

**Episode:** Genesis & Job Series No. 01

**Narrator:** Paul

**Primary Scriptures:** Genesis 1-5

**Story Summary:** The beginning of everything

**Location:** Garden of Eden and nearby

**Time:** Beginning      Creation of Everything

**Suggested Memory Scriptures:** 1:1-2, 1:3, 1:26-27; 2:2-3, 2:7, 2:18, 2:21-22; 3:1; 4:6; 5:1-2

The first five chapters of *Genesis* are truly amazing. They describe the beginning of everything, the creation of everything. Matter, light, mankind, civilization...everything.

Hebrews 11:6 gives an important clue to these chapters: "And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him."<sup>1</sup> Combined with Genesis 1, believers understand that God exists now and existed before there was anything. When God so chose, he created everything. This is a central tenet of the Bible: God created everything.

The creation of mankind is described in Genesis 1:26-31, 2:7, 2:21-25, and 5:1-2. Each of those passages lead to a host of interesting questions, but Genesis 2:7 may be the most intriguing and might help lead to better understanding of the other passages. What is the "breath of life?" Does that mean God took an inanimate body and caused it to start breathing? Or that God took a body without a spirit and gave it spiritual life? Does it make humans be in the image of God?

Genesis 3 gives the account of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Among other important topics, this chapter opens the door for an understanding of the nature of sin and the consequences of sinning. Many people believe the serpent in the story is Satan, which leads to another group of topics and questions.

Genesis 4 relates the story of Cain and Abel. One of the important aspects of this story is learning that people have the capability to resist sin and overcome it. On the other hand, resisting sin is not easy. The word picture in the story is that sin is like a devouring, wild animal lurking nearby, waiting to destroy.

Genesis 5 gives the family line from Adam to Noah. The account is detailed as to how long certain people lived, and when their sons were born. The understandings about these accounts also vary significantly. Some take the genealogies to be complete and literal, while others take them to be figurative and/or incomplete.

With the possible exception of *Revelation*, the first five chapters of Genesis are some of the most challenging verses to interpret in the Bible.

<sup>1</sup> Hebrews 11:6 NIV

### Discussion Questions:

1. Based on Genesis 1:1-2, what is the difference between God and the Spirit of God? Is the Spirit of God the same as the Holy Spirit as revealed in the New Testament?
2. Do you interpret Genesis 1:1 to mean that no physical thing existed before God created the heavens and the earth? Why or why not?
3. Based on Genesis 1:27, what does it mean that humans are created in God's image?
4. Based on Genesis 2:7, what does the "breath of life" mean?
5. According to the wording, Genesis 2:24 follows from Genesis 2:23. Why does it follow? Does Genesis 2:24 give you any hints as to who wrote down Genesis or when it was written down?
6. Genesis 3:1 introduces the serpent in the Garden of Eden. Do you think the serpent is Satan? Why or why not?
7. Do you think Genesis 3:15 is a prophecy concerning Satan and Jesus?
8. Genesis 4:5 relates that God did not look with favor on Cain's offering. Why do you suppose God held this view?
9. Genesis 4:26 says that people began to call on the name of the Lord. What does that mean?

### Application Questions:

1. Have you ever gotten sidetracked by trying to make the latest scientific theory fit the account of creation in the Bible? What is the purpose of the creation account in the Bible?
2. Concerning their eating of the forbidden fruit, Genesis 3:12-14 tells that Adam blamed Eve, and Eve blamed the serpent. Can you name a time when you knowingly sinned and then tried to blame it on somebody else? How did your results compare with Adam's?
3. In Genesis 3:5, the serpent tempted Eve by indicating that if she ate the forbidden fruit, she would be like God and know good and evil. What forbidden things do you do because you want to?

### Application Questions for Teens:

1. If science was to "prove" that all humans came from one mother, would that impact your understanding of the Bible story of Adam and Eve?
2. In Genesis 3:5, the serpent tempted Eve by indicating that if she ate the forbidden fruit, she would be like God and know good and evil. What forbidden things do you do because you want to?
3. Genesis 4:8 says that Cain killed Abel. Why did he do that? Have you ever let envy or jealousy rule over your good judgement?
4. Words like "mankind" are falling out of favor culturally and are being replaced with language that is considered more inclusive. How do you feel about that based on Genesis 5:2?

**Episode:** Genesis & Job Series No. 02

**Narrator:** Japheth

**Primary Scriptures:** Genesis 6-9

**Story Summary:** Noah, building of the ark, and the flood

**Location:** Not specified

**Time:** In the time of Noah

**Suggested Memory Scriptures:** Genesis 6:5, 6:22; 8:21; 9:17, 9:19

In the times of Adam and Enoch, men walked and talked with God. By the time of Noah, men had become so wicked that God regretted having created them. Knowing that Noah was the only righteous man left, God determined to wipe out mankind and start over with only Noah and his family.

By the time of Noah, the inclination of all mankind was to do only evil all the time. The Bible does not describe what kinds of evil actions mankind did during this time, but their actions seemed to have been heinous enough that God determined to wipe out all human and animal life except for a remnant he would use to start over.

God chose to destroy mankind through a flood. There is no Biblical record God had yet created rain, so Noah may have just expected the rivers and streams to overflow.

Noah was no doubt surprised when God described the size of the boat he was to make. Where would he ever get so much wood? How would he cut it and put it into place? The Bible does not give details as to how Noah made it happen, just that he did.

2 Peter 2:5 describes Noah as a preacher of righteousness. It is easy to visualize Noah preaching to the curious onlookers as he built the giant boat. Year after year, the onlookers laughed at him; year after year he pleaded with them to change their ways. Jesus said the people of Noah's time carried on their normal lives up until the time the flood came.<sup>1</sup>

The Bible gives Noah's age at 600 years old when the flood started. God opened the springs of the great deep and the floodgates of heaven for 40 days and nights. The only things living on the earth's surface that survived were in the ark. The flood covered the earth for 150 days before the water started to recede.

After the flood was over, God promised mankind and the animals he would never again destroy the earth by flood and created rainbows as a reminder of this promise. However, God did not promise he might not destroy the earth in another manner. In fact, Peter says God will eventually destroy the earth with fire.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Matthew 24:37-39

<sup>2</sup> 2 Peter 3:10

### Discussion Questions:

1. Genesis 6:1-4 is quite challenging to understand. Research these verses and then try to answer the following questions: Who are the “sons of God?” What does the Lord mean when he says his Spirit will not contend with humans forever? How important is it to understand what these verses mean?
2. Why did God once regret creating mankind?
3. Why did God choose to save Noah?
4. In what order were Noah’s sons born?
5. God gave Noah many instructions. How many of them was he able to follow?
6. From which of Noah’s sons did Jesus descend?

2. Their wickedness and evil had become great - Genesis 6:5-6. 3. He was righteous and blameless, and walked faithfully with God - Genesis 6:9. 4. According to the table of nations in Genesis 10, the order was Japheth, Ham and Shem. However, Genesis 9:24 indicates Ham is the youngest. Genesis 10:21 says, in many translations, that Japheth was the older brother of Shem; however, in other translations this verse says that Shem was the older brother of Japheth. Many people believe that the typical ordering of Shem, Ham and Japheth is meant to reflect the important fact that Shem was the ancestor of the Hebrews, the ones who wrote the Old Testament. Overall, many experts believe the birth order was Japheth, Shem, and Ham; however, others think Shem, Japheth and Ham. 5. All of them Genesis - 6:22. 6. Shem. See Genesis 11, and Luke 3:36.

### Applications Questions:

1. Genesis 6:13 indicates that God spoke to Noah. How does God communicate with you?
2. According to Genesis 6:22 and 7:5, Noah did all that God commanded him to do. Do you strive to follow God that closely?
3. Describe the consequences of Noah getting drunk and being unable to control his actions.

### Application Questions for Teens:

1. Do you sometimes feel restricted in your ability to be a good Christian because of your age? Since Noah was 600 years old when the flood came, do you think he ever felt too old to follow God?
2. Capital punishment is supported by many people and opposed by many others. Since Genesis 9:3-6 was given to all mankind, is it useful for you in evaluating that kind of punishment?
3. In light of Genesis 10, what does Genesis 9:19 mean?

**Episode:** Genesis & Job Series No. 03

**Narrator:** Satan

**Primary Scriptures:** Job 1-2:6

**Story Summary:** God allows Satan to test Job by taking away all he has

**Location:** In the land of Uz

**Time:** In the time of Job

**Suggested Memory Scriptures:** Job 1:21, 1:22; 2:4

The book of *Job* is often considered to be a type of wisdom literature, much like *Ecclesiastes* and *Proverbs*. It is not known who wrote it or when, nor what time period it covers. Experts disagree whether it is to be taken literally or figuratively. Despite all these unknowns, it is still considered an invaluable resource for discovering the nature of God in light of the suffering of mankind. It also provides a unique look at direct interactions between God and Satan.

The book opens by describing Job, a resident of the land of Uz. There is no record where Uz is located, but many scholars believe it was in the modern Middle East. The whole plot of the story is underpinned by this opening description of Job: blameless and upright, a man who feared God and shunned evil.

Job had a wife, seven sons, and three daughters, and was the richest of all the people of the East. If anyone seemed to have it all, it would have been Job.

After confirming the amazing qualities of Job, the scene shifts to the presence of the Lord. The angels present themselves, as does Satan. The Lord asks Satan where he has been, and Satan rather flippantly replies that he has been roaming back and forth on the earth.

The Lord asks if Satan was aware of Job, the most righteous man on earth. Satan accuses God of making Job's life so good that he cannot help being that way. Satan tells God that if Job lost his possessions, he would surely curse God. God allows Satan to find out by taking away all of Job's possessions.

In short order, Satan destroys or takes away virtually all Job has: his children and all material possessions. Even so, Job continues to praise God and not charge God with wrongdoing.

Job Chapter Two opens with the scene shifting back to the presence of the Lord. Again, Satan challenges God, and asks to test Job again. This time, God allows Satan to take away Job's health, but not his life.

Obviously, things are going on in the spiritual realm that Job cannot know about or understand. He will have to rely on his theology—his knowledge of God—to make sense of it all. But what if his knowledge and understanding are unreliable?

### Discussion Questions:

1. In what time period did Job live?
2. Where did Job live?
3. Why was Job such an unusual person?
4. Consider Job 1:6. What heavenly beings came before the Lord? Had Satan fallen before this time? If so, how could a sinful Satan be in the presence of God?
5. Consider Job 1:8. Was God testing Satan? Was God setting up Job to be tested?
6. Read Job 1:13-19 aloud and time how long it takes you. Job received his bad news faster than you just read those verses. How would you react if you got even a small part of his bad news that fast?

1. The Bible does not specify. From the description of Job's lifestyle, it may be that he lived just prior to Abraham. 2. The Bible does not specify. It seems as if it is in the Middle East. 3. We will find that Job was much like his wealthy friends. However, Job was blameless, upright, feared God, and turned from evil. According to Job 1:8, there was nobody like him on the earth.

### Application Questions:

1. What would you have to do to become blameless and upright, like Job?
2. Job sacrificed on behalf of his children in case they had sinned. What could you do on behalf of your children in case they have sinned?
3. When you look at some of the privileged Christians in your life, do you ever feel like Satan in Genesis 1:9-11?
4. After Job lost all his possessions and children, he immediately worshiped God. Is that what you would do? Is that what you did the last time there was a calamity in your life?
5. Do you think it is okay to get mad at God or to question him for what happens in your life?
6. As people age, they typically value good health more. How much do you fear losing your health? What steps are you taking to keep your health as good as it can be?

### Application Questions for Teens:

1. What would you have to do to turn away from evil, like Job?
2. When things go completely wrong in your life, what is your first reaction? Is it to ask questions of God, or to worship him?
3. A major theme of *Job* is the cosmic battle between God and Satan. Do you think such battles still exist? If so, what would one look like? Imagine Satan testing your mother. What would that trial look like? Would Satan be willing to harm you in order to get your mother to sin?

**Episode:** Genesis & Job Series No. 04

**Narrator:** Job's wife

**Primary Scriptures:** Job 2:1-3:26

**Story Summary:** God allows Satan to test Job by taking his health; three friends arrive

**Location:** In the land of Uz

**Time:** In the time of Job

**Suggested Memory Scriptures:** Job 2:9-10; 3:25-26

In the previous episode, Satan, with God's permission, tested Job by taking away all his possessions and family. In this episode, God grants Satan permission to continue Job's test and take away his health, replacing it with pain and agony.

In Job 2:9, Job's wife says, "Will you maintain your integrity? Curse God and die!" These short sentences help set up two important aspects of Job's story. The more minor of the two is Job's relationship with his wife. These sentences are often used by modern readers to condemn his wife for being against Job. However, it is as likely that she is being merciful to him. Death looks like a much better alternative for him than life.

The second, and most important, aspect her comments set up is how humans understand God. In her belief system, God reacts directly based on the actions of humans. If Job is righteous, God lets him live. If Job opposes God, God will kill him.

A primary purpose of the book of *Job* is to explore and understand the nature of God. Did God reward Job and his friends with prosperity because they were righteous or for some other reason? When Job lost everything, was God punishing him for some unknown sinful behavior or for some other reason? Was God punishing Job at all or was something else going on? Why did so many other people have to suffer because God allowed Satan to test Job? Why does God do what he does? The questions go on and on and on.

Job's responses to his wife were not rhetorical. He knew he must accept the good and bad that comes to him; he had no other choice. He only desired to know *why* things happened to him. Why did God behave the way he did?

Job's entire belief system came under attack. It had been natural for him to accept and enjoy prosperity because he believed he was righteous and God was giving him a proper reward. If that was true, why would God take it all away? Job knew in heart he was not more or less righteous from day to day. Obviously, God didn't behave according to Job's understanding, or Job didn't have enough information. Or...maybe God just didn't understand the facts, and Job needed to explain himself so God would change his behavior.

### Discussion Questions:

1. Read Genesis 2:1 in several different versions of the Bible. From just this one verse, do you conclude Satan is an angel or not? Why do you think the angels and Satan had to present themselves to the Lord?
2. In Job 2:9, what do you perceive the attitude of Job's wife to be? What religious attitude is she reflecting? What integrity was Job maintaining?
3. How long do you think it took for Job's three friends to hear about his troubles, communicate with each other, and travel to Job? It appears they were from different tribes, cities, or nations. Why would they make such a trip?

2. Her attitude reflected a view that God rewards the righteous and punished the wicked. If you act wicked enough, he will kill you. You might have just wanted Job's intense suffering to come to an end.

### Application Questions:

1. Considering Job 2:1, Satan thought Job's weakest spot was his health and comfort. What are your weak spots that Satan tends to attack?
2. Job 2:10 says Job did not sin in what he had said. How can you keep from sinning in what you say and how you say it?
3. How could you develop friendships with people as deep as the friendships Job had?
4. When you have severe disappointments in life, how do you react? Does somebody, even God, have to be responsible?

### Application Questions for Teens:

1. According to Job 2:19, Job had three incredibly dedicated friends. How you could develop deeper friendships?
2. In Job 3, do you think Job is complaining about how God has treated him, or is he just lamenting the difficulties of life?
3. Job knew nothing about the conversations between God and Satan about him, nor about the testing that ensued. Think back about your latest disappointments in life. Do you think you truly understood the circumstances behind those things?



**Episode:** Genesis & Job Series No. 05

**Narrator:** Job and Satan

**Primary Scriptures:** Job 4-37

**Story Summary:** Job and his friends debate the reasons for Job's demise

**Location:** In the land of Uz

**Time:** In the time of Job

**Suggested Memory Scriptures:** Job 8:5-6; 37:23-24

Causation or correlation? When you rely on your own experience and judgments, you are always at risk of coming to the wrong conclusion. Job and his friends could see that he had fallen from his high position. Now they wanted to explain why. Without a good explanation, they could not fix his problem. Nor could they protect themselves.

Bildad's comments in Job 8:3-6 are an example of how he correlated righteousness with prosperity and unrighteousness with punishment. "Does God pervert judgment? Or does the Almighty pervert justice? When your children sinned against him, he gave them over to the penalty of their sin. But if you seek God earnestly and plead with him, if you are pure and upright, even now he will rouse himself on your behalf and restore you to your prosperous state."

Bildad and his friends were on very dangerous ground and did not realize it. They were blind to the fact that they had very little information about very important things. They misunderstood the nature of God and even ignored or misinterpreted reality to fit their own views. For instance, Eliphaz started his discussion with this observation, "Consider now: who, being innocent, has ever perished? Where were the upright ever destroyed?"<sup>1</sup> If Eliphaz had been able to understand, he would have realized he was talking to an upright man who was being destroyed. Surely, they had all seen innocent people perish because of war or other circumstances beyond their control.

When examined in detail, the eloquent debates of Job and his friends reflect the same inadequacies of modern arguments and debates. Whether they are expressed or not, the assumptions of a debate usually dictate the conclusions. Does God behave according to formulas or our own understanding? Is suffering always caused by our own actions or inactions? Can we manipulate God through our sacrifices and prayers?

Job and his friends reach an impasse. He knows that suffering is not always related to righteousness, but he cannot understand what causes suffering. His friends absolutely know that suffering is related to being unrighteous. Unfortunately, they will not be able to come to understanding because their base assumptions about God are incorrect. God is about to give them some new information.

<sup>1</sup> Job 4:7

### Discussion Questions:

1. Was Job's original goal to be righteous or was it to be rewarded because he was righteous? Was he even able to see the difference between the two? Does Job 1:5 give you an indication?
2. How come Job did not attribute his misfortunes to his own actions?
3. Why did Job's friends think he had sinned badly?
4. If you lead a great life, is it easy to believe God is rewarding you for being a nice person?

2. Because he knew that he had not changed any of his actions. According to his philosophy, the only acceptable answer was that God had made a mistake in penalizing him. 3. According to their philosophy and experience, righteous resulted in rewards and unrighteousness resulted in penalties and suffering. Since Job was suffering badly, he must have sinned badly.

### Application Questions:

1. Do you ever feel like God is mistreating you?
2. What do you do when things are going badly?
3. While you are on this earth, is there a correlation between good behavior and God's rewards? Would it be easy to confuse that with the fact that good behavior often naturally results in better results?

### Application Questions for Teens:

1. Why should you behave well?
2. Based on your actual behavior the past week, is it more important for you to please your friends or to please God?
3. How do you find out what God thinks about something?
4. Do you think there are definitive answers for all of life's questions?

**Episode:** Genesis & Job Series No. 06

**Narrator:** Job and Job's Wife

**Primary Scriptures:** Job 38-42

**Story Summary:** God gives Job a dressing down; conclusion to *Job*

**Location:** In the land of Uz

**Time:** In the time of Job

**Suggested Memory Scriptures:** Job 38:1-4, 19-21; 40:1; 42:1-3

Job 38 opens a rather one-sided discussion between God and Job. It appears that Job's friends are not included in the discussion. Job has been wanting to talk with God, and this is his chance. However, once God starts speaking, Job realizes he wasn't prepared to get what he wanted.

God does not justify or explain his actions to Job. God does not inform Job of Satan's role in his misfortunes. God just gives Job the opportunity to see the difference between God's majesty and Job's insignificance, and he does that by asking Job some "simple" questions.

Where was Job when God laid the foundations of the earth? Who determined its dimensions? Where are its footings set? Who laid its cornerstone?

God goes on and on, asking questions about nature, weather, light, the stars, and a host of other things. It is not long before Job realizes he is incapable of understanding anything of importance, much less of advising or correcting God. Job 38-41 include some of the most valuable information about God in the Bible. Few things can humble you more than taking these chapters to heart.

Job 42:1-6 describe Job's final conclusion: he is incapable of speaking of things that are far beyond his understanding or dealing with an all-powerful God. God then turns to Job's friends and castigates them for speaking falsely about God. He forgives them when they offer sacrifices and has Job pray on their behalf.

The conclusion of the book of Job has caused a lot of differing reactions through the centuries. After Job prays for his friends, the Lord blesses the rest of Job's life even more than the first part! For the last 140 years of his life, he enjoyed great riches, more children and grandchildren, and (probably) his wife.

Why did God bless Job so much? Because he was faithful through his trials? Because he was humble at the end? To rub it in the nose of Satan? We are not told why. In that respect, we are like Job. We see that God gives and God takes away, but we do not have enough information to know why he does. And, like Job, we are incapable of understanding the nature of God sufficiently to predict why he does what he does.

### Discussion Questions:

1. Job 38 starts with the Lord speaking to Job. Do you think Job's four friends could hear what God said? (see Job 42:7)
2. When you read passages like Job 38:4-7, do you perceive the language to be entirely figurative or at least partially literal?
3. What is your favorite passage in Job 38 or 39? Pretend like you are Job and God stops to let you answer the question. What would you say?
4. In Job 40:1-2, God says Job accused him. What is God referring to?
5. God blessed Job more in the later part of his life than in his former. Of the older people you know, do you think most of them were blessed more in the earlier part of their life, or the later part?
6. Do you think the children Job fathered late in his life were by his original wife or by another?

### Application Questions:

1. Many people have questions they want to ask God when they get to Heaven. If you have such a question, do you think you will want to ask it, or will you feel more like Job does in Job 42:1-6?
2. Job 42:8 says God will accept Job's prayers about his friends because Job spoke the truth about God. What truth was God referring to? How do you speak truth about God to your friends?
3. When is the best time to determine what you know about God...before or during a crisis?

### Applications Questions for Teens:

1. Sometimes it is easy to think of God as the creator of all, but it can be difficult to think of him interacting with his creation. Read Job 41, and think of God interacting with creatures like that. Can you think of God interacting with you in the same way? Why or why not?
2. Job 42:7-9 shows God having Job pray for his friends so they will be forgiven. In your friend group, who would God choose to offer prayers for everyone? Why would God choose that person?
3. In the end, God blessed the last part of Job's life more than the first part. If you had written the ending to the book of *Job*, would you have made that happen? In your observation, does that sort of thing happen to the people you know?

**Episode:** Genesis & Job Series No. 07

**Narrator:** Lot

**Primary Scriptures:** Genesis 10-20

**Story Summary:** God calls Abraham, gives him a promise; birth of Ishmael; fall of Lot

**Location:** Ur, Haran, and Canaan

**Time:** Abraham's birth is probably 2200 – 2000 BC

**Suggested Memory Scriptures:** Genesis 12:4; 15:1, 15:6; 16:13; 17:21

Genesis 10-11:26 gives a very brief history of mankind from the time of Noah until the time of Abram, who will later be re-named Abraham. Although it is easy to skim through this section, it provides a background of nations that will be helpful to know through the rest of the Old Testament and up to today's time.

By the end of Genesis 11, we learn that Abram is the son of Terah, and they have moved from Ur to Haran. Abram is married to his half-sister, Sarai, and they are unable to have children. Abram's nephew, Lot, is living with them. Terah dies at the age of 205.

Upon Terah's death, God tells Abram to take everything and everybody and move to a country that will be revealed in due time, and in return, God promises to make Abram into a great nation, bless him, make his name great, and bless all people through him. At age seventy-five, Abram takes everything and everybody and heads to Canaan, approximately the land of modern Israel and Palestine.

After a brief stay in Egypt, Abram and Lot arrive in Canaan with many animals and possessions. They agree to split up in order to preserve family peace. Lot chooses to live on the plain near Sodom and Gomorrah. One time, Lot gets kidnapped and Abram has to rescue him. This provides the setting for Abram to meet the mysterious priest and king, Melchizedek.

The Lord takes the occasion to convert his previous promise to Abram into a one-sided covenant through a very elaborate ceremony. As part of this covenant, God names all of the country that will be given to Abram's descendants.

Unfortunately, Abram and Sarai decide to "help" God, and Abram has a son through Sarai's servant, Hagar. This son, named Ishmael, does not become Abram's heir, but does become a great nation. God institutes the rite of circumcision at this time, and changes Abram's name to Abraham.

The people living near Lot in Sodom and Gomorrah became so evil that God chose to eliminate them. Abraham bargained with God to save them, but nothing could save them. The story of Lot and God's angels describes their decadence in detail. Eventually, Abram and his family flee the area, and God destroys the two cities, setting the stage for God to fulfill his covenant.

### Discussion Questions:

1. Read Genesis 10 and take notes on the names that are familiar. What did you learn? If Genesis was written by Moses, would this chapter have described his understanding of how the world's populations spread to where they were in his time? How does Genesis 11:1-9 fit with Genesis 10?
2. Abraham's father was 205 years old when he died. Abraham was called by God to go to Canaan when he was 75 years old. After reading Genesis 11:10-26, try to speculate on how old Abraham expected to live. How old was Abraham when he died?
3. Based on Genesis 12:1, when do you think God told Abraham where he was to go?
4. Read Genesis 12:3. How do you think Abraham understood the second part of that verse? Do you think God was talking about Abraham's descendants in general, or was he talking about Jesus...or both?
5. Genesis 12:20 indicates Abraham got rewarded for acting deceptively. Why would God allow that to happen?
6. What does Genesis 13:4 mean?
7. Compare Genesis 14:18-20 to a modern communion service.
8. When was the rite of circumcision first commanded by God? Who was the first to be circumcised?

2. Abraham was 175 years old when he died. 8. Genesis 17:10 - Abraham and Ishmael.

### Application Questions:

1. Read Genesis 12:1. Do you think God has ever asked you to make a commitment to obey without telling you all the details ahead of time?
2. Read Genesis 15:5-6. When you act as if you believe the Lord, does he give you credit for being righteous?
3. Genesis 16:1-2 describes how Sarai and Abram decided to solve a problem on their own. Think of a time when you did that and it did not turn out well.

### Application Questions for Teens:

1. In Genesis 15:4, God promised Abram a son of his own flesh and blood. Would Sarai and Abram's plan of Genesis 16:1-2 have met the conditions of God's promise? Have you ever tried to skirt around something by parsing the words of your parents? How did that work out for you?
2. Based on Genesis 19:3, do you think Lot knew he was living in a wicked city? Have you ever put yourself in a position of being around evil, and chose not to leave it? How did that end?
3. The story of Lot and his daughters in Genesis 19:30-38 is pretty awful. It resulted in two races of people named the Moabites and Ammonites. Describe how these two people groups tormented the descendants of Abraham in the time of Moses and of David.

**Episode:** Genesis & Job Series No. 08

**Narrator:** Isaac

**Primary Scriptures:** Genesis 21-23

**Story Summary:** Birth of Isaac; Ishmael sent away; Isaac becomes a sacrifice

**Location:** Canaan

**Time:** Abraham's birth is probably 2200 – 2000 BC

**Suggested Memory Scriptures:** Genesis 21:13; 22:2, 22:5, 22:12, 22:16-18

Abraham is 100 years old. It has been twenty-five years since God first promised him an offspring,<sup>1</sup> but he and Sarah have borne no children. Something has to give.

It does. The Lord is gracious, and Sarah becomes pregnant. At 100 years of age, Abraham becomes the father of Isaac. When Isaac is weaned, Abraham throws a great feast. This provides an occasion for Ishmael to mock Isaac, which infuriates Sarah. She insists that Abraham send Ishmael and his mother away. This is crushing to Abraham because Ishmael is also Abraham's son, but only through Sarah's handmaiden. God tells Abraham to send Ishmael away, and God will not only make sure he survives, but also become the start of a great nation.

Genesis 22 is one of the most crucial chapters in the Bible. It tells the story of God testing Abraham by commanding him to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, to God. Abraham obeys God, takes Isaac to Mount Moriah, places him on an altar. As he brings the knife to Isaac, his hand is stayed by an angel, and Isaac is saved. They spot a ram caught in a nearby thicket and sacrifice it instead.

That story raises a long list of questions. Did God really want Abraham to make a human sacrifice? How could Abraham have enough faith to sacrifice Isaac, when it was the son through whom God was going to fulfill so many promises? How could Isaac have enough faith in his father to willingly lay on the altar? How much does this story foreshadow the story of Jesus' death on the cross?

Perhaps the answers to many questions about that story can be addressed by looking at a New Testament scripture, Hebrews 11:19: "Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and so in a manner of speaking he did receive Isaac back from the dead."<sup>2</sup> Absolutely astounding. Abraham had so much faith in God that he *reasoned* God could raise somebody from the dead. Never been done before, but that was the only way God could fulfill his promises to Abraham. Raising a son from the dead? Yes, just as God will do with his own son.

<sup>1</sup> Genesis 12:1-4

<sup>2</sup> Hebrews 11:19 NIV

### Discussion Questions:

1. Genesis 21:1-2 points out in detail that Isaac was born exactly according to God's promises. What lessons do you think Abraham learned from that?
2. Compare Genesis 17:12 and 21:4. Why do you think God chose the eighth day instead of a different day, or no special requirement at all?
3. Read Genesis 21:13. Do you think Ishmael was in God's plan, or was God making the best of the situation? Name some of Ishmael's descendants.
4. Genesis 21:34 says Abraham stayed in the land of Philistines for a long time. Is that historically possible?
5. Many people think that Abraham only had two sons, Ishmael and Isaac. Can you name his other sons? (Genesis 22:20-24)
6. Abraham purchased the Cave of Machpelah, near Mamre. Who else was buried there? Who was the first person in the Bible known to be buried?

3. The slave traders who purchased Joseph from his brothers, and the enemies of Gideon. It may be that Midianites are also Ishmaelites. Traditionally, many have associated some or all Arabs with Ishmael. 4. Nobody knows where the Philistines came from or when they arrived in the area of Canaan. It is possible that the writer of Genesis used a well-known name from his own time period to designate an area and people. 6. Sarah is the first person named in the Bible as being buried. Others known to be buried in the cave are Abraham, Isaac, Rebecca, and Jacob.

### Application Questions:

1. Genesis 22:1 says God tested Abraham. What would it look like for God to test you? How would you know the test was from God?
2. Read Genesis 22:5. Do you infer that Abraham knew he would be returning with Isaac, or just that he was hoping to do so? Read Hebrews 11:19 and answer the question again. Abraham had so much faith in God that he could reason differently than normal people. Does your faith inform your reason, or does your reason inform your faith?

### Application Questions for Teens:

1. Many people think Abraham had an innate faith in God. Read Romans 4:21. What was one source of Abraham's faith in God? What does it mean to be fully persuaded?
2. Read Genesis 22:5. Does this foreshadow God's sacrifice of Jesus? Why or why not? Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born. Can you think of a time when you had to be very patient while waiting on something you wanted badly? Were you patient because somebody you trusted had promised you something?



**Episode:** Genesis & Job Series No. 09

**Narrator:** Esau

**Primary Scriptures:** Genesis 27-27

**Story Summary:** Isaac and Rebecca; births of Esau and Jacob; final blessings of Isaac

**Location:** Canaan

**Time:** Isaac's birth is probably 2100 - 1900 BC

**Suggested Memory Scriptures:** Genesis 24:12; 25:5; 26:5, 26:28; 27:41

Abraham gets very old and has no grandchildren. His son, Isaac, through whom his descendants will be numbered, is single. They live in Canaan, surrounded by people who do not believe in God. So, Abraham sends his trusted servant, whose name is unknown, back to Abraham's home country to find a bride for Isaac, specifying that the bride must be from his own clan and his father's family.

Through prayer, the faithful servant is led to Rebecca, the granddaughter of Isaac's aunt. Through the giving of gifts and negotiation with Rebecca's brother and mother, the servant receives permission to take Rebecca back to Isaac. Rebecca's brother, Laban, will come back in the story many decades later.

Lucky Isaac! He receives Rebecca and comes to love her. Through virtually no effort of his own, at the age of forty he ends up with an awesome wife!

The Bible reveals that Abraham marries Keturah after Sarah dies. Through her, Abraham has many other children. While alive, he gave these children gifts, but then sent them away. At his death, Abraham leaves everything to Isaac...nothing to the others or to Ishmael. Isaac was his sole heir!

The Bible has a lot to tell about Isaac's father and Isaac's children, but little about Isaac. Genesis 26 seems to be almost a summary of his life. There is a famine in Canaan, but Isaac stays because of God's command; just like his father, Isaac worries about getting killed by men who want his beautiful wife, so he lies about her, gets caught, and ends up being rich, moving around the countryside getting older and richer.

Rebecca was childless for two decades. Then Isaac prayed on her behalf, and she became pregnant with fraternal twins. Esau was the first to come out. He was red and hairy. He came to love the outdoors and hunting. Esau was the favorite of his father. Jacob was the second to come out, while grasping Esau's heel. Jacob liked to stay indoors and was the favorite of his mother.

The Bible is not specific about its meaning, but the oldest son of each family had a "birthright." This very likely was the right to receive an inheritance double the amount of the other sons. Through a series of deceptions, Jacob stole Esau's birthright and his father's blessing. These deceptions would have consequences that reverberate through the ages. Surely God would punish Jacob and reward Esau for such behavior? Not so!

### Discussion Questions:

1. Abraham entrusted his senior servant to get a wife for Isaac. Name some reasons why Abraham would send a servant instead of Isaac himself.
2. How did Abraham expect for his servant to get a wife for Isaac?
3. How did Abraham's servant choose Rebekah?
4. Although not specified in the servant's test, what two characteristics of Rebekah should have been appealing to Isaac?
5. What was Laban's relationship to Rebekah? What caught Laban's interest?
6. Was Abraham's servant a good negotiator?

1. For some unstated reason, Abraham was adamant that Isaac not go back; the servant had proven to have good judgment; v.7 has Abraham saying that God will provide an angel to lead him to the wife; Abraham might have thought the travel too dangerous for Isaac. 2. By sending 10 camels with presents on them. The 10 camels by themselves would have shown Abraham to be wealthy. Each camel could comfortably carry 300 pounds of gifts. Abraham probably suspected that his relatives were a little greedy. 3. By specifying a test that a woman would have to pass. 4. She was beautiful. Isaac's mother was beautiful, too, so he probably would have wanted that. She was a virgin, so their firstborn would certainly be by Isaac if he protected her. 5. Laban was Rebekah's brother. He was certainly intrigued by her gold nose ring and bracelets, which would have been very expensive gifts from a stranger. 6. Yes, in that he got what he wanted. No, in that he probably paid more than he needed.

### Application Questions:

1. Do you have anybody in your life that you can trust as much as Abraham trusted his servant?
2. When Abraham died, he left everything to Isaac while his other children only got gifts from him while he was alive. Do you think it is fair to leave different amounts to children when a parent dies?
3. Do you perceive Isaac was a spoiled rich kid? How does your perception of Isaac influence your understanding of his parenting skills?

### Application Questions for Teens:

1. According to Genesis 25:6, Abraham treated Isaac much better than his other children. Do you think that was fair?
2. Genesis 25:9 says Isaac and Ishmael buried their father together. How do you visualize the burial ceremony? Does Genesis 25:18 indicate anything to you about their relationship, and the relationship of their descendants?
3. Rebekah was told by God about her children before they were born. Do you think that influenced how she raised them?

**Episode:** Genesis & Job Series No. 10

**Narrator:** Rachel

**Primary Scriptures:** Genesis 28-34

**Story Summary:** Jacob acquires two wives; Jacob has twelve sons; Jacob and Esau meet again

**Location:** Paddan Aram, Canaan

**Time:** Jacob's birth is probably 2050 - 1900 BC

**Suggested Memory Scriptures:** Genesis 28:14-15; 30:27; 31:32; 32:28; 34:30

The setting: Jacob will inherit the majority of his father's fabulous wealth. He is a mama's boy who has to leave town because of his threatening twin brother and is instructed to go back to the area of his family's origin to marry a relative of his Uncle Laban. Jacob may or may not be aware that Laban knows Jacob is wealthy and cannot wait to take advantage of him... which will be ironic because Laban is even more tricky than Jacob. Unless God steps in, the situation promises to be treacherous for Jacob.

God looks out for Jacob from the beginning. As Jacob travels back to his family's land of origin, God reiterates that his promises to Abraham will come true through Jacob. Jacob agrees to accept God as his own god and sets up a pillar at Bethel as a sign.

When Jacob arrives at Paddan Aram, he immediately meets his cousin Rachel and falls in love with her. Her father, Laban, enters the situation and the chaos begins. After a month, Laban and Jacob agree that Jacob will work for Laban for seven years and receive Rachel as his wife, purposely agreeing to bypass Rachel's older sister, Leah.

After seven years, Laban tricks Jacob into marrying Leah. Jacob had to succumb and agreed to work another seven years for Rachel. During that seven years, Jacob had eleven sons and at least one daughter through his two wives and their two handmaidens. Just as Jacob had been a favorite, and his father had been a favorite, Rachel was the favorite. So, her son, Joseph, was a favorite, too.

A few years after the second seven years, Jacob determined to take his family and his considerable possessions back to his home in Canaan. As usual the situation entails deceit and trickery. One part of the story deserves special attention. As they sneaked away, Rachel stole her "family's gods."<sup>1</sup> As the story unfolds, it is clear that the family's gods were very important. Apparently, Jacob agreed that these gods had power, even though he personally had accepted God as his god. As a point of interest, this is the first time that "gods" are mentioned in the Bible. However, Joshua indicates that Abraham's family worshiped gods before moving from Ur.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Genesis 31:19

<sup>2</sup> Joshua 24:2

### Discussion Questions:

1. There is no record that Isaac ever met Laban. What do you think Abraham's servant told Isaac about Laban? What do you think Isaac told Jacob about Laban?
2. What can you infer from Genesis 29:31?
3. Genesis 31:19 is the first time that "gods" are mentioned in the Bible. Read Joshua 24:2. What can you infer about the lands where Abraham came from? In Genesis 35:4, Jacob and his family bury their gods. Do you think this ended their attraction to other gods?
4. Genesis 34:31 shows the sons of Jacob acting to avenge their sister. Did they do this to protect her honor or the honor of their clan? In modern times, how do people protect their honor?

2. In this case, God controlled the ability for Leah to conceive. You do not have to infer that he kept Rachel childless, or that he always controls everybody's ability to have children.

### Application Questions:

1. Esau was angry with his parents for favoring his brother, Jacob. To spite them, he married some Ishmaelite women. Have you ever made bad choices out of jealousy or spite? What is the meaning of the old saying, "He would cut off his nose to spite his face"?
2. Genesis 28:22 shows Jacob promising to give God a tenth under certain conditions. Knowing Jacob to be a trickster, how do you suspect he might have tried to get around this promise? Do you ever try to maneuver your way around your promises to God?
3. Genesis 29:30 shows that Jacob plays favorites among his wives, just as his parents had played favorites with their children. Is your family history one of playing favorites or not? How has that affected your family dynamics?
4. Genesis 32:28 shows God changing the name of Jacob because he successfully contended with God. Based on your faithfulness, how would God change your name?

### Application Questions for Teens:

1. Genesis 28:20-22 shows Jacob accepting God as his god...conditionally. Do you ever place conditions before you decide to trust God or accept him as your God?
2. Genesis 31:1 shows that Laban and his sons did not trust Jacob. Have you found that people who are not trustworthy are often the first ones not to trust others?
3. Genesis 31:32 shows how important false gods were to Jacob and Laban. What kind of false gods are important to you and your friends? How powerful are these gods? (i.e. phones, video games, popularity, etc.)
4. Genesis 34:13 shows Jacob's sons acting deceitfully. Do you think they learned that from their parents? Have you found yourself following in your footsteps?

**Episode:** Genesis & Job Series No. 11

**Narrator:** Reuben

**Primary Scriptures:** Genesis 35-38

**Story Summary:** Jacob returns; death of Isaac; Joseph's dreams; Joseph sold into slavery

**Location:** Canaan

**Time:** Jacob's birth is probably 2050 - 1900 BC

**Suggested Memory Scriptures:** Genesis 35:2, 35:10; 37:3

When Jacob returned to Canaan, Rachel stole her "family's gods." As the story unfolds, it is clear that the family's gods were very important. Apparently, Jacob agreed that these gods had power. Before going to Bethel, Jacob requires that they abandon all of their foreign gods and purify themselves.<sup>1</sup> This may be the point when the family finally accepts God as their only God. It is shortly after abandoning their gods, that God reaffirms that Jacob's name is changed to "Israel."<sup>2</sup>

Although Jacob and Esau had a contentious relationship virtually their entire lives, when their father, Isaac, died, they came together to bury him.<sup>3</sup> This could have been a time for the brothers to mend fences for good, but they apparently did not. History shows their descendants fought for centuries.

Choices have consequences, and Jacob's choices had everlasting consequences. He had twelve sons by his two wives, and their handmaidens. Here is the list:

Leah: Reuben, the firstborn; Simeon; Levi; Judah; Issachar and Zebulon.

Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin.

Rachel's handmaiden, Bilhah: Dan and Naphtali

Leah's handmaiden: Gad and Asher.

As the Bible unfolds, we find that Reuben does have special responsibilities as the firstborn. We don't know the reasons, but Jesus will come from the tribe of Judah.

Although Jacob was tricked into marrying Leah, his lifelong favorite wife was Rachel. Rachel had trouble having children, so both Joseph and Benjamin were born later in his life. Much of the end of Genesis revolves around the fact that Joseph is Jacob's favorite son, just as Jacob was the favorite son of his mother.

Jacob treats Joseph as a favorite. It seems that God treats Joseph as a favorite. And Joseph seems to be insensitive to his brothers. The result: his brothers are dangerously jealous. When they get the chance, they imprison Joseph and sell him into slavery.

<sup>1</sup> Genesis 35:1-5

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 35:9

<sup>3</sup> Genesis 35:29

### Discussion Questions:

1. How did Jacob's household purify themselves before going to Bethel? Was this a temporary or final purification?
2. What name change did God give Jacob?
3. What is another name for the town of Ephrath?
4. What is the significance of Genesis 35:20.
5. What is the significance of Genesis 35:22?
6. The Edomites become a traditional enemy of the Israelites. Who were their ancestors?

1. They buried their gods and earrings under the Oak at Shechem. There is no more mention of gods in Genesis, so it may have been the last time that Abraham's descendants had false gods for quite a while. 2. God changed Jacob's name to Israel - Genesis 35:10. 3. Bethlehem. Apparently it was already a village. 4. It indicates that Genesis was written long after Rachel died. 5. Reuben was the firstborn of Israel by Leah. Sleeping with Bilhah would have been incredibly disrespectful to both Israel and Reuben's half-brothers by Bilhah, Dan and Naphtali. The fact that Israel did nothing about it might have showed that he was old and weak. 6. Esau was the father of the Edomites, and Jacob/Israel was the father of the Israelites/Hebrews/Jews.

### Application Questions:

1. Genesis 35:29 says that Esau and Jacob buried their father. There is no indication whether this was forced by tradition or if the brothers were amicable about it. Do you think Esau had held a grudge against Jacob all this time? Do you have any relatives you need to forgive instead of holding a grudge against?
2. Genesis 37 is an account of a dysfunctional family. There is one father, four mothers, and twelve children. There is disrespect, favoritism, and hatred. Based on that chapter, what are some things you could do to help your family to have less dysfunction?
3. How do you think your parents treated you compared to your siblings? Do you tend to have parenting traits like the ones you experienced? Why or why not?

### Application Questions for Teens:

1. Genesis 36 shows several generations of descendants of Esau. Does it ever seem possible to you that you could be the father or mother of generations?
2. Genesis 37 seems to be a partial account of Joseph's life when he was seventeen and after. What types of things did Joseph do that angered his brothers? How much older were his brothers? How did Joseph's father contribute to the tense situation?
3. What sorts of things do you do that irritate your siblings? How would your life, and their lives, improve if you made some changes?

**Episode:** Genesis & Job Series No. 12

**Narrator:** Joseph

**Primary Scriptures:** Genesis 39-41

**Story Summary:** Potiphar and his wife; Joseph in jail; Joseph interprets Pharaoh's dreams

**Location:** Egypt

**Time:** Joseph's birth is probably 1900-1700 BC

**Suggested Memory Scriptures:** Genesis 39:5-6; 41:16

Try to imagine Joseph's situation. One day, he is the favored son of a very wealthy man, with expectations from God that he will rule over his family. Days later, he is in copper chains being beaten by merciless Ishmaelite slave traders. Slave traders that are distant relatives. Generations before, they had the same great-grandfather: Abraham.

Arriving in Egypt, the slave traders sell Joseph to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officials. Since the Lord gave Joseph favor in everything he did, Potiphar had the good business sense to put Joseph in charge of all his affairs. Joseph fulfilled his responsibilities perfectly...until he unwittingly got crosswise with his boss's wife. Joseph was on his way to jail as he learned the meaning of the saying, "hell has no fury like a woman scorned."

In jail, God causes Joseph to correctly interpret the dreams of two of Pharaoh's former officials. Eventually, one of those officials recalls that Joseph can interpret dreams and volunteers him to interpret dreams for Pharaoh.

Pharaoh tells Joseph of his two dreams. Giving God the credit, Joseph interprets the dreams to mean that Egypt will soon have seven years of extraordinary harvests, followed by seven years of severe famine. Pharaoh discerns that Joseph is correct and promotes him to have the authority to act appropriately. At only thirty years of age, Joseph became Number Two in the country.

During the seven years of plenty, Joseph stores up an immense amount of grain. It seems he stored all of the grain that Egypt could produce, and maybe purchased extra from other countries. He stored up so much grain that it could not be counted.

The subsequent famine hit Egypt and many other countries. Joseph took advantage of the situation by acquiring all of the wealth and lands of his country for the account of the Pharaoh.

Joseph must have thought he had reached the pinnacle of life. He was the Number Two man of all Egypt and was completely favored by the Number One. He had a wife and two children, so he had all the family he needed. And then, the rest of his family showed up. The very ones who sold him into slavery.

### Discussion Questions:

1. Genesis 39 is a continuation of the story told in Genesis 37. Joseph was sold by his brothers to slave traders. The traders took him to Egypt and sold him to Potiphar, a high official of Pharaoh. Discuss the changes in life Joseph would have experienced in a few weeks as he went from being a wealthy, favored son in his late teens to an unnamed nobody who was treated brutally. How much did Joseph know about God before he was sold into slavery?
2. Once Joseph knew that Potiphar's wife was attracted to him, what could he have done?
3. How did the prison warden come to understand that the Lord was with Joseph in everything? How did he learn about the Lord?
4. What was Joseph's understanding about dreams? How does that compare to your understanding?

### Application Questions:

1. It was certainly not "fair" for Joseph to have been sold into slavery. Name an event in your life that was not fair. How did you react at the time? In retrospect, how do you evaluate that event now?
2. Potiphar was able to observe that the Lord gave success to Joseph. How did Potiphar know that? How do people around you know how the Lord impacts your life? Could your bosses infer that your company is being blessed just because you are an employee there?
3. Joseph was 30 years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh (Genesis 41:46). What skills and knowledge had he accumulated from Potiphar and from jail? Name a situation where you thought your time was being wasted, but you were actually accumulating knowledge or contacts that were critical to your future.
4. Pharaoh asked Joseph to interpret his dream, which he did. Joseph went far beyond Pharaoh's request by offering him a solution to a huge problem. Do you tend to do the minimum at work or overperform? Do you expect to be compensated for overperforming, or is that just part of who you are?

### Application Questions for Teens:

1. Joseph correctly interpreted the dream of the cupbearer, but the cupbearer did not return the favor. Instead, he forgot Joseph. Have you ever forgotten somebody who helped you or did you a favor? Can you correct that situation now? Will you?
2. Joseph told Pharaoh that God could interpret his dreams. Joseph did not take credit for it. Name a situation when you took credit for something but should have given the credit to God.
3. Pharaoh needed a wise and discerning man to enact a fourteen-year plan. He chose Joseph, a complete stranger, because he had the spirit of God. How did Pharaoh know he had the spirit of God? How do people discern that you have the Spirit of God?



**Episode:** Genesis & Job Series No. 13

**Narrator:** Benjamin

**Primary Scriptures:** Genesis 42-50

**Story Summary:** Joseph's brothers go to Egypt twice; all Israelites move to Egypt

**Location:** Egypt, Canaan

**Time:** Joseph's birth is probably 1900-1700 BC

**Suggested Memory Scriptures:** Genesis 45:7-8, 45:24; 46:4, 46:27; 47:30; 49:10; 50:20

The story of Joseph is one that stresses God's foreknowledge and control. God knew about the time of plenty and the time of famine before they happened. God knew how to make Joseph's slavery contribute to the redemption of his country and family.<sup>1</sup> God knew how long the Hebrews would be in Egypt and he knew how they were going to leave.

God knew the family of Israel, located in Canaan, would have to go to Egypt to get grain if they were to avoid starvation. You can imagine God smiling when he thought about the surprises awaiting the ten brothers when they arrived.

The Bible says the brothers did not recognize Joseph.<sup>2</sup> That is probably a bit of an understatement. Granted, it had been about twenty years since they had seen him, but that is only part of it. Joseph was probably wearing heavy makeup, had his hair in the Egyptian style, and wearing elaborate Egyptian clothes and a headdress. He looked like an Egyptian, talked like an Egyptian, and probably even walked like an Egyptian. Besides, they probably thought Joseph was dead.

In Joseph's interactions with his brothers, it is hard not to perceive that he punished them for their past actions, almost to point of being a little sadistic. He toyed with them, and with their father, over a pretty long period of time. When he finally revealed himself to his brothers, he made sure to give God the credit for all that had happened. In a little foreshadowing of Jesus, Joseph tells them that God sent him to save their lives by a great deliverance.<sup>3</sup>

When Joseph extends the invitation to his wealthy family to move to Egypt, it is easy to perceive there were hundreds, if not thousands, of family members. However, there were just over seventy people who moved.<sup>4</sup> About four centuries later, this entourage will have grown into far more than a million people.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Genesis 50:20

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 42:8

<sup>3</sup> Genesis 45:7

<sup>4</sup> Genesis 46:26-27

<sup>5</sup> Exodus 12:37

### Discussion Questions:

1. How might this story have changed had Jacob sent Benjamin on the first trip instead of keeping him at home trying to protect him?
2. Do you think Joseph was trying to punish his brothers by putting them in weird positions, or was he trying to teach them a lesson? Did he act differently once he remembered his dreams (Genesis 42:9)?
3. What is ironic about Reuben asking for Jacob to trust him with taking Benjamin to Egypt?
4. What is ironic about Judah convincing Jacob to send Benjamin with them, and Judah having to negotiate with Joseph about keeping Benjamin as a captive?
5. Why did Joseph settle his family in Goshen?
6. Discuss Genesis 46:3-4.
7. Notice Genesis 46:27. Does this number fit your conceptions?
8. Discuss the blessing of Judah in Genesis 49:8-12. How much of this was fulfilled in Jesus?

3. Reuben had slept with Jacob's concubine, Bilhah (Genesis 35:22). That was an incredibly disrespectful act, but surely broke any trust that Jacob could ever have in Reuben. Also, it was Reuben who kept his brothers from killing Joseph (Genesis 37:22) 4. Judah was the one who had the idea to sell Joseph into slavery instead of killing him (Genesis 37:26) 5. Goshen was a good place for shepherds. The Egyptians detested shepherds and would be happy to have them located far away (Genesis 46:34).

### Application Questions:

1. The story of Joseph is a stark reminder that God doesn't always see things the way we do. Joseph's summary of the situation resonates with so many events. He told his brothers, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good."<sup>6</sup> When was a time you thought you were being mistreated, but God made it turn out for good?
2. Jacob continued to show favoritism about Rachel's two sons all the way to the end. Name a time when you have caused problems by showing favoritism to a child or to a coworker or employee.

### Application Questions for Teens:

1. Read Genesis 45:4-8. Joseph gave God the credit for planning things far in advance to preserve the family of Jacob, the descendants of Abraham. Name a time when you thought things were just happening randomly but were actually happening according to God's direction.
1. Why did Joseph tell his grown brothers not to quarrel on the way back to their father? (Genesis 45:24)

<sup>6</sup> Genesis 50:20