his family are now camped ‘in view’ of the city of Shechem in Canaan where Hamor is the ruler of the Hivites of Canaan. His son’s name was Shechem. Dinah (Jacob and Leah’s daughter) went out to visit the Hivite women one day. Shechem saw Dinah and was drawn to her, so he took her; that is, he raped her – as stated by the God of the Bible.

The definition of rape then was different than it is today. Rape then was included a man taking away a woman’s virginity outside of marriage, whether she allowed it or not. In God’s mind it is evil to have sex outside of marriage. Rape is not defined by us, but by God; at least that is how it was and should be still. Virginity is a thing of virtue; something to be proud of; commendable in our Father God’s eyes.

Saving yourself sexually for marriage – protects your health (from transmitted diseases), your mental state in marriage (having no other to compare to), and protects your children (not passing the spirit of sexual immorality down to them). God’s laws are good for us in so many ways. God’s laws are not against us, but for us.

Men back then were held in contempt by their fathers, brothers, uncles, and other men friends for even speaking sexually of, or to a girl/woman. So very different from today here in America where our little girls and boys in school are learning how to put a condom on a cucumber! Children are learning from the secular music, movies and commercials all the different ways of sexual perversions! We have become so hardened toward purity and righteousness that we can’t see where evil is taking us and our children.

Any prostitute can cry “rape” if the man didn’t pay her! Any girl already having sex with her boy-friends can cry “rape!” simply because she wasn’t ‘attracted’ to him (desiring him sexually). Virginity for both boys and girls is NOT important like it used to be. In fact, you are shamed by friends for wanting to remain a virgin until married, especially a guy.

I would assume that Shechem, Hamor’s son, didn’t have to force himself on Dinah because of how he explains his intentions of what happened:

“Shechem loved the young woman and spoke tenderly to her. And Shechem said to his father Hamor, ‘Get me this girl as my wife!’” (34:3-4)

Now when Dinah’s brothers heard about this. “They were shocked and furious because Shechem had done an outrageous thing in Israel by sleeping with Jacob’s daughter – a thing that should not be done.” (34:7)

It didn’t matter how Dinah felt about Shechem or how she felt about what happened; all that mattered is that it was “an outrageous thing done in Israel” and should be brought to justice. God is just, and His people should see “evil” in the same way with personal conviction and self-control.

How these brothers bring this crime to justice is quite interesting. Jacob’s two sons, Levi and Simeon, pretend to make an agreement with Hamor whereas all the Hivite men must be circumcised for the freedom of taking wives from the household of Israel (Jacob), and likewise, the men of Israel to take wives for themselves from the Hivites. Hamor and Shechem agree to this, and all the men are circumcised leaving them extremely painful, immobile and vulnerable for days. Levi and Simeon knowing this would be the case, then rush in to attack and kill all the circumcised men.

Now we might look at that and think “how dishonest and deceptive,” but let’s not forget what Hamor had in mind with this agreement telling Levi and Simeon that Jacob’s household would be free to live in his land. Hamor shared his secret agenda with the Hivite men so that they would agree to getting circumcised, stating that all that belonged to Jacob would become theirs. God heard Hamor’s true intention in this pact, even though Levi and Simeon had a different agenda which was in agreement with God who told Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that He was giving them the land of Canaan. The end never changes although the means to the end can change. God controls the end. Man control the means by doing it ‘his way’ or ‘God’s way.’

God is God, and we should not be so quick to think that we have the right to judge God for how He chooses to work on behalf of His people. God is good and there is no evil in Him. God responds in kind to teach us wisdom and humility.

What Shechem did to Dinah was referred to as: “a thing that should not be done.” Who says? Who says that a single man should not look at a single woman in a sexual way until they’re married? Who says that sex before marriage is “a thing that should not be done?” Who says that living together without being married is “a thing that should not be done?” Who says that a guy or a girl looking for sex, “is a thing that should not be done?” Who says that a girl/woman dressed (rather undressed) in a way that stimulates the sexual juices in a boy/guy/man is “a thing that should not be done?” Who says that a man having sex with a man, or a woman having sex with a woman is “a thing that should not be done?” Who says?!

Who says that a boy/guy/man learning to restrain his sexual urges until he is married is a thing that SHOULD BE done? Who says that a little girl should learn to cover her body properly so that she does not become guilty of tempting boys in a sexual way? Who says and who determines the guidelines by which we should live by? Who? Who establishes a ‘**stand**ard’ by which to live up to? Is there a standard at all, and who says? As I look out in our land of America it is obvious that the majority have no standard by their own, no godly conviction, no self-respect, no concern for Whom he/she will stand before and answer to at the end of their life.

The One whom we will all ‘**stand**’ before to be judged for what we did that we should not have done, or did not do that we should have done – has set the standard, and when we strive to live up to God’s standard – we enjoy the life we’ve been given by Him. Who should dictate to all people in this world what should not be done, and that which should be done? Our Creator Father is the One, and He says, “If you love Me then you will obey Me.”

What has happened to godly conviction, true identity, self-respect and the sanctity of human life in the womb? How did we get so far away from thinking and living like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? Or maybe you don’t believe we are to think and live like they did? We are seeing in the last 24 articles of their *journeys of faith* that they were not perfect people, but they certainly knew the difference between right and wrong by God’s definition.

Here in Abraham’s, Isaac’s and Jacob’s journeys of faith – we see that there were rulers, people, lands – that did not think and live under the same standard with the godly conscience and conviction that God’s people lived under. What makes that difference; the differences of opinions and lifestyles we still see today? Whose belief and conviction is true and right? What is the outcome of the right belief in God? What is the result of godly conviction and holding to God’s standard and laws?

I wrote a poem: *“Imagine a world where everyone honors and serves their heavenly Father; where everyone uses their God-given abilities, authority and will to benefit others. Imagine a world where absolutely no one goes unnoticed and everyone is valued, even in the womb; where every children is cherished and raised to their full potential. Imagine a world where there is no need for insurances; where the threat of harm, terror and destruction are unheard of. Imagine a world where trust is as natural and expected as the law of gravity; where the standard of God is taught and proudly upheld in every family and home. Imagine a world without death, despair and disappointment; where words like “disease,” “addiction,” and “infection” are found only in history books. Imagine a world when the only tears that fall are tears of joy and gratitude; where respect for all God’s creation is as certain as the air we breathe. Imagine a world where a cemetery can not be found; where every family member is known ‘personally’ through endless generations. Imagine a world without greed and corruption; where the only debt that’s felt – is love; where no one goes hungry or thirsty or homeless. Imagine a world where the whole earth gives forth a bountiful harvest in ‘every’ season; where God’s good earth receives her seventh year of resting; where her sixth year of harvests is doubled. Imagine a world where sports, construction, entertainment and sales have nothing to do with selfish ambition and vain conceit; where every song, movie, bill-board, commercial and human endeavor is rooted in VIRTUE. Imagine a world where there are no warning and ratings necessary; where every form of expression and education increases godly wisdom, creativity, productivity and joy for the world. Imagine a world without a monetary system; where integrity barters for the good of mankind; where our Father blesses the work of our hands and makes everyone to succeed in life and love. Imagine a world where our God is welcomed by all and His favor is on each family; where there is no demon, darkness or doubt in man. Imagine worlds on planets yet to be fashioned by the gifted and true children of God; where man’s imagination is holy to the glory of the LORD and where eternity is filled with the WORSHIP of our Father God. Try to imagine what our Father God imagined in the beginning for mankind; for it shall be just as HE imagined!”*

Who says? God says! If God said it – I will believe it with strong conviction, endurance and perseverance. The Word of God will live through me because God’s Son lives in me and I live in Him, my Savior. Therefore, I am blessed and highly favored by my Father God. HE says so!

Jacob’s journey of faith – Part 13 – Genesis 35

After Jacob’s sons got justice for their damaged sister and the family’s honor – Jacob said to Levi and Simeon, “You have brought trouble on me by making me obnoxious to the Canaanites and Perizzites, the people living in this land. We are few in number, and if they join forces against me and attack me, I and my household will be destroyed.” But the brother’s replied, “Should we have treated our sister like a prostitute?”

Then GOD SPOKE to Jacob! He told Jacob to go to Bethel (where God spoke to Jacob the first time after Jacob left home) and to settle his family there. I find this interesting that Jacob’s first reaction was FEAR (again) to what his sons did to the Hivite men in how Shechem treated their sister Dinah in raping her. I wonder why Jacob didn’t feel angry like Levi and Simeon did? Fear has a power over us that prevents us from doing what is right. Fear over us can make us feel guilty for something God does not find us guilty for. Fear freezes up our faith!

I wonder why Jacob doubted what the Lord had told him the first time the Lord spoke to him and then again the second time. When God has told us the future and what He plans to do for us, you can be sure the devil will work hard to make us forget it, or to at least doubt it. So here God speaks to him the third time, without holding Jacob’s fear against him.

“Your name is Jacob, but you will no longer be called Jacob; your name will be ISRAEL. I am God Almighty; be fruitful and increase in number. A nation and a community of nations (12 sons/nations) will come from you, and kings will be among your descendants after you.” (35:11-12)

After Jacob told his family and servants to “get rid of the foreign gods (idols) among you and purify yourselves and change your clothes and come up with me to Bethel where I will build an altar to God, who answered me in my distress and who has been with me wherever I have gone.” There you go Jacob! Now you’re thinking right!

They all did what Jacob told them to do and Jacob buried all their idols in the ground under the oak at “Shechem.”

Now he builds an altar of worship for remembrance and, re-calls that place “**El** Bethel,” because it was there that God first revealed Himself to Jacob when he was fleeing from his brother’s wrath. Jacob set up a stone pillar there. He poured out a drink offering and oil upon it in the presence of his family in worship and joy of God’s Word to them.

Has anything similar ever happened to you? Have you ever done something ‘physical’ in remembrance of what God said to you directly and then how He followed up with action to fulfill His Word to you? I used to paint rocks while the kids were growing up and even after when they moved on with their families - whenever God did a miracle in our family. I kept this ‘rock garden’ on our front porch. People coming to our door would always comment about the rocks and it gave me an open door to talk to them about my wonderful Savior and Lord Jesus Christ. It also kept our children never forgetting how great God is, and how much He loves us.

I have also ‘journaled’ everything that has happened in our family and that God did for us. Our journals are more important than we think. Back in 2002, the Lord said to me one morning: “Carol, don’t stop journaling. The day is coming when your loved ones that are *left behind* to endure the Great Tribulation will go after your journals to know what you knew that they could’ve known, but didn’t, about this time. They had the Bible too, but they didn’t study it. They went to church, but church going replaced having a real relationship with Me.” During the Great Tribulation – many will get right with Jesus Christ, but oh what troubles they will live through! The Lord has said about this time, that had the Father not cut this time ‘short’ not even those who returned to Him – could survive a longer duration of such persecution and destruction all over the world.

Here with Jacob, and as it was his father Isaac, and as it was with his father Abraham – we see God faithfully working through their fears and oppositions to keep these fathers of our faith on His course of what He promised them and what He promises all those who believe HE EXISTS and REWARDS THOSE EARNESTLY SEEK AFTER HIM. I just love that about my God; that what HE STARTS with me (any of us) HE FINSIHES. He understands our weakness and does NOT hold our mistakes and fears against us. He does require honesty from us though, and then takes our honest confessions of sin and regrets and covers them with the blood of His Son.

Jesus Christ, our great HIGH PRIEST, stands at the right hand of the Father’s Throne sprinkling His precious never-ending blood over our confessions, cleansing us from all our unrighteousness. I am so very THANKFUL for my Savior’s blood that He shed on that cross for me. I am so very THANKFUL that HE IS the AUTHOR and FINISHER of my faith in GOD’S WORD, beginning to end. I am so very THANKFUL that no matter what happens around me, to me and my husband and children, and to this world who foolishly continues to reject His Son – all that God has promised His children – will be fulfilled exactly like He promised and exactly on time. For HE has set a time for everything to change.

The time when ‘I’ changed was in February of 1975. I changed when I opened my heart to Jesus Christ as my Savior and Lord, taking hold of God’s Word (the Bible) for the first time with God’s Spirit living in me to help me understand God’s wisdom and what He requires of me. Now I see – where once I was blind. Now I know – where once I was ignorant. Now I am free – where once enslaved. Now I am full of hope and love – where once I was afraid and alone. I am so VERY THANKFUL to my Father God, for knowing me before He created all that exists, and for forming my body and purpose in my mother’s womb, and for watching over me my younger years while I behaved so very shamefully, and for His loving discipline with this unruly child, and for blessing me when I finally saw the TRUTH of it all.

Jacob’s journey of faith – part 14

Just because the Bible records things about His servants, doesn’t mean that God is pleased about all the things that His servants did and said. I love that about my Father God and His Son and Spirit. They don’t like talking about evil, and they don’t like discussing our sinful behavior and mistakes in life. They see the future with us! They see me “finished!” They are even more excited than I am for the fulfillment of what God has promised to those who love Him.

What God’s Son did on the cross with His own blood that dripped from His head and side – covers all my sin and foolishness, past and present until I die. I am no longer “condemned” for breaking His laws. I am not innocent but I am forgiven and accepted by my heavenly Father as His true daughter – because I believe Jesus Christ died for me personally and I choose Him over all others to listen to and follow to the end of my life on earth. My choice to believe and follow – is not something that I’m hoping will turn out to be true; my choice to believe and follow is by the will of God. God our Father desires all men to be saved; to come to the knowledge of the truth about His one and only Savior: Jesus Christ. (1 Timothy 2:3)

Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God said: “For it is My Father's **will** that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in Him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.” (John 6:40) “No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, **who is Himself God** and is at the Father's side, has made Him known.” (John 1:18) “**I am** the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies.” John 11:25

“We all lived… in the cravings of our flesh, indulging its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature children of wrath. [But](http://biblehub.com/greek/1161.htm) [because of](http://biblehub.com/greek/1223.htm) [His](http://biblehub.com/greek/846.htm) [great](http://biblehub.com/greek/4183.htm) [love](http://biblehub.com/greek/26.htm) [for us,](http://biblehub.com/greek/3739.htm) [God,](http://biblehub.com/greek/2316.htm) [who is](http://biblehub.com/greek/1510.htm) [rich](http://biblehub.com/greek/4145.htm) [in](http://biblehub.com/greek/1722.htm) [mercy,](http://biblehub.com/greek/1656.htm) made us alive with Christ, even when we were dead in our trespasses…. For it is by grace you have been saved through faith, and this not from yourselves; it is the gift of God, not by works, so that no one can boast.” Ephesians 2:3-4, 8-9

“For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not from the Father but from the world. [The](http://biblehub.com/greek/3588.htm) [world](http://biblehub.com/greek/2889.htm) [is passing away](http://biblehub.com/greek/3855.htm) [along with](http://biblehub.com/greek/2532.htm) [its](http://biblehub.com/greek/846.htm) [desires,](http://biblehub.com/greek/1939.htm) [but](http://biblehub.com/greek/1161.htm) [whoever](http://biblehub.com/greek/3588.htm) [does](http://biblehub.com/greek/4160.htm) [the](http://biblehub.com/greek/3588.htm) [will](http://biblehub.com/greek/2307.htm) [of God](http://biblehub.com/greek/2316.htm) [remains](http://biblehub.com/greek/3306.htm) [forever.](http://biblehub.com/greek/165.htm)” 1 John 2:16-17

For His Son was given to us, and the government will rest on His shoulders. And His Name will be called by all that escape the flames of our Father’s wrath: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6)

Reading through the Old Testament about the journey of faith each of His servants made, one right after the other, so that we today would have this recorded ancestry of faith in the LORD GOD, one thing that really stands out to me and that I so greatly appreciate about my Savior God is that what has been forgiven – is forgotten; He does not bring it up again! They (the God-head of three persons) do not gossip about the sins of others like we do. They do not hold grudges like we do against each other. They do not set up “stumbling blocks” before me to remind of what I did or didn’t do that I’m ashamed of – like the devil does and like those who listen to the devil’s voice – do.

The Bible certainly records good and evil that His servants have done, but He doesn’t respond to it like He responds to those that come against His chosen servants. God is VERY protective of those who belong to Him; those that He knows and counts on to do His will – no matter what comes against them. With anyone else God is very direct in His Word with warnings to repent and of His coming judgment on the evil they do – if they continue to reject the Savior of the world.

Who am I? Well, I’m certainly NOT the person I was before Jesus Christ came into my heart and life! And neither am I perfect (without the sinful nature) until I’m home with Him in my new body; clothed for eternity with the LORD. Until I am no longer fighting against this sinful flesh, no longer tempted by the devil with the things of this world, no any longer having to listen to his lies and constant threats – I will do things, say things, I wish I hadn’t or wish I had. While the devil is still the god of this world, and while I am still living in ‘his’ world, I have a battle to fight every day. But one thing I know: Jesus Christ has overcome the flesh, the world and the devil, and I am in Christ Jesus – who promises to finish what He started in me. I long to see Him and His finished work **on** this daughter of His.

When I read what God says (in the Bible) about His servants Abraham, Isaac, Jacob (Israel and his 12 sons), Moses, David, the prophets, Joseph and Mary, the Apostles and what Christ Jesus says about His beloved Church – there is no public rebuke (in His Word) or secretly (in heaven with His Son). Yet, we see Jesus Christ Himself being rebuked publicly and secretly hated and discredited by the world that He came to save and bless with a good future. The Name of Jesus Christ has been slandered by people and governments making Him out to be evil in purpose or altogether false, calling the Bible a fictitious book.

All other “faiths” are accepted, or at least “tolerated” by the world – all but the one true faith in Jesus Christ. That’s because truth is truth, and there’s no getting around it! We will each have to face “the Truth” and acknowledge Him, but better to do it now than when it’s too late to enjoy Him.

The way to our heavenly Father is ONE way only, and it’s narrow where He has sadly stated that only a “few will go.” The difference between Hell and Heaven is, even though “the few” go to Heaven while the majority end up in Hell, the “few” continue to increase in number all throughout eternity, where those in Hell – have that blessing from God taken from them. They will never die in Hell and forever suffer intense pain and regret of their rejection of Jesus Christ. This is why God’s people are compelled to share their faith in Jesus Christ while He is still available to this world. All other “faiths” do not have this unselfish reason for why they try to win people over.

The life we hope for is found only in Jesus Christ, but pride and deception keeps people from real faith. Faith is certain of those things we hope for that are from God. All good things come from God.

When we expect the Lord to walk with us on our path, that path is crooked and troublesome, but when we walk with the Lord on HIS PATH, the path is straight and easy. The Lord might walk our path for a time letting us learn the hard way how much better HIS PATH is, but the day will come when He shows us the better way to go and we will have to decide to go with Him or go against Him. The choice is ours.

“Consider it pure joy, my brothers, when you encounter trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Allow perseverance to finish its work, so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. **6**But he must ask in faith, without doubting, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. **7**That man should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. He is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways….

Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love Him.” James 1:3-12

Jacob’s journey of faith – part 15

Jacob returned to Canaan where his father Isaac was living. Along the way Jacob’s wife Rachel died giving birth to her second son, Benjamin. Jacob buried her in Bethlehem. Upon returning home to his father, Jacob was faced with his 180 year old father (Isaac) getting ready to die. Esau and Jacob buried him in Hebron. (Genesis 35) The next chapter (36) talks about Jacob’s brother Esau, the father of the Edomite clans, and all the rulers of Edom. It lists the “kings who reigned in Edom before any Israelite ever reigned as a king.”

“A King verses a Head”

A little history: The first king on the earth after the flood was Nimrod, a mighty hunter who went against God’s Word for mankind. Nimrod, in his rebellion to God’s Word, built the Tower of Babel in which God brought down and then confused their common language by miraculously launching many languages among them – so they could not understand each other like they had. They all scattered – grouped by their own languages. (Genesis 10 and 11)

Nimrod, the ‘first king’ of the earth, was Noah’s great-grandson after Noah’s son Ham and grandson Cush, Ham’s 4th son. Noah’s clans (the clans of his 3 sons Japheth, Ham and Shem) spread out over the earth after the flood. Shem, Noah’s 3rd son, was the line in which Abraham came 9 generations later. They lived MUCH longer then. Noah himself lived 950 years, but men lived less and less in length of years with each generation on. God had a good purpose in shortening man’s life-span – being that man would continue to rebel against His Maker in how He told them to live on the earth.

Ham had another son named Canaan. Canaan’s territory included the towns of Sodom and Gomorrah where Lot, Abraham’s nephew chose to live after Abraham and Lot split up. Sodomy (homosexuality) as it is condemned in God’s Word – was on its evil way to fill the territory of Canaan.

Ham’s father (Noah) cursed Ham’s son because Ham was the son that highly offended his father Noah (Genesis 9:18-29) in doing what should never be done according to God and to men with good conscience.

What did Ham do to his father? Ham saw his father naked in his tent sleeping off some wine he had made from his own vineyard. (Imagine being the very first wine-maker and not knowing what happens when you drink fermented wine.) Instead of Ham covering his father and keeping it to himself, he talked about it openly to his brothers. Ham didn’t ‘think’ like his two brothers did. Now his brothers, Shem and Japheth, did what was right in God’s eyes. They didn’t look at their father and went in backwards to cover their father’s nakedness. “Love covers.”

When Noah found out what Ham did to him – Noah cursed Ham’s son Canaan in that he and Canaan’s descendants would be the lowest of slaves to Shem’s and Japheth’s descendants.

End of history lesson.

The curse from Noah on Ham’s son Canaan seems pretty harsh, huh? But that just goes to show you how very shameful it was to be found naked (indecently exposed) or passed out (not of a sound mind), and how it was so extremely disrespectful to even talk about such things openly. Was this curse done by the will of God through Noah, or not? You decide. (I personally see a strong connection with Ham, the curse on Canaan, and sodomy springing up in Canaan in these two cities ‘named’ Sodom and Gomorrah. The ‘progression’ of evil under the curse.)

Man! Have we lost that right way of thinking! Today we have no problem exposing our bodies in public view, getting drunk to the point of addiction, and having no self-control with our mouths and bodies. Gossip (about the shameful things people do) isn’t regarded as being even MORE shameful than bad things people do that are gossiped about. God says in the Bible that is even more shameful to discuss the sins of others because gossip denies love for one another. Exposing the sins of others rejects God’s law of love. Who is without sin anyway? No one!

It seems that with each of America’s presidential elections the candidates are going after sin in each other’s lives more and more; trying to expose shameful things to use against each other. And, just sit in a restaurant next to a group of young women or a group of young men and listen to what they say about others not present, or about the opposite sex. And what we see on television and at the movies today, is just plain shameful and disrespectful in so many ways!

In a previous part on Abraham’s journey we learned that uncle Abraham heard that a takeover had happened (war between kings) and that Lot and his family had been taken captive along with all the people of Sodom and Gomorrah (two cities within the territory of Canaan). Abraham with 318 of his trained men fought against the four kings who had allied to take over the land of Canaan (five territorial kings). Abraham and his 318 soldiers, by themselves, rescued Lot and his family; rescuing the kings and all the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. (Genesis 14) The king of Sodom wanted to pay Abraham for rescuing them, but Abraham rejected it. How did only 319 men conquer four kings and the armies that had defeated five kings and their armies? By God’s will, favor and all-surpassing power for His own cherished people!

A “head” is a man who strongly believes in God the Creator, and seeks after God following in what God has told him to do with his family on the earth. A “head” understands that the earth belongs to God who created it for man to take care of. Kings and governments are under the evil idea (the devil’s lie) that the earth and people belong to them; that they are not accountable to God. A “head” has a very sensitive conscience for God’s thoughts and ways; which works for the ‘good’ of all people on the earth. A “head” is not after the same thing a “king” is after. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were “heads.”

God does not look at our sin because through His Son Jesus Christ our Father has forgiven us. God looks at our heart – whether or not God can depend on us to keep following Him, no matter what foolish things we do that we will later regret doing and learn not to do again. A “head” understands this fully, even depending on it with his life and future of his children – under the God-Head: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

If we acknowledge God in ALL our ways, both right and wrong ways, He will direct our path. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. A “head” fully understands this; even depends on it for his life and children’s future. This truth, a “head” treasures in his heart for the peace and joy that only comes from God when we are right with Him.

So, as my husband tells his children and grandchildren all the time: BE HEADS! Not tails.

Jacob’s journey of faith – part 16 – the end of this series. (This last one is the longest, so hang in there to the end for how it relates today.)

“Now Israel (Jacob) loved Joseph (11th son of Jacob, Rachel’s first son) more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made an ornate robe for him.” Genesis 37:3

Most of us know how the story goes with all of Joseph’s jealous brothers hating him. But, when Joseph shared his 2 dreams with them all – this is what sent the brothers over the top with hatred for Joseph. The dreams had to do with the older brothers serving the youngest brother (Joseph). First dream: “We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it.” (37:7) Second dream: “The sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me.” (37:9)

Sometimes I wonder if Joseph had kept the dreams to himself, or at least just between he and his dad – maybe his brothers would not have done what they did to him. Even Joseph’s father took offense somewhat. “Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?” But faithful Jacob kept the matter in mind. (37:11)

Joseph’s brothers were furious with Joseph, but Joseph’s father KNEW that God gives dreams and vision to His chosen servants; for God had come to Jacob in dreams and visions many times. He also knew about the dreams and visions of his father Isaac and grandfather Abraham. None of Jacob’s other 11 sons had been given a vision or dream from God. God had told Jacob and Rachel that HE would bless them with the son of His promise from Rachel’s womb, which these 11 sons did not come from. God chooses whom God will use to be HIS way of blessing HIS people.

Well as the record of true events continues, some of Josephs’ older brothers plotted to kill him. They hid this from their father Jacob, but not from the Father God, who would use their evil behavior towards their brother – for good later.

They threw Joseph into a dry cistern in the wilderness. Reuben (the oldest from Leah - Jacob’s first wife of his uncle Laban’s deceitfulness) ordered the brothers not to harm Joseph any further. He said this so that he could rescue him later and take him back to his father. Reuben was outnumbered by his brothers who decided to sell Joseph to Ishmaelite merchants traveling by. These people then sold Joseph to Potiphar, the captain of Pharaoh’s guard in Egypt. Joseph then lived in the house of his Egyptian master and finding favor in his eyes because the captain saw that the Lord gave Joseph success in everything he did.

Potiphar put Joseph in charge of all his household, everything he owned, and the Lord blessed everything Potiphar had because of Joseph. Potiphar did not concern himself with anything that belonged to him, until his wife lied about Joseph trying to have sex with her. She was the one who wanted Joseph that way. But Potiphar believed the story she made up after Joseph refused her over and over, and Joseph was thrown into the brink. But even there the Lord gave Joseph success in everything he did, and so the warden of the prison put Joseph in charge of all those held in prison.

Later Joseph was assigned to two new men in the prison who had angered the king of Egypt. While these two men were in prison they each had a dream they could not understand. The chief cupbearer told Joseph his dream, and the chief baker told Joseph his dream. God gave Joseph the interpretations of each dream; one was good and one was bad. The cupbearer was going to be restored in 3 days to his position, but the baker was going to have his head cut off and body impaled on a pole in 3 days.

Two years passed before the cupbearer whom received pardon from the Pharaoh – remembered Joseph still in the prison. The Pharaoh then had two disturbing dreams and the cupbearer told him about Joseph’s ability to interpret dreams. So Joseph told the Pharaoh that both dreams were of the same interpretation: “God has shown Pharaoh what he is about to do. Seven years of great abundance are coming throughout the land of Egypt, but seven years of famine will follow them. Then all the abundance in Egypt will be forgotten, and the famine will ravage the land. The abundance in the land will not be remembered, because the famine that follows it will be so severe. The reason the dream was given to Pharaoh in two forms is that the matter has been firmly decided by God, and God will do it soon. And now let Pharaoh look for a discerning and wise man and put him in charge of the land of Egypt…..(and in a nutshell)…..store up during the seven abundant years….to be held in reserve for the people to buy and live on during the seven years of famine.” (Genesis 41)

So Pharaoh appointed Joseph for saying to him, “Since God has made all this known to you Joseph, there is no one so discerning and wise as you. You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people are to submit to your orders. Only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you.” (41:39-40) Wow! What a journey of faith for Joseph! And he still hadn’t come to the end of this amazing journey!

Now Jacob, Joseph’s father, was under the impression that his favorite son was dead all this time. But all the time God was promoting Joseph, step by step, in how God was going to provide for Jacob’s family during the famine which would also effect the land of Canaan where Jacob and all his huge family lived. (Hum. Sounds familiar. Similar to what has happened with my husband. More explanation at the end of this article.)

The brothers had lied to their father by smearing goat’s blood on the robe Jacob had made Joseph, and then told their father that they had found it that way in the wilderness; alluding that Joseph had been devoured by some animal. Jacob believe it all……UNTIL the day he saw Joseph in Pharaoh’s house so many years later.

Jacob had sent his 10 sons to Egypt to buy grain during the famine, keeping young Benjamin, Rachel’s second and last son, at home. Joseph’s brothers did not recognize him as he looked all-Egyptian, with an Egyptian name, and not anything like the Joseph they remembered, but Joseph knew them after a little conversation with them. Joseph didn’t let on who he was. He wanted to mess with them first, as well as find out more about his father Jacob. So Joseph cried out, “You are spies, not honest men!” This put FEAR in them! They told Joseph about their father and the brother they left behind and what was happening in their land and why they came to him. Joseph ordered them to leave one of them behind in Egypt, and with grain they had bought with silver, to return home and then bring Benjamin back for more food, or NO DEAL.

They talked among themselves fearfully agreeing that God was punishing them for what they had done to their youngest brother Joseph, still not recognizing Joseph before them. So they submitted and hurried back to their father with all that had happened to them.

Now Joseph wanted to mess with them again, and had the silver they bought the grain with put back in their packs, as if they cheated, so it would make them even more fearful of what was going to happen. When they found the silver – they didn’t know what to think. They returned home and told their father all that happened, but Jacob was not going to let Benjamin go, not after losing Joseph, and certainly not to go before a man (Joseph) who would kill them for keeping the silver. But, after they were down to their last grain of food some time later, Jacob gave in and let them take Benjamin back to Egypt along all they needed to buy more grain and pay back Joseph for the first amount of grain. Simeon had been left all this time in Egypt; the brother Joseph insisted they leave for insurance that they would return with Benjamin. The brothers were all confused over this, but they did exactly what they agreed to do – out of sheer fear: “He wants to seize us as slaves and take our donkeys!” (43:18) But as they approached Egypt, Joseph’s steward who met them - put their fear to rest. Then he brought Simeon out to them.

When Joseph returned home and found his brothers all there with gifts they had brought, his brothers all bowed down to him. (Just as his two dreams had prophesied.) Joseph’s heart was touched by this and he had his servants prepare a great meal for them. Joseph, in seeing his brother Benjamin, had to leave the room for he was deeply moved and he didn’t want them all to see his tears. He went into his private room, and wept. After Joseph returned, they all were told to sit down at the table. To their surprise they were each seated at the table in order of their ages, and they looked at each other in astonishment. When portions were served Benjamin received five times more than the others, and again they were in wonder of all this.

The next morning they were sent on their way with food they bought, but again, Joseph had their silver secretly returned, and this time to Benjamin’s sack. What Joseph wanted was for them to return with his father Jacob next time they returned for food. Joseph had them chased and made to open their sacks and of course the silver was found in Benjamin’s sack. Now Joseph could use Benjamin for ransom; knowing that Jacob would definitely return for him. (God was making these older brothers of his – relive – what they did to Joseph.) After they begged Joseph, telling him what this would do to their father if Benjamin did not return with them, Joseph could no longer control himself. He had all his attendants leave so he could make himself known to his brothers.

At first they didn’t believe him, but after Joseph rehashed what they had done to him, and what God had done with Joseph after they sold Joseph to the merchants - they were simply dumb-struck. They all rejoiced, and did what Joseph told them to do, and hurried home with all that Joseph sent back with them. LOADED! So that Jacob’s whole household could return to live in Egypt with Joseph. He said to them, “Never mind about your belongings because the best of all Egypt will be yours.” (45:20)

When Jacob heard that Joseph was still alive, Jacob was stunned to say the least, and did not believe them. But after he listened to the whole story and saw all that Joseph had sent with them to bring Jacob and all the family to Egypt to live, Jacob said, “I’m convinced! My son Joseph is still alive. I will go and see him before I die.”

Jacob offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac, and there God spoke to Jacob in a vision at night. “Jacob! Jacob! I am God, the God of your father. Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you into a great nation there. I will go down to Egypt with you, and I will surely bring you back again. And Joseph’s own hand will close your eyes.” (Genesis 46: 1-4) Wow! What a thing to hear from God! God is very close to His servants and cares deeply about the things that grieve them.

As the story goes, well….it was more than just your traditional family reunion! Jacob showed up in Egypt - 70 in all. They were to settle in Goshen, the best part of the land of outer Egypt where their livestock could graze. Joseph came to them in Goshen and when he and his father saw each other they embraced and wept. Jacob says to Joseph, “Now I am ready to die, since I have seen for myself that you are still alive.”

Joseph had them meet the Pharaoh and Jacob blessed the Pharaoh, which impressed him much. Pharaoh asked Jacob how old he was. “The years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty. My years have been few and difficult, and they do not equal the years of the pilgrimage of my father Isaac and grand-father Abraham.” Pharaoh highly respected Jacob, because of how much the Pharaoh had come to respect Joseph and Joseph’s God.

So Joseph settle his family in Goshen and gave them property of their own, the best part of the district of Rameses. They were given more than enough food for all to live on during the famine. But 400 years later – Jacob’s descendants end up as slaves in Egypt. That’s another story you can read in the book of Exodus.

Now, we should learn from this wisdom of God in preparing for what we’ve been told about in God’s Word – that IS coming. God is showing His servants His open doors for prospering now so that we can prepare as the Holy Spirit directs each of us to do. Many of our own loved ones (including children and grandchildren) will be left behind to endure a famine of a worse kind. (Read Matthew 24, 25 and 26, and the book of Revelation.)

This provision the God is preparing through His people now is for the same reason God had for prospering Joseph at the end of all his hardships. Before God removes His faithful church from off the earth (before His full-on wrath against man’s rebellion) God is storing provision for those who will return to Him, but must physically endure the worse time on earth. We are to have God’s wisdom to understand why things are happening the way they are, and with confidence in God’s will through us in our day – move boldly through all of God’s open doors of prospering, so we can leave provision for those coming into Christ’s Kingdom behind us, which many will be our own loved ones. God cares – shouldn’t we?

“Hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches.”

CONCLUSION - Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph’s journey of faith:

Although Jacob and his family were honored in Egypt by Pharaoh’s favor on Joseph, years later Jacob’s grandchildren became lowly slaves in Egypt. How did THIS happen?

Well, the famine in Egypt and Canaan lasted so long that all the people eventually ran out of money to buy grain from Joseph. Then they sold their livestock for the grain. When that ran out they sold their bodies and land. Seed was given them to plant in their land so the land would not become desolate, and they worked the land they sold to Joseph and Pharaoh. All except Goshen where Joseph’s family lived free and full.

Jacob dies at the age of 147, after living in Egypt 17 years. Joseph lived 110 years and saw his great-great-great-grandchildren before he died. Jacob on his death bed blesses each of his 12 sons, but before this – Jacob blesses Joseph’s 2 sons from his Egyptian wife: Manasseh and Ephraim. To Joseph’s surprise, his father puts the second-born in place of the first-born blessing (just like Isaac did to Esau and Jacob).

What came to me about why Jacob did this was not like the way it happened to him and his brother Esau. Isaac was tricked to believe he was giving Esau his firstborn the blessing when it was Jacob that Isaac spoke the blessing over. This was God’s will for Jacob even though it came through trickery. But, here Jacob is purposeful in why he honors Ephraim over Manasseh. I believe it had everything to do with the meaning of these two boy’s names.

Joseph named his first-born son Manasseh stating it was “because God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father’s household.” Joseph name his second-born son Ephraim “because God has made me fruitful in the land of my suffering.” (Genesis 41:51-52)

Was Joseph to “forget his father’s household?” Obviously not! For, Joseph was gloriously reunited and blessed so that he could be a blessing to his father and brothers. Ephraim’s meaning of his name was surely God’s plan; for Joseph to be fruitful so that God could use him to bless Jacob’s whole family (Israel).

Names are very important to God. Every name has a meaning behind it which is important to know when naming your children. Names, like words spoken over us, have power in our lives.

After Jacob dies the brothers get a little fearful that Joseph might turn on them for what they did to him out of jealousy, so they made up a story after Jacob died, that their father wanted Joseph to forgive them, and they sent this message to Joseph. Joseph wept when the message came. The brothers all came forward and bowed down before him. “We are your slaves.” But Joseph replied tenderly, “I am not in the place of God. You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, **the saving of many lives**. Don’t be afraid! I will provide for you and your children.” (Genesis 50:15-21)

When Joseph was on his death bed – he said to his brothers, “God will surely come to your aid and take you up out of this land to the land he promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.” Then he made his brothers promise they would take his bones from Egypt with them when God took them back to the promised land.

When all Joseph’s brothers had died, a new king came to power in Egypt and Joseph meant nothing to him. This Pharaoh is the one who put all of the Israelites into slavery, afraid they would overtake the kingdom since they were exceedingly fruitful, far too numerous. So for 400 hundred years Jacob’s descendants suffered enslavement, until God raised up Moses with the exodus of the Hebrews out of Egypt after God brought ten plagues to destroy Egypt and break Pharaoh’s pride of rebellion to God.

Conclusion: As Christians (Christ’s Spirit-filled disciples) we will suffer for who we are; it is inevitable Jesus warned. He warned us so that we would not be surprised by it, but rather READY for it; ready for Him to use us in so many ways as we listen to what the Holy Spirit says to us.

It seems that for a time God has shown His people here in America that He’s giving some time to prepare by putting in our next president and vice president. So may we not waste the time we’ve been given, wake up and wise up, and see the Joseph in all of us; see the two-fold purpose of this time of His grace in America. Not only do we continue to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ but we listen to the Holy Spirit for how to prepare for what is inevitably coming by storing up provision while we can still prosper on our own under the protection of our new president and his vice. This is the time to think wisely and take advantage of opportunities God will present us. He’s not going to prosper His people so that we can eat, drink and be merry – living for ourselves like we have for the most part. God is calling His people to see further out with a vision of the Great Tribulation and of loved ones left behind (the rapture) to endure the worse time on earth “FOR THE SAVING OF MANY LIVES.”

I would rather be prepared and ready, and it not come in my lifetime, than NOT be prepared or ready; helpless instead of abundantly set up in order to help others. Our children need to hear about the future that God talks about, not the future that our government talks about, or that the godless conjure up that isn’t going to happen.

The Lord says to His New Jerusalem – the ‘faithful’ in Christ Jesus (His Bride): “What I open no one can shut, and what I shut no one can open. I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept My Word and have not denied My Name….Since you have kept my command to endure (persecution) patiently (as you finish the work of the Father), I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth. I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown….” (Revelation 3:7-11)

Like a bride preparing for her wedding day, she gives out the invitation to come, and then she sets up for her guests so that after she is off with her groom – her guests are well fed and looking forward to seeing them ‘after’ they ‘return’ from the honeymoon (rapture): the Return of Jesus Christ – to finish His Father’s will on earth. (Revelation 19-21)