

The Story of the Bible

We have had over here ...

- Creation and the human calling.
- Rebellion and the fall out.

We have had Israel & the Great commission where God said to Abraham ...

Genesis 12:1-3 ¹ “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the **LAND** ^[New Eden] I will show you.

² “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.

³ I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and **ALL PEOPLES ON EARTH WILL BE BLESSED THROUGH YOU.**”

...

And through Abram ...

- These great promises and great commission that then ...

Unfolds in ...

9 (+1) Key Movements

1. The Formation of Israel (Genesis 12-50)
2. The Rescue & Testing (Exodus 3-18)
3. Sinai Covenant (Exodus 19-24)
4. The Presence of God in a mini Eden (Exodus 25-31, 35-40)
5. The Sanctification of Israel (Leviticus, Numbers & Deuteronomy)
6. The Preparation for and Possession of “the New Eden” (Deuteronomy, Joshua)
7. The Rebellion & need for a King (Judges, Ruth, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles)
8. The Fall-out/ Exile (Daniel)
9. Return from Exile & waiting for God’s New World (Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther)
10. Silent Years (The Maccabees)

The rest of the book (Genesis 12-50) ...

- Focuses on the formation of Israel ...
- The people of God (the church) ...
- And how the promises of Gen. 12:1-3 develops.

The book is basically divided into three main segments.

- That focuses on Abram and his family.

Gen. 12-25a - ABRAHAM	Gen. 25b-36 – ISAAC & JACOB	Gen. 37-50 – JACOB’S SONS

First there is Abraham himself – Gen. 12-25a – ABRAHAM

- Then there are his sons – Gen. 25b-36 – ISAAC & JACOB
- Gen. 37-50 – JACOB’S 12 SONS
- That eventually become the 12 tribes of Israel.
- That has a “hyper-link” to the 12 apostles in the NT.

And the stories of each generation are united by two main themes ...

FIRST – each generation of Abraham’s family is marked by repeated failure.

- They just keep on making really bad decisions that mess up their lives ...
- And put God’s promise in jeopardy.

HOWEVER – God is faithful ...

- He keeps on rescuing them from themselves ...
- Confirming his commitment to bless them ...
- And bless the nations through them **despite** their failings.

Let’s see how all of this plays out.

Gen. 12-25a – ABRAHAM

- So, let's start with the Abraham stories.

God promised Abraham a huge family ...

- But on two different occasions (Genesis 12 & 20) ...
- He fears for his life because other men are attracted to his wife ...
- So, he denies that he is even married to her ...
- Saying, "She is my Sister."
- That creates a whole set of problems for a whole lot of people.

Not only that ...

BY Gen. 16 – Abraham and his wife Sarah cannot have children ...

- So, Sarah suggests that Abraham should sleep ...
- With one of their servant girls (Hagar)
- So that they can build family through her.

That obviously sounds like a brilliant plan for a winning marriage.

In Genesis 16 both him and Sarah are FAITHLESS about the promise.

- And they come up with an ulterior plan ...
- For him to sleep with one of her servants (Hagar) ...
- And build a family through her.

Genesis 16:4–6 ⁴ He slept with Hagar, and she conceived. When she knew she was pregnant, she began to despise her mistress.

⁵ Then Sarai said to Abram "I am so sorry sweetie for putting us in this mess!!!"

NO!!! She said to him ...

"You are responsible for the wrong I am suffering. I put my slave in your arms, and now that she knows she is pregnant, she despises me. May the LORD judge between you and me."

Abram said, "Honey, I am so sorry about all of this. I should have taken responsibility and have led both you and myself to put our faith and hope in God instead of coming up with our own devices. Let's go back to God and figure out a God-glorifying way forward."

NO!!!!

⁶ Abram said, “Your slave is in your hands. Do with her whatever you think best.”

And what was best?

Then Sarai mistreated Hagar; so she fled from her.

Ok, not a pretty picture! Very dysfunctional.

- But on each of these occasions God bailed them out.

Gen. 12 → The Lord inflicted serious diseases on Pharaoh and his household.

Gen. 20 → ³ ... God came to Abimelech ^[king of Gerar] in a dream one night and said to him, “You are as good as dead because of the woman you have taken; she is a married woman.”

Gen. 16 – God sent an angel to Hagar in the desert ...

- To nudge her back to Abram & Sarah.

Not only does God bail them out ...

- But, in Genesis 15 & 17 he even formalizes his promise to Abraham ...
- With an official commitment called a covenant ^[as in marriage] ...
- (That we will unpack in a later class)

In Genesis 15:5 it says ...

Genesis 15:5–6 ⁵ God took him outside and said, “Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your **OFFSPRING** be.”

- OFFSPRING ????

In spite of all of the odds ...

- Not having kids and seemingly not having a way to have any ...

The bible says that ...

Genesis 15:6 ⁶ Abram **BELIEVED** ^[pisteuō] the Lord, and he credited it to him as **RIGHTEOUSNES.** ^[dikaiosynē]

He trusted God, he had a Believing Allegiance.

- He had what Adam and Even didn't have in the beginning.

Remember they missed the mark?

- They had a failure of Allegiance → failure of purpose.

Abraham Trusted God here in Genesis 15 ...

- As well as **Genesis 12** when he **obeyed and left**.
- And eventually in **Genesis 22** when God asks him to **sacrifice Isaac**.

God responds to Abraham's faith (believing allegiance) ...

- By entering into a Covenant with him ...

And saying ...

Genesis 17:6–7 ⁶ I will make you very **FRUITFUL**; I will **MAKE NATIONS OF YOU**, and **KINGS** will come from you.

⁷ I will establish my **COVENANT** as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you.

God then asked Abraham to mark his family ...

- **With a sign of the covenant = Circumcision (Gen. 17:10)**
- The Circumcision of all the male boys in the family.
- That would be one of the symbols that would separate them from other nations ...
- And also remind them that the fruitfulness of their family is a gift from God?

That connects us back to ...

Genesis 1:28 ²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it."

So, Abraham has lots of kids and he dies at a good old age.

Gen. 25b-36 – ISAAC & JACOB

The Jacob stories play out themes of human failure and God's faithfulness ...

- Even more dramatically.

Almost from birth Jacob lives up to the meaning of his name ...

- Which is **"Deceiver."**

He cheats his brother Esau out of his Birthright in (Gen. 25)

- And then out of the blessing of his father in (Gen. 27)
- By deceiving his blind old father.

After stealing the blessing, he moves to his mother's family ...

- In search of a wife.

He goes on to take **four wives** even though he really only loves one, **Rachael**.

- That again creates all kinds of issues in the family dynamic.
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The only thing that humbles Jacob is **being deceived by his uncle Laban** ...

- Who cheated him out of years of his life.
 - Finally, the tables have finally turned ...
 - And he gets a bit of a taste of his own medicine.
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Gen. 32 –JACOB WRESTLES WITH GOD

So, it is a humbled Jacob that returns to his homeland ...

- And in a very strange story ...
- Jacob ends up **wrestling with God** ...
- As he **demands that God bless him (Gen. 32:26)**.

Surprisingly God honors his determination ...

- And he passes Abraham's blessing onto him.
 - And he renames Jacob as ...
 - **Israel** = which means **"Wrestles with God."** – Genesis 32:28
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Gen. 37-50 –JACOB's SONS

It is now in the last part of the book where all the themes come to a head.

Jacob loves his second to youngest son (Joseph) ...

- More than any of the others.
- And he gives him a special coat.

And because of that the 10 older sons come to hate Joseph ...

- So, they kidnap him and plan to kill him

Gen. 39-40

But instead they decide to just sell him into slavery in Egypt ...

- Where he ends up in prison ...
- With lots of disappointments.
- And you think your family is dysfunctional.

Gen. 41-46

But ...

Genesis 39:2² The Lord was with Joseph so that he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master.

...

Genesis 39:23²³ The warden paid no attention to anything under Joseph's care, because the Lord was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did.

Joseph's release from prison and Pharaoh ends up elevating Joseph ...

- To 2nd in command over all of Egypt.

So, Joseph saves that nation of Egypt during a famine.

- And in the process also ends up saving his brothers ...
- And his whole family from starving to death.

So, once again we can see the folly and sin of Abraham's family ...

- Is met with God's faithfulness.
- Who subverts even the evil of the brothers to an occasion to save lives.

And we see this in what Joseph says, right near the end of the book.

Genesis 50:20²⁰ You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.

Now, these words are strategically placed at the end of the book ...

- Because they summarize not only the story of Joseph and his brothers ...
- But the book as a whole.

From Genesis 3 onwards ...

- Humans keep acting selfishly and doing evil.

BUT God is not going to leave his world to its own devices.

- He remains faithful and determined to bless people despite their failures.
- He wants the human project back on track ...
- In order to get the creation project back on track.

You see another hint of this in Genesis 49 ...

- As Jacob's life is coming to a close ...
- He gives a blessing to his 12 sons (that will become the 12 tribes of Israel).

When he comes to Judah he says ...

Genesis 49:10¹⁰ The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he to whom it belongs shall come and the **OBEDIENCE** [allegiance] of **THE NATIONS** shall be his.

What does that mean?

He is saying, that a king will come from the line of Judah ...

- Who will command the obedience of the nations.
- And restore God's blessing to the world.

And after this Jacob dies ...

- Later on, Joseph dies too ...
- And the growing family remains in Egypt.

So, the book of Genesis ends with these future hopes and promises ...

- Hanging and undeveloped and it forces you ...
- To turn the page to see how it is all going to turn out.

EXTRA