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THE PREACHING FROM THE BOOK OF

GENESIS

by Rev. Joseph Kim

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GENESIS

THE PREACHING FROM THE BOOK OF GENESIS

GENESIS 1-2

The Book of Genesis is very important in the Bible. It explains how the heaven and earth were made. More importantly it tells about how human beings came to existence. When you read the Book of Genesis, you will understand who the Creator is and that is God our father.

Gen 1:1 says, In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. If you believe this, you are blessed by God. Everyone enjoys God's creation and many have heard this verse, but only few believe it. We are Christians who believe God created the heaven and earth.

At the time of creation, how was the shape of this world? Verses 2~3 say, "Now the earth was formless and empty and darkness was over the surface of the deep. And God said, Let there be light. And there was light. As God proclaimed, it happened so. Whatever God says, it will happen and this also

true in our daily lives. The Creator God who made the heaven and earth through His proclamation proclaims His good will and good plan for our lives. That proclamation is the Bible. However, when you read the Bible, it would be hard for you to accept many stories and promises in the Bible because they seem very far from our daily life. In order to cope with this obstacle of faith, we should accept the message of creation by faith because God created the heaven and earth through His Word.

At that time, the whole world was empty, formless and filled with darkness, just like today, we may not find any lasting solution to our problems but God wants to proclaim His will to us. God proclaimed to the earth in verse 3, Let there be light and the light came there. Yes, Jesus proclaimed to us that you are the light of the world therefore, because Jesus said so, then the light should shine in our lives. Your life should be the light of the world according to God's proclamation. When God created the world, he created everything through his word. Today also, God wants to say his message to us. When you believe that God created the heaven and the earth, then also believe the Bible. Through the Bible, God really wants to change your life. The Bible says the earth was formless (v2). We don't know tomorrow and our future; our lives seem formless and because of that we also feel empty because we

don't know about next year, and neither do we have the goal in our lives but God wants to proclaim His message upon my life and yours.

When you believe God's proclamation, it will come true in your life. If we understand who created the heavens and the earth, we can accept today and therefore we can able to face tomorrow because God will accomplish his will in our lives. Don't just say I believe. Therefore if you do believe, don't listen to other people's advices other than the Bible. All the messages in the Bible came from God in order to save us. We should therefore believe that God has power and authority to save us.

Therefore, when you read a message in the Bible, believe it because it is being proclaimed in your life through the power of God.

When God created the light, verse 4 says, God saw that the Light was good In Genesis chapter one, this message is repeated several times that God saw that it was good. From the beginning of the creation to the end of it, God made and He saw that everything was good.

Therefore, Remember that God who made you and He is the one who created everything in the world as in Genesis Ch.1, Therefore He will accomplish his good will throughout your life.

Bible emphasizes that God saw that it was good. When you look at yourself, you may not say that it is good because you have some weakness and failures, however, when God looks at you today, he will say that it is good because he created you according to his will and purpose. When you believe and accept this message, your life could be different. Bible teaches you how to deal with your weaknesses. When you compare yourself with someone else, you might be disappointed at yourself. But when you believe God's plan for your life, you will be strong. When God sees you, it is good in his sight. Even though we have many weaknesses and failure to follow the word of God with the whole heart, when God looks at us, they are good because he created us in His own image.

What is it good for? It is good for tomorrow. Because for tomorrow, God prepared the first day. For the second day, When God created the light, he said it was good though only light was there. But God knew the next step and this light was very enough. The same applies in our lives. God knows our tomorrow and the same God will prepare what we desire in the next 10 years.

After God created the light, he separated the water down from the water in the expanse of the sky. Then on the third day, God prepared the land and the sea. Everything was still in the process, but God saw that it was good every time.

Although God had not yet completed his work of creation, at the end of every step, he saw that it was good. For us humans, we are quite different, when something is still under process, we don't want to say that it is good because we cannot understand today's situation. For example there was a one man who got problems in his life but he couldn't accept them, and he couldn't believe that there was God's will in his life. But after 10 or 20 years, he recognized that the great power of God and His will was in his life. Today I can now comfortably say that it was good. Please believe God's processing stage because he is doing something great in your life, we are only in the processing stage, we haven't reached the finishing stage yet. God will surely and absolutely accomplish his will in our lives. Our lifetime isn't enough to know God but we shall at times cry because of what is happening today. Why? Because we cannot and do not want to accept today's situation. God wants to prepare us to face tomorrow. Every day, God sees what happens and says that it is good. When the day ends, before you sleep, confirm that it is good. If you can believe it, then God himself will prepare tomorrow for you.

Without light, how can God prepare your next stage? When God created the light, it was the only one in existence but God still said it was good. Why? Because God knew that

the next step needed it. Through this, he created the second and the third day and even during those days, everything he created, he saw that it was good.

In your life today, Even though you cry, Weather you doubt God, he already proclaimed everything and He will fulfill His promise in your life. One day, you will finally understand God's direction in your life. So, we must believe the Bible and God's Almighty hand will keep our lives to see His glory.

Our God is a great God. He created the Heavens and the Earth including our lives. After every creation, He proclaimed and said that it was good. In Verse 10, God created the land and the sea and proclaimed one message in Verse 11 the Bible states that And God said, let the land produce vegetation, seed bearing plants and trees But at that time, there was no sun, moon or stars. For the vegetation to grow, they need the sun but how can they grow without the sun? God commanded the land to produce vegetation and the land obeyed that. Even though nobody knew how the vegetation would grow and survive without the sun, the next day, God created the sun in the sky. Today also in our lives, we may not understand God's direction but he is telling us to produce vegetation. If you believe, you will see God's power in your life the following day. Even though you are still under the processing stage, you will see my power tomorrow. So we should be

afraid of tomorrow because God will protect us. If we obey today, we shall God's power in our lives.

At first, the sky was dark with no moon, no sun, and no stars. God knows everything you need. If you can believe, God will provide for you everything. Do something today for tomorrow you will enjoy God's glory in your life through faith.

So through Genesis, God created the Heavens and the Earth and according to his perfect direction, it was good. We are God's creatures, when God says something to us, we must overcome our experiences and reasoning. So in every situation in your life, believe God's will because it is perfect since He is the Almighty God.

God prepared chapter 1 story to encourage our lives. If we can believe chapter 1, then we shall be happy and fear will be very far from us. Whenever you feel afraid to meet tomorrow because you don't know what it will bring, open your Bible and proclaim to yourself Genesis chapter 1.

There are several repeated messages like God saw that it was good, it was so. In Verse 18, 21, they are also the same messages. They say God saw that it was good. If you can't accept or believe the life you are in today, proclaim to yourself that God saw that it was good. When you check yourself clearly, you may say that life is not good. But God still wants

to say that it was good. Why? God wants us to live according to his will but we are different because we want to compare amongst ourselves, friends and neighbors. So because you are different from another person whom you consider to be better than you, you may say that your life isn't good. It is not good to compare yourself to others. Whenever you begin to compare yourself to another, or your possessions with those of another person, remember the one who created you says that it is good. It's not good in your eyes but it is good in the eyes of God.

When God had finished creating all things, he finally decided to create human beings. The Bible says in verse 25, "God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. The Bible says that God created everything according to their kinds, but some people don't take this message, they think that were created out of the monkey. Even though we see some similarities between human and monkey but remember Bible says we were made differently,

But Satan is very clever. Satan wants to alter the Bible message. He doesn't want people to believe that they were created in God's image.

Verse 26 explains how God made human differently. Let

us make man in our own image, in our likeness. This is God's message. You have the image of God in you and His likeness is in your life. Whether you believe it or not, it is nonnegotiable message. Satan wants to destroy God's image in you through sin, but when you stand in the sight of God, you will naturally follow and retain the image of God. Verse 27 says, So God created man in his own image. In the image of God, he created him, male and female, he created them. Though God created some people as men, they want to change themselves to be women. Now if you are a male, never try and desire to be a female and if you are female, you should never try to become a male person.

Let's try to find God's image in our lives today. Apparently in some countries, people have legalized homosexuality, but God didn't create anyone like that, they want to misuse God's creation and image for their sinful desires. This is a serious problem and therefore lets be careful to follow the direction of God in your life. Verse 28 says, God blessed them and said to them; be fruitful and increase in number, fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and every living creature that moves along the ground. Yes, God said "be fruitful and increase in number. For example I do respect Ugandans, In South Korea and China, there is a serious problem; people want to have only

one or two children. I once asked a pastor here in Uganda how many children he had. He told me seven. I asked him, “How many children do you plan to have? He said, “Twelve. When I looked at him, he looked so poor. So, I asked him, How could you take care of such many children? He told me, “God always take care of his children. For sure, God blessed Uganda. So I want to encourage you this. When you want to be fruitful and increase in number, God will surely bless you and your descendants. Some people will argue that if they have many children, who will feed them? But verse 29 says, I give you every seed- eating plant on the face of the earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. Human beings didn't ask God for food but God himself provides for them. When you want to stand on the message of God, God will provide for you therefore you should believe in the power of God.

Now, Genesis 2:2 says, “By the seventh day, God had finished the work he had been doing. So on the seventh day, he rested from all the work. Then verse 3 continues, “And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy because on it, he rested from all the work of creation he had done. God made the seventh day Holy. Also keep yourself holy because of God's message written in the Bible.

In verse 7, the Bible explains about how man became a

living being, “The Lord God had formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. After God formed the man, he immediately did what follows, breathing his life into man’s nostril. When you walk in the sight of God today, he will also prepare what you want for today and tomorrow. And then God prepared the Garden of Eden to bless the life of Adam. Through this message, we should understand that God prepared for us the place where we should stay. It is called the Garden of Eden. Where is your place?

In verse 9 the Bible states that “And the Lord made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground– trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. There were three kinds of trees in the Garden of Eden. First was the trees for food. Without food and good environment, who can follow Jesus Christ? The other tree was the tree of life. Jesus said I am the way, the truth and the life [In 14:6] With food alone, you cannot be happy. Only when you stand with Jesus, you will have a meaningful life. The other tree was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. What kind of tree is this? It is the Bible. People often say, Jesus you are my Lord! Without knowing who Jesus is. Therefore, if you want to have a life of paradise, first enjoy good food and nice

environment, and then walk with Jesus through the Bible. Without the Bible, no one can understand what is good or evil. Without Bible, we will act according to our experiences and emotions but with Bible knowledge, you can surely tell what is right, good, bad and evil.

You will understand the meaning of these three stories through the book of Genesis. When God built the Garden of Eden, there were three conditions to stay there. Verse 16~17 say, And the Lord God commanded the man, 'You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.' This was God's condition. We might not know why God required this condition, but God declared the message. What should we do? We must obey. God laid out this condition to protect man from death and corruption, and to establish good relations with God.

The Lord said, It is not good for a man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him. (v18) The Bible says God will prepare a helper. Adam did not cry to God for help or wife. He tried to do something for God. When God saw Adam, He decided to make a helper suitable for him. Today, Believe in God and he himself will prepare a helper for you. You may not understand who you are but God knows what you need. Therefore focus on God and he'll do something for you.

When God brought Eve to Adam, Adam said, This is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman' for she was taken out of man. When Adam saw Eve, he loved her and she loved him. Why and how did Adam truly love Eve? Because there was only one woman and it was Eve. He had no other choice. We don't know Eve's physical and structural appearance, but what matters is that she was the only woman available at the time. For the rest of your life, you must have one partner, too. When I came to Uganda, I found that many men had more than one partner. But according to the Bible, God took a rib out of a man and made a woman. So find only one original rib through God and don't try to get a lot of ribs. You've lost only one. Too many ribs cannot follow God. When you have a single wife, you will be happy. But when you try to get a lot of ribs, serious problems will be waiting for you. By following God's instructions in the Book of Genesis, God will bless your life and family. In Chapter 1 & Chapter 2, we can understand who our God is. He created heaven and earth, and all that was in it, according to his power and by his words. He created everything according to his great plan. He gave us authority over all creation.

GENESIS 3-4

The Bible says in 3:1, “Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’?” God commanded them not to eat the fruit of knowledge of good and evil to protect Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. (2:16~17) God told Adam, Adam told Eve the message of God. The serpent might have heard the message but tried to check if Eve remembered God’s message correctly. Though God had said you must not eat from any tree in the garden, the woman said to the serpent, we may eat any tree from the Garden of Eden but God said that we must not eat the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden and you must not touch it or you will die. What Eve said was not the same as what God said to Adam. Look at God’s message in 2:16~17. It is not the same

what Eve said to the serpent. Genesis 2:16~17 says, And the Lord God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.

You will surely die. The Bible says that you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God indicated the tree exactly, “the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but the woman said, “The tree in the middle of the garden. God’s message was changed.

If you were asked to tell someone where ‘the middle of Kampala is,’ can you answer? Our attitude in reading the Bible is like this. We all know Bible is very important but we don’t pay attention to read God’s message from the Bible. We need to spend time and meditate to know the meaning of God’s message.

Eve heard the message of God but she didn’t remember it correctly. This was the original message, “God said you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil but she said we must not eat from the tree in the middle of the garden. She said maybe we will die but God said surely you will die. Everyday Satan checks us if we can remember God’s words. Satan knows God’s words and wants to check if we remember it. So you should pay attention to God’s words else

Satan will come and alter the message of God in your mind.

In the Garden of Eden, God gave them three instructions to live. Three kinds of tree explain these three instructions. The first kind of tree was for food. The second was the tree of life. The third is the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

These three instructions are given to us as well and therefore if you keep three instructions related to the three trees you can enjoy the life of Eden.

God prepared Eden to bless human beings, but they couldn't understand and keep God's instructions. Bible continues to say, when Satan heard this message, he prepared false message saying, you will not surely die. Look at this statement. It was totally different from the message of God. God said "you will surely die but Satan said, "You will not surely die. And the woman was persuaded at this, So How did this happen?

Nobody wants to go to the witch doctor, but how do they go to a witch doctor? When they are sick, they pray to God. However, as God's answer is being delayed, they start to look for another solution and that is a witch doctor. For the witch doctor may seem to give them an immediate healing.

When you don't hold fast God's words, Satan will come to you and say, "My way is better than God's. Come and follow me. Eva heard the message of God, but she failed to keep it

in her heart. When Satan noticed that she didn't have Bible in her mind, he proclaimed false message immediately. On hearing of this false message that you will not surely die, she didn't check who the speaker was and believe it. Why? The message of not-dying so sweet to her while God's message warned them of death.

God made us but today there are many messages in the world. Please follow God's way as in the Bible, when some people want to say some message to you, first check who they are. Human beings cannot give advice to you because we are all sinners. Therefore if you have any problem, open your bible instead of calling your friends. Your friends don't have any solution for your problems. So, if you have a problem, please come to Jesus and open your Bible to know what His will is in your situation.

If you believe in God's word, then don't share your problem with other people. You must try to find out the solution from the Bible. Why is it not good to seek solutions from human beings?, Because everyone will tell you that his/her solution is the best since all human beings are the same. Even Pastors cannot help you. So through the Bible, let us find out God's way because there is no other solution. When you tell human beings your problem they may pretend to feel sorry for you but when you move away they might talk bad about you

or look down on you. You may tell your problems to some people, but they might not want to see you again and this the true mind of human being, this is the true human mind. Therefore who can guide us? Only God can, so please keep your whole mind to follow God.

Keep all your problems for God only, keep your whole mind according to the Bible.

Satan told Eve that “you will not surely die even though it was a lie it sounded sweet to her. After declaring that there is no death, Satan prepared a good vision for her For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.

Isn't this shocking? This message sounds so good but Eva's mind was filled with fake hope and she started to look at the tree differently and her mind was completely changed. Even the things she saw everyday now looked different because of the message that the serpent spoke to her. In verse 6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

First Satan will change your mind and then your view point, then, you yourself will stretch up your hand to take it. Remember that Satan didn't encourage her to eat the fruit

at first time, he just started with talking about God's words. The most tragic incident happened in the most beautiful place God created for man. Why could this happen? All this happened because Eve didn't keep God's message in her heart.

God still speaks to us today. Even us many times we hear the message of God but we fail to keep it in our hearts. Satan will come to you and he will prepare false message that will sound good to you. Without any prayer, without Bible, don't say anything, don't encourage anyone, keep your life in the name of Jesus. Be careful not to be a Satan to somebody nor to be an Eve. Don't give any advice according to your thoughts. If you want to help others, open the Bible, proclaim the Bible and pray for them. It's the best solution. For example when I was young, I thought I could help others. I talked and gave advices to people through my knowledge, but their lives weren't changed. The only solution is this. "Let us always pray and remember God's message.

Because Eve failed to keep God's words in her mind, she ended up doing the opposite of what God wanted. The Bible says, She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. After she enjoyed the fruit, she also gave some to her husband. May be she said "darling this is so delicious please have some and eat. We can guess that Adam said,

“What are you doing? God said when you eat this you will surely die. You are in big trouble now. Eve said, “look at me, I am not dead I have no problem touch my fresh I am here. Believe my message you will not surely die I am the witness of this message. Adam said, “Really, I won’t die? Then Adam also ate together with Eve.

They could not understand the meaning of death. What is the meaning of death? Adam predicted the death of the body and confirmed that Eve was not dead. He enjoyed the fruit believing it to be true. Then Eve died before God. Today, why don’t people want to come to church? Why don’t people want to have a special Sunday? Because no one died. If one of our church members dies for reasons of not attending the Sunday service, our people will run to church every Sunday for fear of dying. In light of physical evidence, it became very hard for Adam to resist the temptation to eat that fruit. So there are basically two major problems. They forgot the word of God and also they trusted what their eyes saw. While the spiritual is dying, the physical is still here and so we think there’s nothing wrong. When they ate fruit, the Bible says their eyes were opened and they that realized they were naked. Satan’s message was true in that their eyes were open and they knew one naked fact. Satan works like this. When you follow a false message, you are ashamed at the

end. God seeks to encourage you through the blood of Jesus and to cover up your weakness and shame. But Satan is different. He wants to expose your weaknesses and destroy your life. When you are discussing with people, you can't get a perfect solution. Therefore please remember and read the Bible again. Satan is right next to you if you don't want to read the Bible. He'll call you every day. When God called them out in verse 9, "Where are you?" When God came into the garden, he knew where exactly they were and what they were doing and what they had done but God tried to give them a second chance, he expected that they would repent. He never rebuked Adam when he came into the garden. He simply asked one question, "Where are you? He wasn't asking about the physical location but the spiritual. He wanted them to realize that they had gone out of God's boundaries so that they could come back through repentance. Surely God wanted to encourage Adam and Eve but they hid themselves from God. Therefore God asked them, Where are you? We must stand before God. God is looking for your heart, not your body. If spiritually you want to stand as a man of God, you will be with God. Adam and Eve were in the Garden of Eden, and God asked them, "Where are you? Remember this question for the rest of your They weren't there in God's sight. We are the same today. In church today, you may be

around physically but you may find that spiritually you are not around, therefore try your level best to keep your life in the Bible. Every day, and every moment, God wants to meet us. Remember the call of God. We must keep the Bible. Then we must stand before God. Don't try to stand before man. Don't try to get advice from a human being. Open your eyes and practice the Bible.

This story tells of the origin of sin. From this time on, sin went into man because they couldn't believe the word of God.

Adam answered God, I heard you in the garden and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid. (v10) He said he was afraid. When you sin, even if no one knows what you have done, you will still be afraid. Please come back to the Bible. When you don't feel okay, open the Bible and proclaim it to the soul. God wants to restore your soul first, and this will restore your love before God. God asked him, Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree which I commanded you not to eat from? (v11) Adam gave God an excellent answer in the eyes of man. The woman you put here with me (v12) "I didn't ask for this woman, you brought her here. I believe this woman is from you. So I believed that whatever she said came from you. That was the first answer from Abraham. May be he said I wouldn't have a problem if you didn't leave this woman here. Don't try to find excuses

to avoid your problems. He didn't say "SORRY, GOD! God wants to hear only one word of repentance from us. If you repent in your deep heart, everything will be all right and so will your life be. For example when I have problems with my family or friends, if I repent, everything will be all right. But Satan doesn't want you to say that. He will continue to encourage people to find other reasons. Therefore, Adam claimed God was the problem because he was the one who brought her to him. If you say you are a born-again Christian, not based on the word of God, it is very useless because Satan is very clever. Satan will attack you through the word of God. He changes the word of God.

God asked the woman what she had done. And she replied, The serpent deceived me, and I ate.(v13) She knew everything but did not try to return to God's word. She knew Satan had deceived her. Even today people admit that Satan deceived them, but they don't want to come back in the direction of God. Today, if we don't understand the Bible properly, Satan will come and deceive us. At first, the woman was told not to eat, but she added not to touch it. We need to understand the Bible clearly.

In Gen 3:22~24, Satan said, "...if you eat of it you will be like God. He has become like God, which means that we know what is good and evil today. We knew good and evil

only from God at first, but we always make decisions based on our understanding and therefore we make ourselves to be like God which is not good at all. We make decisions without God's inquiry. And this made our God decide not to allow us to be in the land of Eden again. For they may stretch out their hands to take the tree of life and live forever. So God decided to kick them out of the garden for they had sinned before the Lord but they didn't repent only they gave excuses.

Today, we need the Bible to know what is good and evil because without the Bible, we cannot distinguish between good and evil. So only through the Bible can we know what is good and what is evil.

Verse 24 says, After he drove out the man, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden the cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life. The tree is still there. Jesus promised to us to go to God and we will receive eternal life. Jesus said that I am the way, the truth and the life So through the name of Jesus we can come back, and this was God's original blessing. But Adam's sins brought evil hearts into our lives, and that's why we have a fear before God. And we make our own decisions. If we don't open the Bible, today we will follow the path of Adam and Eve's sin. Sin is contagious. For example, even children attending elementary school are teaching that homosexuality

is not an issue. If we can't rely on the Bible, we can't keep our lives. But when we follow the Bible, God will protect our next generation.

The story in Chapter 4 is outcome of Chapter 3. One day Abel and Cain prepared a sacrifice. The two boys were Adam and Eve's family. They were four as a family. When they prepared the offering, the LORD saw the offering of Abel favorably, but Cain and his offering did not look favorably. It was not said that God simply did not accept Cain's offering. God did not accept Cain and his offering. This means that your mind and mind are very important. It doesn't matter how much you give to God. I urge you to make up your mind as a sacrifice.

God refused to accept Cain's offering, for Cain was bent down angrily. He also offered, and prayed to offer, but there was darkness in his heart. So God could not accept his offering. When God rejected his offering, the darkness covered his heart. When he offered this offering, he looked like a good Christian, and there was envy in his heart, and he was very angry. Satan was there, and he came out. And God said to him, Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? He also said to him, Sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it. If you cannot control the sin will master you. God knew everything and so

encouraged Cain, but Cain did not understand God's message and finally killed Abel.

Why did Cain kill Abel? Because in his mind it was right and good for him. When Cain killed him, he became like a god who carried out Chapter 3. The Bible shows us that we will be like gods who decide good and evil. We see that God advised him that sin was very near, that he was obligated to govern it, and that he must be careful. But he couldn't listen and eventually killed his brother. Today, no one wants to be a thief, murderer or criminal but the sin is very close to us. If you cannot control your sins, then the sin will control you. Because your actions will come from your heart. So if you can't keep your mind, Satan will use you. When you refuse to follow the Bible, you will do as you please. So God tells us to open the Bible and know what is good and evil, not through discussion with others. For example, if there is a problem, you will try to tell someone your problem, and they will also try to advice in the wrong way because they are sinners. Therefore, when you have a problem, open the Bible and listen to what God says to you. Remember that no one apart from God himself can advise you about what is good for you. Let's keep the Bible message because only God is our counselor, guardian, and our guide. Therefore, I urge you not to talk to others but to talk to God.

Today, some people want to be prophets, they call people and give them prophetic messages like 'You're going to be rich.' This is a lie. No one has this power. Only God wants to give you this message through the Bible. We need to love each other. Because if we can't love this way, we'll be like Cain, who killed his brother. We will follow God for profit. If we understand very well what is in the Bible, we will know which way is good and evil.

When Cain killed his brother, God asked him, Where is your Brother Abel? (v9) He said, I don't know. Am I my brother's keeper? He had killed his brother, but he told God that he didn't know where his brother was because his heart was full of Satan. Long time ago, he planned to kill his brother. God knew it before and said, "You must control the desire of sin. But he did not follow God's path to overcome the problem. Satan changed his mind and eventually killed his brother. His parents did not follow God's path, nor did their children. Today sin will cover your offspring or generations to come if you fail to follow God's ways. Therefore, I urge you to change and follow the path of God. If you want to bless your child, follow the biblical message.

Who was Cain and who was his mother plus father? His father and mother did not follow God's instructions, and his son did the same. Because of the problem, sin has engulfed

the whole world as we are descendants of Adam and Eve. In order to solve this problem, God prepared his son to die on the cross for us. Through his blood, we were saved today. Through this message, let us be careful to protect our children and the next generation. God commanded them not to eat it, but they did not hear it, and sin reigned over them. As a result of sin, they died and have given us a lesson that we should not follow their ways of disobedience. Let us turn to the Bible and believe in God's advice and ask him to give us the final solution.

GENESIS 5-11

In these chapters we are going to share Noah's story and Babel's story. To understand Noah's story, however, you should recall chapters 2 and 3. God created man and blessed him. He built the Garden of Eden to bless human beings. Unfortunately, however, people could not keep God's covenant, and so their relationship with God was broken. The problem was that God ordered them not to eat the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, but they could not keep His commandments. Satan had convinced man that eating the fruit would make him like God. The temptation of Satan began to ruin human life, so what was the sin? Men disobeyed God's commandments when they ate from the tree of knowledge of good and evil and this was a serious problem. Satan told humans that eating the fruit would make you to know good and evil like God. Because since then, people have

known for themselves what good and evil is. God prepared his direction for us. And what is evil in God's eyes is evil. We are the descendants of Adam and therefore we do everything according to our own understanding of good and evil. This is a serious problem for we were created by God. God made us fulfill his will and explain his image to the world. However, because Adam ate the fruit, even without the Bible, we survived and made our own decisions about what was good and what was evil. From that time until Noah's time man lived according to his will and standards. You see, in chapter 4, Cain killed his brother Abel. Why did he kill him? Killing his brother seemed to be a good choice for him. He knew it was bad and evil in God's sight, but it was good for him. He thought that if Abel was there, God would always bless Abel but not Cain. In order to get God's blessings Abel needed to be killed, as Cain thought. The same is true of our lives. No one wants to kill others, but the important thing is that we try to do something according to what we think is good for us. It was a very serious problem during Noah's age.

Look at what the Bible says in Gen 6:2, "the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose. Can we say that was a sin? Don't all men want to find a pretty lady to marry? Of course! But the Bible said this was a sin. Yes, we feel it's

natural to choose the person we want to marry. So what exactly is sin? If we do what we feel right instead of asking God, whatever we do is sin. God made us according to his standards, and God created us according to his will, and fulfilled his great will. So the Bible says, “My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal; his days will be a hundred and twenty years. (v3) The problem is that since then no one has tried to consider what God’s will is. They did everything according to their will. In your reality, check yourself, too. Did you ask God about the next step? Did you ask God about today? People inquire God only at prayer time. Most people will still not ask questions even during prayer time. They will only ask for what they want. So remember who your God is, who created you, why he created you. He created you for his glory. If you don’t remember God’s will and plan by inquiring from God, all you do will be the opposite of God’s will. You will always work according to your feelings and come back on Sunday saying, ‘Jesus you are my Lord. You have to provide everything for me.’ So the Bible continues and says, “The Lord saw how great man’s wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. (v5) Can you take this message? Can you accept that this is your situation? No. We may think like this; sometimes “I am not good, but sometimes

very good. But at least as far as I know, most of the time is very good. But now the Bible says their thoughts were only evil all the time. Even for thieves, murderers, or even terrorists, we can't say they're always evil. But according to the Bible, the inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. Yes, the Bible says clearly, not his actions, but his thoughts on his heart were evil. The Bible says that there was no God or Godliness. Your actions will come from your heart and mind. According to the Bible, without God, we cannot live as God's people.

Bible says, The Lord was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain. I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earthmen and animals, and creatures that move along the ground and birds of the air—for I am grieved that I have made them. (V6~7) If today, God wanted to say this message to us, this would be a serious problem. Let's check our lives according to the will of God shown in the

Verse 8~9 says, But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord. This is the account of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God. But now there is another message in verse 11. The Bible says, “Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence. Remember that the earth was corrupt in

the sight of God, not in the sight of man. At that time, they were the same society and organization as they are today. They believed their world was developing and getting better through them. However, according to the Bible, the earth was corrupt in the sight of God. Today too, if you don't want to consider who your God is, and why he created you plus what's good for God's eyes, God will tell us this message.

The Bible continues and says, God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. (v12) The Bible says 'in their way' and not in God's way. No one considered the ways of God, but everyone survived according to their ambitions. And because of this, God decided to remove all humans from the Earth. If we can't understand this story, we would think that people in Noah's day were very bad people. People want to think that these people of Noah's time were all thieves and murderers and committed homosexuality. But we are the same or the worse. At that time, they decided not to consider God's will in their lives. For God created man according to his image, God was wiping them from the face of the earth to restore his original image or plan in creating human beings. We all know the story of Noah's flood, let's not elaborate on that. When it rained on the earth 120 days, all the beasts and birds and all the creatures died, and only Noah's family and

what he put in the ark survived. When God ordered Noah to make an ark telling Noah about his plan to destroy the world, Noah probably explained it to his friends and neighbors, but no one believed it. Noah took a long time to make the ark and everyone scolded Noah and his family, thinking he had a “psychological problem.” They have neither seen nor heard of such a huge flood that cover the entire earth. But Noah told them it was God who told him. As spoken by God, after Noah built the ark, God sent water to the ground. Noah listened to God’s instructions. The Bible says Noah was a righteous man among the people of his day. If you listen carefully and follow to the will of God and His directions today, you will be called righteous. God prepared a new generation. Let us not follow the paths of others, but rather the paths of God. It took very long time for Noah to finish building the ark. How could Noah survive the temptation of people in the meantime? He always reminded himself that what he was doing was God’s will. Because he believed in God. Perhaps during that period sons could have challenged him because they did not understand what he was doing because the lifestyles were quite different from other families. May be they asked him why they could keep building the ark. All they did was to wake up from their sleep and cut down trees to prepare for the ark, believing God would destroy the world and kill all things and everyone

else. They wondered why they needed to build the ark such a long time. But the important thing was that Noah and his family kept it. No one heard the message. God spoke only to Noah, but Noah convinced his family about what he was doing no matter how long it took to finish.

They finally finished the ark. It was so big like a seven story building. They had finished God's great projects and work. Now such people will become righteous. Do you seek God's will? Christians know the will of God and His plan. They know about coming of Jesus Christ. Why is Jesus coming back? To save us and judge the whole world. We know these things and we've heard everything like the people of the Noah era, but in most cases, we don't keep this message in our lives. Sometimes we want to follow the worldly way. Remember that God's message is very true. His word will be accomplished. If we don't believe that Christ will come back to save us and to judge the world, we will also die like the men of Noah's age. They enjoyed life as they wished, but in the day of God's judgment they saw the great wrath and power of God.

When the rain started, they probably said, 'Rain is Rain! How can rainwater cover the world? If it rains, it can cover up to your knees.' Maybe they were trying to encourage each other. But they may have done so until they die. That is

human life. Therefore we need to pay attention to the word of God. Although no one believed Noah's words, he took a step of faith and encouraged his family to create a very large ark to save the generation. Encourage your 'team' and your family and children. They do not know and perhaps have never heard the message of God in person, but you know the will of God through the Bible. Some people like Noah they want to hear the message of God in person. They said, "Now, O God, speak to me. When I hear your voice, I will obey your word." But the Lord has made his direction very clear to us. Believe in God. The Bible's message will be accomplished in your life.

Anyway, because of the floods, all the people of that age died except Noah and his family. Gen 8:16 says, "Come out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and their wives. Bring out every kind of living creature that is with you—the birds, the animals, and all the creatures that move along the ground—so they can multiply on the earth and be fruitful and increase in number upon it. So God prepared and proclaimed his original message and direction once again just like he had said to Adam. Verse 20 continues and says, "Then Noah built an altar to the Lord and, taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it. Then Verse 21 also says, "The Lord smelled the pleasing aroma and

said in his heart...” The Bible says that he said in his heart. He didn’t say to Noah but in his heart. This means that he decided his new direction. When Noah prepared a sacrifice, the Lord was happy and then he decided his new direction. It is the same for today. When we worship the Lord our God in genuine heart, God will remember his original direction for us. God will update His direction to us and he will to help us to overcome our weakness. His message is not of destruction despite human sinfulness, but of renewal and protection. The Bible continues and says, Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done. Just like Noah, when we worship God with a clean heart, God will change his judgment upon our lives. Even though we are sinners, and we cannot keep our holiness, God will say to us this message, “...even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood, never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done. This is God’s real heart for us. Every day, God wants to say this message to us. He knows our evil and sinful mind and thoughts, but God wants to protect our lives just as through his new message to Noah. Let us understand God’s love. Are we here because of our righteousness? Of course not. We are here because of the Grace of God. God always reminds us

of his love. Even though he destroyed the generation of Noah, God doesn't want to do that ever again. Until today, God has done His best to protect us from destruction. So let us try to understand the unfailing love of God. The Bible says, "As long as the earth endures seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease. (v22) Because of the situation of Noah, God restored his will upon the earth.

Gen 9:2 says, "The fear and dread of you will fall upon all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air, upon every creature that moves along the ground, and upon all the fish of the sea; they are given into your hands. God prepared food for human beings again. Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything. But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it. (V3~4) So now God prepared his new commandment.

Verse 9 says, I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you. So God prepared his new covenant for human beings. What kind of covenant is it? "I establish my covenant with you: Never again will all life be cut off by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth. (v11) And he confirmed that His covenant was for us human beings. "This is the sign of the

covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. (V12~13) Have you seen a rainbow before? Then He continued and promised, 14Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life. Why did God prepare a rainbow in the clouds? It was to remember the promise by God himself. We need to know that whenever God looks at the entire world, he might want to destroy it because of our sinfulness. However, He wants to protect us. God prepared a rainbow by himself to keep his promise. The Bible says that whenever he sees the Rainbow, he will remember his covenant with his people and all his creation. We are not here because of our own righteousness but because of God's love. So, whenever you see the Rainbow in the clouds please remember and understand the love of God. The rainbow is a sure sign of God's promise. Verse 16 says, "Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth. Because of our doubtful hearts, God prepared the sign of his promise.

Therefore when we see the rainbow, we remember his promise and keep his directions.

Despite God's confirmation of His grace and protection, sinful men again started to sin as seen in chapter 11. Gen 11:1 says, "Now the whole world had one language and a common speech. Verse 3 says, "Come, let's make bricks and bake them thoroughly. They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar. Then they said in verse 4, Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth. Even though God promised not to destroy the earth through water again, the people didn't believe it. So they remembered the flood and sought how to survive from God's wrath. They didn't try to follow God's will to live. Instead, they sought to keep their lives from God's judgment. May be they thought, 'Last time God sent a lot of water and my house was so low. Now we should build a very high building so that even if it rains for a full year, the water will not reach our rooms.' They tried to protect their own lives by themselves and this was serious problem however this is the same situation that were are in today. God promises us his protection when we follow his will. However, we say "No! We shall protect ourselves and our families, for our names

and honor. Those are the type of Christians we have in this generation. God said in Matthew 7, Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all other things shall be added unto you. These days who follows this promise of blessing? Rarely.

We have two voices in our mind, one voice encourages us fully to believe in God while the other voice tells us to prepare for tomorrow by our own selves. These guys remembered the story of the flood. They only focused on how to overcome the flood. They did not first try to think about why God sent the flood, they didn't try to find out the cause of flood and the solution of God for the cause, human sins. They all tried to build the Tower of Babel to protect their lives and proclaim who they are. Therefore, God said in verse 6~7, If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other. All people want to build a Babel tower for their own name, they want to become big figures in society, but God doesn't want to allow such. When you believed the word of God and became a Christian, you must live by His word. When they didn't follow God's will, God changed their language and they couldn't understand each other. God will do to us in the same way when you,

though you are a Christian, want to build your own fortress to protect yourself. Even though we speak the same language, we might fail to read each other's heart. And we would not have meaningful relationship between brothers and sisters.

Below is the conclusion of this message; what happened during the time of Noah?, why did it happen?, It was because of sin. This is the same sin that we have today. Some people think that the people of Noah committed much more serious sin than today. No. Their sin was that they didn't care about the will of God. They forgot that God was watching their everyday life. They enjoyed their lives according to their own will and desires which didn't come from God. Remember who you are. God created your life. Sin shall not be your master. Who is your master? Jesus should be your master. He is your Lord. When you believe this, try to understand the will of your Lord. When you want to consider whatever you do before your God, everything will be ok. When God destroyed the earth and everything in it, he made a new promise through his covenant with humans. He put a rainbow in the sky for himself. But human beings didn't believe the promise of God and tried to build a tower to save themselves. Today also, the promise of salvation was given to us through the blood of Jesus Christ as written in the Bible. That's the only way to enter the kingdom of God and to have the eternal

life. When you believe God's message and follow it, God will protect your life like Noah. Even though all other people died, God saved Noah and his family from destruction. We know the will of God, we know that Jesus will come back, that's true. So if you believe this, keep your mind like Noah and follow the way of God like how Noah did. Then God will protect our lives and we will see the glory of our God.

GENESIS 12-14

THE CALL OF ABRAHAM

When God created the earth, everything was beautiful. But one day Satan attacked man and sin plus death came into the world through man. From then on, humans didn't do anything in consideration of God's will and this is a sin. They decided by themselves what was good and evil. It was the same in the age of Noah. When Cain killed Abel, it was because it was good for him. All people followed their own evil ambitions, and no one considered God's direction and so God destroyed the entire earth through floods. From that time, God promised them that he would never destroy the earth again through floods. And God put a rainbow in the clouds for him to remember his promise. But humans didn't believe God's promise and they built the tower to protect themselves. God continuously says he will protect us but at times we don't

believe his promise and we build our own Babel Tower to protect ourselves. So God scattered them and made them not to communicate each other by confusing their languages.

From then, God changed his plan of salvation and he called one man named Abram. Through the life of this man, God made a perfect plan to save his people and therefore through this message, let us understand the will of God in our lives.

Gen 12:1, the Lord said to Abram, Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. At that time when Abram heard the instruction of God, he couldn't understand it. It was God himself who spoke to Abram. At that time, Abram's family had a big problem because Abram had no child. In society, when a family was old, but they did not have children, it was looked down and despised. This was a challenge for this wife because she was barren. When God made a promise to bless Abram, he believed the call of God in his life and this is very important. Even today, God speaks to us and we ought to believe it. When Abraham heard the message of God, he believed it and followed it.

The Lord promised again, 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. (v2) This was God's the promise to Abram.

God used the life of Abram even though his life didn't seem

the best choice for God's plan to save all nations through his descendants. Likewise, God also wants to use our lives for his great work to save his people.

The Lord continues, I will bless those who bless you and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you. (v3) This is a great message. God is also proclaiming this message to us today. God said I will be with you, meaning all blessings; power and glory will be and will go with us forever.

Verse 4 says, "Abram left as the Lord had told him and Lot went with him..." Abram at that time believed the word of God and left his father's house and familiar environment to follow God. Lot followed Abram though he was not called to leave. Later, Lot failed to keep accompanying Abram in following God's calling given to Abram. If Lot had been faithful to the calling together with Abram, he would have participated in God's work somehow even though he was not called from God. However, because Lot was not called from God and just followed Abram, as an uncle's advice, he easily gave up staying with Abram's faith. We must try to follow the instruction of God, not the instruction of man.

At the time when God called Abram, he was 75 years old. He tried to understand the direction and will of God in his life. Though he was very old, he believed the message of God. Do

not think that it's too late to be called and used by God. When you decide to believe and trust God according to his calling, God himself will open the way for you. When Abram decided to follow the message of God, God led Abram's life into the Promised Land, Canaan. When Abram arrived in Canaan, it wasn't an empty land but there were Canaanites living there. But Abram remembered the promise of God. God promised to bless him there.

Abram might have expected that his wife would have a baby as soon as he arrived in Canaan. However, he didn't see any blessing of God when he entered there. He lost hope, when we don't see blessings as promised by the Lord, we might turn away from God's word.

But the Lord said to Abram, To your offspring I will give this land. (v7) When Abram heard this, he immediately accepted the word of God in his life. The Bible continues and says, There he built an altar to the Lord who had appeared to him. He immediately worshiped God and he was determined to stay in the land because of the promise of God. Verse 8 says, From there he went on towards the hills east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the West and Ai on the East. He tried live there according to the will of God for God had promised him that he would give this land to his offspring.

However, he faced some challenge and these caused him to leave Canaan. Verse 10 says, “Now there was a famine in the land and Abram went down to Egypt to live there for a while because the famine was severe. He was a shepherd and he had cattle and flock. In famine and drought, He needed to find grass for his flock. When Abram left Ur, he had the promise of God for protection. But when he went down to Egypt, he needed to find a way to protect himself. Verse 11~12, I know what a beautiful woman you are. When the Egyptians see you, they will say, ‘This is his wife.’ They will kill me but they will let you live. Really Abram loved his wife Sarai. He was 75 years old and Sarai was 65 but in her husband’s eyes, she was very beautiful. Abram was so worried if Egyptians would kill him to get his wife. When Abram went down to Egypt, this was the kind of mind he had. Through this, let us understand a very important lesson. If you want to stand under the word of God and keep your life as God’s child, peace will cover your heart. If you don’t keep God’s direction, overwhelming fear will cover your heart. When Abram tried to live in Egypt, not Canaan, he suddenly started to worry about his life because of his 65 year old wife. Today if we don’t believe God, all kinds of fear will fill our mind. His life became terrible, he tried to keep his life by himself. He said to his wife, from today onwards; don’t call

me your husband. When the Egyptians ask you, you are to say that I am your brother. Surely when they arrived there, pharaoh took Sarai and gave many gifts to Abram. Maybe he was happy because he was safe and he got gifts. Without the mission of God, we will focus on protecting our lives, but when you stand up and move with the mission from God, even though we don't know tomorrow, we shall try to follow the direction of God. So please keep yourself in the word of God. There is no other solution. If you need peace, come back to the word of God. When he entered Canaan, though there was no land for him, he was peaceful but when he arrived in Egypt, fear covered and engulfed him. So, check your life today. If there is fear, check your life and come back into the word of God. Believe the direction of God and receive peace.

Even when Abram made a mistake, God still protected Abram. Remember that God still protects us even though we fail to follow His instruction. This is because there is still the will of God in us. Abram learned a lesson from the incident in Egypt.

We must also understand the next story of chapter 13. Verse 1 says, "So Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev, with his wife and everything he had, and Lot went with him. Abram had become very wealthy in livestock and in silver and gold. Who gave him silver and gold and all the wealth?"

It was the king of Egypt. He sold his wife and became rich. So when he came back to Canaan, all the people knew that story. Could he say he was one of God's people? They all knew who blessed him. They knew he became rich because he exchanged his wife for the wealth in Egypt.

Abram knew that he must trust God only. His first choice was a failure. When he faced famine, he had two choices. Either to stay in the land of Canaan and trust God or to trust his wisdom and go down to Egypt. Based on his experience, he thought Egypt was the only way and he decided to go there. For there were pasture for his livestock in Egypt. However, his choice was wrong.

There was also another test, when he went back to Canaan, “...the land couldn't support them while they stayed together, for their possessions were so great that they were not able to stay together. (v6) Lot and Abram were very wealthy because they took a lot of livestock from Egypt. Now they tried to separate. Abram could have chosen the land first, but he let Lot choose first. This time, Abram trusted in God. Let us part company. If you go to the left, I'll go to the right; if you go to the right, I'll go to the left. (v9) Lot keenly considered where was better for him. “Lot looked up and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan was well watered, like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt towards

Zoar···” (v10) Sodom and Gomorrah were very nice and Lot chose to go there. Abram expected Lot would choose there. However, he was discouraged because Lot took better land. Therefore, God encouraged Abram through a new vision. When Abram tried to trust in God, God prepared a new vision to encourage Abram. The Lord said to Abram in verse 14~16, Lift up your eyes from where you are and look north south, west and east. All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth so that if anyone could count the dust, then the dust could be counted. God gave a new promise to Abram. And Abram moved his tents there and the Built an altar to the Lord. Abram is special because whenever he received the message of God and he believed it, he built an altar to worship the Lord. Today also, if we want to take the message from God, please prepare your heart to worship the Lord and He will accept your worship and bless your life also. When Lot arrived in Sodom and Gomorrah, he surely became a very rich man. Possibly, when Abram heard about the news of Lot, he didn't have peace in his mind thinking he lost a good opportunity. But after a while, something happened to Lot. This is the story of chapter 14. There was a war between five kings and four kings. The allied army of four kings attacked Sodom and destroyed it and took lot captive.

In the past, the life of Lot had been so nice. But because of the war, which wasn't Lot's will, he was taken captive and his life turned upside down. When Abram heard this, he went and fought with the armies of four kings and saved him. Through this, Abram realized that everything is in the hands of God. When Abram followed his knowledge and went down to Egypt, he thought that Egypt was good for him. But when he went there, immediately lots of fear covered him up. He tried to sell his wife. But when he believed the word of God, his second choice was better. Even though Sodom and Gomorrah were good, he didn't choose first and wait for God's guidance. At this time, he saw God's miracle when Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed. Abram believed God's power and tried to rescue Lot. When he secured Lot, all kinds of plunder and possessions were his.

The king of Sodom came to Abram and told him that he was free to take all the plunder. That was true that he had the right to take all of it because he had conquered in that war. At this time Abram spoke and said a very important message. Abram said to the king of Sodom in, I have raised my hand to the Lord, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, and have taken an oath that I will accept nothing belonging to you, not even a thread or a throng of a sandal, so that you will never be able to say 'I made Abram rich.' (v22) Why

didn't he take anything? He had the right to take. Today If I prepare here gold bars and ask church members to come and take it, will anyone of them refuse to take it? But Abram refused. Why? It is not to make the king of Sodom say, "I made Abram rich. Did the king of Sodom bring victory over the battle? No. God did. Therefore, the plunder belongs to go. It should be God who can say to us, "I made you rich "I made you happy.

These days they don't thank God for making them rich or healthy. They want to credit their success and wellbeing to themselves. Through the lesson of Egypt and the lesson of this war, he realized that only God is his solution and sponsor. Believe that only God is your solution. Abram believed and proclaimed that the God who made heaven and earth called him, makes him live, and will make him rich by His power. People are different. Through their own hands and knowledge, they want to become rich. Because of this, God sometimes restrain wealth from his children, or they will say that they became rich through their wisdom and power.

Keep your heart towards God and let God speak this message for you. Let God say "I made you rich. Let people know that it's God who made you rich. When Abram met his enemies, he didn't first try to use or believe in his own power. He and his soldiers destroyed their enemies and said I

have raised my hands to the Lord. Don't try to keep your own life by yourself. You cannot. You might end up even selling your wives and children as Abram did in Egypt. Even though he followed and left his hometown in God's instruction, when he left his place where he should be, he tried to protect his own life by selling his wife Today don't try to save your own life, remember God's eyes are on you.

After Abram learned the lesson from the failure in Egypt, he tried to believe in God even more when all the plunder was before Abram and didn't take any of them. In God, there is wealth and there is power.

God cannot bless you with earthly blessings when you are holding something else in your hands. Abram said I have raised my hands to the Lord. Lord, my hands are here and I want to receive blessings from you only. People stretch out their hands to take the things of the world but Abram wanted things from the Creator of the heaven and earth, he confirmed the power of God. In your own life also, confirm who God is. Proclaim like Abram and God will show you his living power. Don't try to be rich by yourself. Raise your hands to praise the Lord and overcome all the temptations of Satan because you are children of God. Let his name be your praise and your glory. Let his power be your power.

When we started our Church in a tent, most people couldn't

believe that we would succeed. Whenever some people came to the tent, they would ask one question? Is this Church? At that time we also didn't have chairs for people to sit on. So we gathered broken chairs from universities. We brought them into the Church and started worship. We believed one thing that God was with us although nobody believed in us. Not even ourselves. We didn't believe that we would one day have a building like this one we have today. Therefore when we tried to accomplish God's will, even though we started in a small tent without any chair or electricity, we did our best to proclaim the word of God. We believed one thing that we would see the power of the gospel. When we want to proclaim the word of God, God will be with us. Jesus also said to us, "Go into the world and proclaim the good news baptizing them in my name. Then I will be with you. We believed it and from that time, God started opening the way for us step by step. Until today, we continue to see God's miracles and power. So through this lesson, we must try to reach the top of the next five years. Let's keep our faith under the direction of God because He is ready to bless us. Abram believed the vision of God, even though he didn't have any offspring. We are here today and we don't know the end of our lives. But after several years, people will know the meaning of your life journey. Because of your life today, people will believe

God and be saved. Let's follow God's way like Abram. I want to encourage you, don't try to look for gold and silver for yourself. When you want to praise God really, God's blessing will follow you. Jesus said "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness..." God will prepare all your needs. When Abram went to Egypt, he faced a bad situation because God didn't call him to Egypt. Today, where is your place? What is your mission? Stand in the mission under the name of God and God will show his great power to you. Satan tries to take your hand into temptations every day. But raise your hands to the Lord and praise your Lord. Believe his power and cut off all temptations. Let God bless you as he blessed our Church. At the beginning, our church was a tent, now we have a very beautiful building. One day he will do the same for you. Therefore let us follow God like Abram.

GENESIS 15-17

Gen 15:1, “after this the word of God came to Abraham in a vision, ‘do not be afraid Abram I am your shield your very great reward’ Even though Abraham won the war but his enemies were still many and fear came in to his heart. Therefore, God first encouraged him and told him that He is his shield. Abraham feared the Canaanites and he could not even sleep because he did not have a son who might protect him. So Abraham asked God, if you’re really my shield then give me a child because without a child who will protect my life.’

Abraham said to God, “you have not given me children so a servant in my house hold will be my heir. (v3) Then God explained to Abraham his direction that “the servant man you have in your house will not be your heir but you will have an heir who will be your own son from your own body (v4)

But this message was contrary to Abram's situation, being without a baby, but he believed in God.

God took him outside and said, "look up to the heavens and count the stars if you indeed you can count them then he said to him so shall your off springs be. (v5) Abram believed God's message and God credited him for that [righteousness] even though Abraham did not have children, he believed the message of God. It was not simple but he decided not to move out of Gods vision and God credited him righteousness. It is the same for us. If we want to keep the message of God and live in His vision, it will be credited righteousness to us by God. Righteousness comes from God not from you. When you believe in God and trust in His plan given His vision, He will call you righteous. When Abraham prayed for children he probably prayed for a son but God promised him many children. We might trust God only for today's problem, but God has a bigger plan and greater answers for you and your future. If we believe God like Abraham believed we will see the power of God in our lives. The hand of God will always go with us for the rest of our days. After the message of God, He asked Abraham to prepare an offering to Him and then Abraham did so. After the offering, "then the Lord said to him 'know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own and they will be enslaved and ill-

treated for four hundred years.’ Remember Abraham was scared and asked God for one kid, but God showed him a vision of many descendants who would suffer for four hundred years. We may not know the meaning of incidents in our lives, or sometimes we cry for to rescue us. However, God wants to show his long-term plan of blessings to you. Your life is not an accident but under God’s control according to his good will. God will accomplish His will in his time. When Abraham asked a son, God prepared many descendants that will survive 400 years. We neither need to cry nor worry, but we should pray to God for we know God has the plan for us even for far future of 400 years. When Abraham believed all the messages of God, God showed him a great plan for Abram and his descendants and that became Abram’s vision.

Sarah, Abraham’s wife, did not give birth to him. She had an Egyptian slave named Hagar. She said to Abraham, “The Lord has stopped me from having baby, go to bed with my maid. Maybe I’ll start a family through her. It was because she didn’t trust God, so she prepared a second wife for Abraham. Encouraging Abraham and telling him that God might bless you through my maid, she also thought she would fulfill God’s will through her sacrifice by giving her maid to her husband. This was because Sarah did not understand God’s will clearly and misled her husband. We do the same

today. We believe in Jesus, but the devil comes and delivers some message to us. We think that's the best message we must follow. But this is because we do not understand God's will. If we do not understand God's will, we will choose Hagar in our life. Yet Abraham believed in God and knew God, but why did he not refuse Sarah's proposal? According to their custom, Sarah was perfectly right. And this seemed a very good solution to their thought and Abraham took Hagar. We know God and believe, but if we do not know His will, we will take peoples advices that seem good in our understanding. But remember we can't accomplish Gods will by ourselves, but we rather have to look up to God Himself to accomplish his will in our lives. Remember God is going to do something in your life according to His will.

God said to Abraham that he would have a child born in his own body. God obviously knew that Sarah was old and barren, but this was God's promise. But because Sarah did not understand God's will, they thought Hagar would be a short-cut to their dream. However, this method brought a big problem to Abraham's family and his descendant. Hagar's son Ishmael became the ancestor of Arab nations who are hostile to Abraham's descendant. Today if we do not understand the will of God we are going to cause many problems in our life. Therefore we have to understand the Bible message and

believe it, but the words of humans. When Ishmael was born they were very happy saying God has answered our prayers and enjoyed and celebrated. But God closed His mouth and stopped talking to Abraham for 13 years. Today you worship God and you thank Him because of what you have got. But if you do not consider the will of God in your life, you are like Abraham who sinned and worshiped God for 13 years while God was in silence. He even must have shared testimonies how God blessed him. After 13 years when God appeared once again to Abraham, what was Gods message to him? God was not happy but seemed a little annoyed with him.

Gen 17:1~2, When Abraham was 99years old, the Lord appeared to him and said “I am the God almighty; walk before me and be blameless. I will confirm my covenant between me and you and I will greatly increase your numbers.” Remember this. God really loved Abraham and promised him to get a child from his own body and encouraged him so much. Look here. Abraham never considered the heart of God, but only his age, his feelings and his wife. Even today we will always follow the path of the devil even when we do not consider the mind of God. Therefore, when God appeared to Abraham again, he said to him, “I promised you great things, but you did not believe in my strength Therefore you must believe that I am the Almighty. If even today we do not believe that God is

omnipotent, we will follow the ways of the devil. God said to him, 'Walk in front of me.' Why should we walk before God? When we walk before God, he can always see us and we can never go the way of the enemy. Because God will always guide us. So we also have to walk before the Lord today and in accordance with the Bible message. And certainly we shall see the power of the Lord. In his former life Abraham had sinned before God, and when God came to him, all the trouble was that God had told him to walk before him. For we may have sinned, God asks us to come back to God. Although in the eyes of the people he seemed fine, many thought he had acquired his son from God. But this was all a complete lie. Because this baby is not from God's consideration. The baby turned out to be a big problem.

God said to him, "Go back to the LORD. When we return, God will bless our future because he knows everything we need." After God had spoken to Abram, he said to him, "From today I will change your name. You won't be called Abram anymore. But your name has been changed to Abraham." Why did God change his name? He had to break off his history and his sins. So he said to him, "From today on you must follow me under your new name. Even today, let us follow God and trust him without considering the sins of our past. Today God is changing your name for your life. God

changed Abram's name to ABRAHAM. This time we have to change every day our names to fulfill God's will; our names to cut off our past sins. After God gave him a new name, he circumcised him. God did this to make Abraham remember the previous sin because he was not able to stand before God with sins. Because Abraham had relations with Hagar, God cut off the very thing concerning his sin and asked him to remember this. Abraham needed to admit his wrongdoing, to resolve not to sin before God, and also to let what came out of his sins be known to his offspring through customs of circumcision. God said to Abraham, "Come now and cut off all ties with Hagar, and you will be restored, and you have been circumcised."

Even today we can overcome our sinful nature by severing the connection of all sins through the circumcision of the mind, which is a spiritual circumcision. Therefore, if we are to stand before God, we must cut off every connection to sin. God told Abraham to circumcise and started a new chapter with Abraham. We can never be blessed until we break the connection of sin in our lives. GOD also changed his wife's name from Sarai to Sarah. AFTER all these, Abraham fell face down he laughed and said to himself "Will a son be born to a man of 100 years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?" (v17) even before the presence of God,

Abraham still doubted the power of God. However, God said, “your wife Sarah will bear you a son and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.”(v19)

Verse 21 “with Isaac I will establish my covenant about the same time next year.”

Verse 23, On that very day Abraham took his son Ishmael and every male in his household whether born in his house or bought with money and circumcised them as God had commanded. If he did not believe the word of God, certainly Abraham did not let his men be circumcised. He even wants to circumcise us with his words. We hear God’s message. As we hear God’s command, we should obey it immediately.

And our hearts will be circumcised in our obedience. We must really look up to the word of God and remember, even if the worldly message is good, it will lead us to destruction. God created us and therefore he alone can help us truly. Therefore, we must always consider the heart of God. We must believe in God. And we will overcome all the temptations of the world in the name of Jesus and will be able to stand before God.

GENESIS 18-19

When Abraham was seventy-five, God told him to follow him and promised him that he would show him His power. Even though he believed in God's power and decided to go to Canaan, he faced some challenges and the first one was famine. He couldn't endure it and finally he decided to go to Egypt. There are many opportunities in our lives for us to make the right decisions. Please don't believe in your own experience but believe in the love of God in your life. God wants to lead us according to his power. After some time, Abraham went back to Canaan, he prayed for a baby for long time, but God had not given him a baby yet. Instead, God kept encouraging him to believe His promise that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars and Abraham believed His message. But if we closely look at his life, he didn't have patience to wait for God's time when the promise

was getting delayed. Sarah advised him to take Hagar and he thought it was a good solution, he took Hagar, and got a son. At this, Abraham thought it was a God answering his prayer. God appeared to him again after 13 years and said, “Remember that I am the Almighty God. Walk before me and be blameless.’ God changed Abram’s name to Abraham. God told him to change his life completely, He also changed his wife’s name from Sarai to Sarah.

Why did God change their names? God wanted to start their lives afresh. So we also need to change our spiritual lives like Abraham. God said to Abraham, “You must circumcise your body, this was to remember his mistakes and speak to his offspring. Therefore Abraham realized his mistake and tried to recover his mind, let’s see what happened in Chapter 18.

After circumcision and change of names, Abraham believed in God again. He prayed that God would fulfill his will in life. So he prepared a service to God.

Chapter 18:1, “The Lord appeared to Abraham near the great tree of Mamre while he was seating at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day.” God appeared to Abraham and he must have met God many times. But this time it was different and Abraham recognized that this was God.

Then Verse 3~5 say, If I found favor in your eyes, my Lord do not pass your servant by. Let a little water be brought to

you and then you may all wash your feet and rest under this tree, let me get you something to eat so you can refresh and then go on your way now that you have come to your servant. “Very well”, they answered, “do as you say.” So Abraham asked Sarah to prepare food quickly and she did so.

Verse 8 then says, He then brought some curd and milk and the calf that had been prepared and set these before them. While they were eating, he stood near them under a tree. This was Abraham’s character. This time Abraham had been changed and transformed. Jesus greeted the angels, and welcomed them, and worshiped them, and also prepared a good meal for them. He welcomed them with joy.

They asked him in verse 9, “Where is your wife Sarah?” At this time he never complained to God, and asked him nothing. He was a man who had completely changed. But in the past, Abraham complained to God a lot whenever he met him, may be used to say “give me a son. But when God changed his name, even his mind changed this time and he didn’t complain to God again. This time it was God who asked Him, “Where is your wife Sarah? God knew the problem of Abraham, Abraham replied, There she is in the tent.

The Lord then promised Abraham in Verse 10 that, I will surely return to you about this time next year and your wife Sarah will have a son. God declared the exact time to give

them children and he did as promised. This was 25 years after he left his hometown, but at this time of his complete transformation, God gave him good news.

But Verse 11 says, Abraham and Sarah were already old and advanced in years and Sarah was past the age of child bearing. When they heard the message of God, they knew that they were old enough not to be able to have a baby but Abraham believed the word of God.

And Verse 12 says, So Sarah laughed to herself as she thought, after I am worn out and my master is old, will I now have this pleasure? They believed in God's word and they walked in his way but when God delivered his blessing to them, they could not believe it. Today we are in the presence of the LORD our God, and he will give us his blessing. We should not consider the state of our bodies, but rather focus on the will of God in our lives. If we focus on God, he will surely help us. Even though Abraham did not believe in God's power, God still delivered his message to them.

So in Verse 14, God asked them: Is anything too hard for the Lord? I will return to you at the appointed time next year and Sarah will have a child. Nothing is too hard for our God under any circumstances. Even today, when our enemy Satan attacks us, we should not be afraid of him, but just declare this message. When God wants to do something in your life,

he will surely do it. God knows our conditions and what we go through. So there's nothing to disappoint him. Just declare. "Is there anything too hard for God? I will return to you at the appointed time next year, and Sarah will have a child. Although they did not believe it, God himself declared this message. So our God can do anything according to his time.

Therefore, we should not look at our situation today because God wants to do something in our lives by his strength and will.

Then the Lord promised in Verse 18, Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation and all nations on earth will be blessed through him for I have chosen him so that he will direct his children and his house hold after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just so that the Lord will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him. When you want to teach your children the way of God, God will surely see your heart. Although you are weak, God has taken your mind into account as the Bible says, so that he may teach his children how to walk in the way of God, to do what is right and just. God surely will call your name like how He called Abraham if you're ready to teach your children His message. And with this, God fulfilled his message in the life of Abraham, He gave him a son and from now on Abraham never disappointed God willingly. Up to today he has followed

God's message and all his children followed God's message.

Therefore, your blessing is not the most important thing but the most important of all is you keeping the way of God. Even until now, we study the story of Abraham from the Bible because he followed the way of God even after God had blessed him.

After this blessing, God prepared another message unto Abraham about Sodom and Gomorrah. This was a very big city and many people lived there but God decided to destroy the cities. So when Abraham heard this, he started talking to God about it.

So Abraham in Verse 23 approached Him and said, Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked? Abraham then started bargaining with God; What if there are 50 righteous people, will you destroy the city God? He said He would not destroy the city if there were 50 righteous people. Abraham reduced the required number down to 10. Even for 10 righteous people, God would spare the city. But unfortunately, there were not ten people who were righteous. There lived Lot and his family, but they didn't give any good influence to change his neighbors. Look at our church, inviting people to come to Church is not enough, we have to move beyond this and pray for their salvation. When Abraham said ten, he thought he had done a great work but it was all

in vain. Today, if you were asked the number of the righteous in Kampala you would say a big number, but you have to first check your life. Many died because of sin. Verse 33 says, When the Lord had finished speaking with Abraham, he left and Abraham also left for his home. Why did he go home? Abraham thought that he would save people through bargaining with God, but the city was filled with too much sins and he was not able to save the city. He had to go down to the city and tell them people that the Lord was going to destroy the city. Maybe some would turn away from their sins and the city would be spared. Today, God wants to talk to us about the situation of his people. If we do not move down to them and preach the gospel, all will be destroyed because of our not telling the truth. So let's not be like Abraham today. Don't return to our homes but go and proclaim the message of God. They will be saved and see the power of God.

Now Chapter 19 Verse 1 says, "The two angels arrived at Sodom in the evening and Lot was sitting in the gate way of the city. What does it mean to sit at the city gate? Lot was among the top officials of the city, people took him as their judge in Sodom. Because he had stayed with Abraham for a while, he had some knowledge about God. When he saw them coming, he got up to greet them and bowed down to them.

So Verse 4~8 say, Before they had gone to bed, all the

men from every part of the city of Sodom both young and old surrounded the house. They called to Lot, 'where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them to us so that we can have sex with them.' Lot went out to meet them he shut the door behind him and said '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.' As he lived in Sodom, he became familiar with the lifestyle in Sodom even though theirs were of sin. As for the request of the homosexuals, Lot tried to solve it according to his experience in Sodom as seen in Verse 7. He tried to save the angels but didn't tell the people about their own sin. Lot didn't choose to tell them about their sins. Rather, he tried to prevent sin with another sin. He also adopted the same culture of people of Sodom. His life was destroyed by these people's characters.

So the men of Sodom replied in Verse 9, "Get out of our way they replied and said, the fellow came here as an alien and he now wants to play the judge. We will treat you worse than them. They kept bringing pressure to Lot and moved forward to break the door. No matter what his method is, the situation got worse and they became more furious.

Verse 11 says, 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. So God saved Lot this way. Verse 12~13 say, “The two men said to Lot, Do you have any one else here, son law daughter or anyone in the city who belongs to you? Get them out of here because we are going to destroy this place, the outcry of the Lord against the people is so great so that He has sent us to come and destroy this place. When God’s angels asked Lot to show them those who belonged to him, he counted his sons in law to be. Verse 14, “··Lot went out and spoke to his sons in law who were pledged to marry his daughters and he said, hurry and get out of the place, because the Lord is about to destroy the city. But his sons in law thought he was joking. It was because the life of Lot could not influence the people of Sodom at all. Therefore, they didn’t believe his words. While in Sodom, Lot lived like the people of Sodom and he never prepared any plan to change the city. He looked like them, behaved like them, so no one could surely believe his message. Even his sons in law thought He was joking. If he had lived as child of God, the people of Sodom probably would have paid attention to whatever he had said. Our relationships with people cannot make them be persuaded to be saved. We should live like Christians. And those who follow us will be the ones who

belong to us and we should keep our lives properly to reveal God's message to the world. When Lot was with Abraham, God used to talk to him through Abraham. But this time, God talked to him directly. When he proclaimed the message, no one believed him. Why? Was the problem on the message? No! The problem was the life of Lot.

When we speak the Bible message and proclaim Jesus but when our lives have changed, many people may not listen to us.

Lot was a judge in that city, he saw their life but he didn't try to teach them to walk according to God's direction. He rather tried to find a way of surviving in the city and when he proclaimed the word of God, there was no power in it. His concern was not their salvation but his own life. Even today, we know the Bible and love of Jesus, and same time we see how worldly culture is pervasive among us. Therefore, we ought to remember this message, when we move in accordance to the way of God, then the word of God shall be seen in our lives. God's power from his word cannot be seen through speech only. From today, we need to be careful how to live because sin is contagious. We have to change our lifestyles so that through our lives other people can be changed. Let's not be like Lot who just wanted to survive in the city and never considered how God would see the city's

sin. Through this message, let's circumcise our hearts to save our cities. Let's not follow what they do here. For example in Uganda in the area where we reside, many men drink waragi and ask us to drink waragi with them and this is a real spiritual battle for us. Therefore, if we don't preach to the people around us, they will continue asking us to drink with them. We should be strong and keep the way of God. [Is there anything too hard for God?] When we proclaim like this, we shall overcome all the powers of the enemy in our area. When we built this Church here, some people were selling waragi but now their lives were changed. Therefore let's try to pray to change the people in every city in our country.

GENESIS 20-22

Through the life of Abraham, let us understand the life of a Christian. When God called Abraham, he was a very old man however he accepted the calling of God and overcame all the challenges. Why did God call Abraham during that time? God wanted to show his great power in Abraham's life. Today we are also here in the name of Jesus Christ, If Jesus wants to show his great power, He looks for someone who believes in His words and God's power only.

So through story, we must understand how to prepare our lives to receive the blessing of God and be used by God. Abraham followed God but when he was called by God, he had his own lifestyle that he had lived in. When he entered Canaan, he faced famine. He decided to go to Egypt because there was no hope in Canaan. Therefore we should believe God and the Bible. We should also we learn from our own

experiences to trust in God. According to what happened to Abraham in Egypt, he knew the will of God. When he understood the will of God in his life, he became different. He made different choice. When they tried to separate land with Lot, he believed God's choice. Therefore without God, our ways will always be wrong. So in every situation, we must understand what the will of God is in our lives. Through your entire life, you have experienced a lot, but from this, we must try to know what the will of God is. When Abraham came back to Canaan, he tried to know who God was in his life, God also encouraged him through his word. He encouraged him to believe that he would give him a son.

Before Abraham got a child, he got two advices. The first was from God almighty and the other one was from his wife Sarai. May be you have also received a lot of advice from many people, but in everything, let us keep our way in God's sight. God is good and he is the only one who can advise us rightly since he is the one who created us. Find a solution to your problem through the Bible, so we must meditate upon the word of God. Even though sometimes the word of God and his answer seems to be so far from us, but in his time God will accomplish his will. Abraham had failed because he listened to his wife. Her advice seemed very reasonable, When Ishmael was born to him, and Abraham was very

happy and praised God because he had given him a son finally. For a long time, God didn't appear to him. When he was suffering, God came to him to encourage him. When Abraham was happy according to his will and desire, God didn't appear to him. God was not happy and this was a big problem. Therefore when you feel like you no longer have communication with God, please check your life. Today, though we may be very happy, we should check ourselves again in the sight of God. Abraham was very happy thinking this was God's blessing. In fact God was angry at Abraham. Therefore let's not just consider our lives all the time, we should always consider God's mind. After 13 years, God appeared before Abraham and said 'I am God Almighty' meaning that 'you should believe my Almighty power.' Abraham was shocked. He thought all was well because he had received his son. God's sight was different. He said also 'Walk before me' meaning 'consider my sight.' God also says to us the same the message. We must walk before God. Our lives must be before God. God's sight is most important for us. He said to Abraham, 'Be blameless.' He had some blame before God, his life was not okay. He didn't kill anyone, he didn't steal any property. However he couldn't understand why God said this message to him, there was no God in his life. To be able to go with God, you must understand the Bible

story. This is because the Bible is a language and narrative to communicate with God. Without the Bible, we cannot communicate with God, He communicates with us through the Bible. God will change our lives and our names through the Bible. God changed Abram's and Sarai's names. He then spoke to Abraham and commanded him to circumcise himself and all the male people in his generation. This was to remind him of his mistake forever so that he wouldn't do the same again. Remember, Abraham was also human, even though he believed at that time, but after some time, he couldn't remember God's promise in his life.

From chapter 20, God promised that he would give Abraham a son. He said 'I will', after one year, I will come back to you and then you will see my power. Even though God had spoken his appointed time, in Gen 20:1, "Now Abraham moved on from there into the region of the Negev and lived between Kadesh and Shur. Then in Verse 2,"And Abraham said of his wife Sarah, 'She is my sister.' Then Abimelek king of Gerar sent for Sarah and took her. When he moved out, he found the situation different and said that she was his sister. So the king of Gerard sent for her and took her. If Abraham had believed the promise of God that the Lord would come back the following year, he wouldn't have left the place where he was. So God appeared to Abimelek king of Gerard

and warned him not to sleep with Sarai else he would die. Abimelek also defended himself and said it wasn't his fault but God said to him that he should send back the man's wife so that he would pray for him.

So Verse 8 says, Early the next morning Abimelek summoned all his officials when he told them all that had happened, they were afraid. Then Abimelek asked Abraham, What was your reason for doing this? In Verse 11, Abraham told him why. He said, I said to myself, 'There is surely no fear of God in this place, and they will surely kill me because of my wife.' Abraham really thought that there was no fear of God in Gerar. According to his experience, he thought that these people didn't know who God was and would kill him because of his wife. This is normal in our lives also, whenever we are afraid of something, all kinds of fear will surely come to us. Do you know how old Sarah was? She was 89 years old. Who really wants to take and marry an 89 year old woman? In the eyes of Abraham, Sarah was young and beautiful, because of this, he thought that people would want to kill him to take his wife. This is like a mental problem surely. How did this happen in the life of Abraham? Abraham couldn't believe God during this period. Therefore in our lives, if we don't trust God, all kinds of circumstances will turn into fear to us. Even if God blesses us, we shall be

afraid that people will attack us because of the blessing we have received. We shall then start to fear will about tomorrow and the future. When Abraham didn't believe the promise of God, immediately his life was covered with fear. Today, do you have anything that makes you to fear? Remember the promise of God every day and in everything situation turn to Him and will give you the right answer.

But even if you have many problems, God will send the Holy Spirit to encourage you not to fear. Therefore, don't fear, you will overcome that problem in the name of God. We may not understand Abraham's decision to move out because God said to him that he would return a year later and give him a son. In Verse 13, the Bible says, "And when God called me to wander from my father's household, I said to her "This is how you are to show your love to me." What was the love of Sarah?? Everywhere you go, say of me: 'He is my brother.' When he left his household, he decided to say this way everywhere they would go. May be he said to her "my life is important and I must keep it carefully, so wherever we go, don't say that I am your husband. People will kill me. So, say of me that I am your brother. Is this the way she express her love? Who would ask his wife to say this way? Abraham he was a coward, he had this kind of mind for quite a long time. However, what was important was that God called him to

confirm his power through his life. We should understand that we are Abraham. Yes we believe God but we still have a lot of fear but even though we believe or not, God will accomplish his promise through our life.

God called us not because of our righteousness but because of His love for us. When we were sinners, when we didn't believe Him, However God still loves us and wants to accomplish his will through us. Understand the love of God to you. God called you to show you his great love.

When God called Abraham, he decided that wherever they would go, she should say that he was her brother, this was a serious problem. God knew it but he never rebuked Abraham. Instead, He protected him and guided him again and again. God accomplished his great plan through this same man.

This is also true in our daily lives, when we want to believe God, He will be happy because of our faith and He will accomplish his promise in our lives.

Gen 21:1 says, Now the Lord was gracious to Sarah as he had said and the Lord did for Sarah what he had promised. Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age. What is important? The Bible says, in his old age. In the sight of humans, it was old age. But in the sight of God, it was the right time. In the same way today, it seems that we receive Jesus at our decision and our time, but God is working

on us according to His time. God called you to accomplish his great will in your life. Even though you may be very weak, accept the will of God. Abraham was very weak but when he believed, when God appeared to him, he prepared worship for God. This is applicable to our daily lives, God wants to speak to us, so when he speaks to us, let's prepare our worship to God.

Abram did it several times. Finally, in God's time, though it was old age of Abraham, but He accomplished his promise. When Isaac was 8 days old, Abraham circumcised him as God commanded. Even though he couldn't believe God's power, when God accomplished his promise, Abraham remembered God's direction and circumcised his boy. Through the birth of Isaac, the life of Abraham was perfectly changed. From then on, Abraham was changed. In the past, Abraham had been an ordinary man like you and me but through this situation, he learnt what Almighty means.

From today, we need to be careful to keep our pure heart. Sometimes we can't believe his time and his promise. But important is that God will accomplish his will in us. So the Bible continues and says that Abraham was a hundred years old. Nobody expected this but God did it. Through this, God's power was revealed to Abraham and others. That's why your life is important. When you believe, in his time

God will accomplish his promise to show his Almighty power and then all people will know who your God is. This is God's plan in your life. We are sinners, but believe in God, he will accomplish his will by himself. God wants to protect our lives, we are alive here today because of God's protection. Why does God want to protect us? It is to confirm his power to us. When Abraham went to Egypt, when he return to Canaan, he met uneasy situations. People took his wife Sarah but God protected his life and his wife. Likewise, in every situation, God will protect you because of his promise. Believe God and do not be afraid. Wait upon his time. When he was hundred years old, maybe there was no hope but God accomplished his promise to him. Likewise, in your life, you will see God's power and proclaim that God is Almighty. So we must learn a lesson from here and pray to God to see the glory of God.

Abraham's soul was opened after the birth of Isaac. He waited for 25 years and finally God accomplished his message. He was surprised and from that time, his life was different. When he saw Isaac, he revered God. He was glad and laughed. So the name Isaac means 'to laugh.' When they saw Isaac, they were happy and immediately remembered who gave him the son. This was his testimony, He believed in God however in times of temptations, he could not over

them. But when he received a strong testimony, he became different, how different was Abraham's life?

Chapter 22 shows what changed about the life of Abraham.

In Verse 22 of chapter 21, the Bible states that, then king Abimelek came to Abraham and said to Abraham that God is with you in everything you do. King Abimelek saw and proclaimed like that. Also for us, people know who we are. In the past, Abimelek was strong and even took Sarah but now he recognized who Abraham was. He said today I know that God is with you in everything you do. So he asked to make a treaty with him. At first, Abraham was afraid that this man could kill him. But when God accomplished his will in his life, all people knew that God was with him. Please believe in God, One day people will say this message to you. When we were sinners, Jesus died for us, therefore, let's believe that God has too much love for us and so we should wait upon his time. Abraham did one thing in Verse 33. He planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and there he called in the name of the Lord, the Eternal God. This meant that Abraham believed the promise of God. Through the birth of Isaac, he tried to believe that his God is the Eternal God. When he said that, God tested him in chapter 22.

Sometime later God tested Abraham and he told him to take his son Isaac and sacrifice him. He said in Verse 2, "Take

your son, your only son, Isaac, who you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burn offering on one of the mountains I will show you. God knew the love of Abraham for his son. So God said 'the one whom you love.' God asked him to take Isaac and sacrifice him as a burnt offering to Him. May be if God had spoken this same message to me, I would have replied that, Satan, go away from me. This is an impossible and an unexpected message because God always bless people and He can't just take away the blessing from them. I would have said thank you Lord for giving me a son.

However, Abraham was different, he obeyed God's message for the message was so clear and there was no way to misunderstand it. The next early morning, he set out to go. God didn't tell him when to go, whether next day, week, month or year. He didn't explain to him anything about time. If I were Abraham, maybe I would have cried for a year. Many times when you know God's will, you don't want to lay down your own thoughts. You will cry out asking God why you are suffering. But Abraham decided by himself to go the very next early morning, he didn't discuss with Sarah. In the past, he listened to Sarah and he failed. So now he understood that this was the will of God and didn't delay even a single day. He took Isaac and two of his servants and left.

Isaac didn't know where he was going and also Abraham had not explained anything to anyone.

After three days' travel, they look upward to the place. In those three days, he slept with Isaac and realized again and again what he was going to do, to kill his boy. Maybe he wouldn't have been able to continue the journey. Why did God prepare three days? In three days, God tested him. Maybe in one day, because of his emotion, he would have killed him. But after three days, that emotion was no longer there and it was very difficult to kill his only son. Day by day, his feeling would have changed. When God touches you, keep your direction and overcome all reasoning and senses.

In Verse 5, Abraham told his servants, Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you. This is very interesting story. 'We will worship' is true. But 'we will come back' is not guaranteed. May be Abraham have said, 'we will go there to worship and then I will come back to you.' Because he knew his son Isaac will die there. He didn't know what would happen after. He didn't know how God can save this boy but he believed they will come back together with the boy. Today even you, go with God, believe his promise and overcome your doubts and fears.

In Verse 7, Isaac asked his father Abraham, The fire and

wood are here but where is the lamb for burnt offering?
Abraham replied him in Verse 8 and said, God himself will provide the lamb for burnt offering. God didn't say to provide a sacrifice. God said, sacrifice your only son, Isaac.

In Verse 10, Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.

When they arrived there, he immediately tried to kill his son. He did not even pray to God, 'father is this real direction?' He just prepared to sacrifice the boy. When he tied the boy, put him on the altar, and was about to kill Isaac, God saw his deep heart. In our lives today, God doesn't see our actions only but our heart and its motives because some people want to pretend that they love God in front of others. They pretend like they are going to do something for God yet they don't really want to. Abraham was different because he didn't say anything but really tried to kill the boy. At that time, God called out to Abraham, Abraham, and Abraham. God was very serious and continued, Do not lay a hand on the boy, and do not do anything to him. When God understood his real mind he said, Now I know that you fear God. This meant that now I know your faith. Many people just want to say I believe Jesus, he is my Lord. What is to believe? Without God's message, your own understanding about God is idolatry. Abraham didn't say I believe but confirmed his

faith through his action. Then God said to him that now I know that you believe me. What is faith? We must check our real life. Abraham was a weak man but through the birth of Isaac, he was changed and knew God's Almighty power. Even though he was given God's promise of blessing through Isaac, when God commanded the sacrifice of his son, he really tried to execute God's command. God said to him, now I know your faith. Through your life, God wants to say this very message also to you. Without following the word of God, we can't claim to be God's people. Then the Bible continues and says, ...because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son. So through this message we must understand who God's people are. Really God had prepared a lamb for the burnt offering. Verse 14 says, Abraham called the place The Lord Will Provide. Without such a test, we can't understand the meaning of this verse. When we want to open up our hearts like Abraham, we will see his providence in our lives and we can say that God is my provider. People sing 'you are my provider' but they mean 'you must become my provider.' Show your love to God and him too will provide to you. God himself provided a lamb in the bush. Without a test, nobody can approach the glory of God. When Abraham listened to God and followed His way, he recognized that God was his provider. In verse 16~18, God promised Abraham again. He

had already promised this message 3 times beforehand. In the past, however, God said 'I will bless you.' But now in verse 17, God says "I will surely bless you. Surely God wants to bless you and will bless you. When God sees your heart like Abraham, he will say to you, 'I will surely bless you.' Why did God promise this way? The Bible says in verse 18, ...because you have obeyed me. When you want to obey God, God will bless your next generation. At that time, Abraham was a hundred years old and didn't have any hope, but God said to him that because of his faith and obedience, He would bless his next generation.

GENESIS 23-26

THE LIFE OF ABRAHAM

Abraham was a normal person like us but God accomplished his will through him. A study of Abraham's life will teach us how God can work in our lives.

Chapter 12~22, shows the story of Abraham. When God called Abraham, Abraham couldn't understand who God was. But through 25 years, he knew who God was. God called him and promised him a son. And God gave Isaac at his time. Though Abraham was not faithful throughout those years, God was faithful and reminded the same promise again and again. Inspire of Abraham's doubt, God still kept his promise to him. This wasn't through the righteousness of Abraham, but was according to God's will and plan.

This chapter shows how Abraham's life influenced others. Whether we want or not, our life will influence others in good

or bad ways. In the life of Abraham, there were 3 categories of people. They are Hittites, Eliezer the servant of Abraham, and Isaac.

In chapter 23, his wife Sarah died and he needed a burial place for her, he talked with Hittites, Canaanites. They were watching Abraham for 25 years and they knew him very well. Abraham went to the Hittites and said, I am an alien and a stranger among you. (v4) Even though Abraham had lived there 25 years, he himself said he was a stranger and an alien. However, look at how they said about Abraham, Sir listen to us, you are a mighty prince among us... (v6) They said, "You are not a stranger nor an alien; you are a mighty prince among us.

He himself said, 'I am very weak.' But they had seen his life and confessed that 'You are a mighty prince among us.' They saw that God was in his life. Even though Abraham had doubt about God time to time, but in the eyes of his neighbors, God was with him. They believed he came from God. They saw authority, anointing, and blessings from God upon Abraham. Therefore, when Abraham asked to buy some land, they told him so. This is very important. Your own confession is important, but your neighbor's assessment of you is also important. They see all your life and know whether you have God in you.

The life of Abraham taught the Hittites about who God was. Without explicit testimonies Abraham witnessed about God. This should be the life of Christian and missionary. We cannot change people through our words alone. But through our lives, they will see and know who God is. Abraham was weak; he even denied his own wife, and sometimes he couldn't believe the promise of God. Through all those situations still, the Hittites saw and knew who God was in his life. Yes, it is the same in your life. Even if you can't believe that God is in your life, you are a great missionary and a preacher. Therefore, remember who the true Christian is.

Chapter 24. When Abraham got old, he wanted to find a wife for his son Isaac. Abraham did not believe in his wisdom and experience, but in God. In the past he believed in his experience but he failed. Later he knew that only God would prepare everything for him in a perfect way. He believed that God would prepare everything for his son's marriage. He sent his servant, Eliezer, to look for a wife for his son, Isaac. When the servant was about to go, he asked Abraham, 'When I reach there, how will I know that this is the wife for Isaac?' But Abraham said in 24:7, "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, saying, 'To your 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. Abraham had known who God was in His life. He said God promised me so I also believe that He will prepare the wife for my son Isaac. He will send his angel before you, meaning 'do not believe your experience and own understanding.' Abraham had no idea how to find a proper wife for his son, but he believed that God will fulfill His promise.

When Abraham sent his servant, he believed God will also send an angel ahead of him. When this servant arrived in the land, Verse 12 says, Then he prayed This is the servant and not Abraham. God spoke to Abraham and Abraham obeyed. This man was only working in the house of Abraham, he saw the life of Abraham. When Abraham arrived in Canaan, he prayed, he worshipped. Whenever he received the word of God, whenever he heard the voice of God, he worshipped. Even though he was weak, he always tried to remember who he was and who God is. The servant Eliezer saw the lifestyle of his master Abraham. When he now went to a new place, Abraham wasn't there, but he prayed to God. Because of the life of Abraham, this man was changed. When he prayed, he said in Verse 12 O Lord, God of my master Abraham He said 'God of my master Abraham!' He didn't know God but he had seen God in the life of Abraham. He prayed to the God who was merciful and powerful in Abraham's life. He continued,

Give me success today and show kindness to my master Abraham. Continually this servant mentioned the God of my master Abraham. He believed that the God of Abraham would lead him to find his master's daughter in law. It was through the life of Abraham that this man got to know God. Our lives should be like this. Because of me, somebody should believe God. If someone can believe God because of us, if people can pray to God because of us, you are a great Christian and a great missionary. That's how the life of Abraham was. This man continued to pray as he was sitting near a well. He said he would ask a woman to give him water. If the woman would give him water and ask to water his camels, then he would know this is the girl God has chosen for Isaac. That was his prayer. He wanted to confirm God's will this way. He didn't want to decide by his wisdom or his sense. He wanted to know the will of God.

When he prayed, even before he had finished praying, a woman came to the well. When he asked her, he found she was a relative of Abraham. Just as he had prayed, things came to pass. So when all this happened, Verse 26 says, The man bowed down and worshipped the Lord. Every time, he did this. Whose life was like this? Yes, Abraham's life was like this. Today also, some people will follow your lifestyle. If you have the power of influence, because of your life, other

people's lives will also be changed. It's either through your weakness or strength. This servant learned from Abraham and worshipped again and again. He said in Verse 27, "Praise be to the Lord, the God of my master Abraham who has not abandoned his kindness and faithfulness to my master..." Remember kindness and faithfulness to my master. He saw God's kindness and faithfulness to Abraham. Then he said, "As for me, the Lord has led me on the journey to my master's relatives. The important thing is that this servant saw God's power in the life of Abraham. He tried to believe, he followed and then he praised the Lord.

Then the family of Rebecca welcomed this servant. He explained to them where he came from and who his master was. They were all glad and prepared lots of food. At the end of a long journey, he found the very exact woman that he was looking for. His mission was almost completed. However, when he was asked to eat the meal, he said, I will not eat until I have told you what I have to say. (v33) Though he was hungry and tired, he said I will not eat He focused on accomplishing the mission given by his master before eating food. Therefore remember that we are God's people and servant, we must seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness We should focus on our missions and God's works. We should not be distracted. The servant knew his

mission. He thought 'I did not come here to enjoy food, but to finish my master's business.' So he explained everything to them and everyone was surprised. When this man put first doing God's will than anything else, Laban and Bethel said in Verse 50, This is from the Lord, we can say nothing in one way or another. When they saw what this man had done, they said this situation had come from the Lord. They could not refuse the direction of the Lord. They agreed to give Rebecca as Isaac's wife. When he heard why they had said, Verse 52 says, He bowed down to the ground before the Lord. He didn't bow down before these people but before the Lord. He didn't consider the minds and eyes of human beings but he considered the God of his master. He was surely a good servant. So after that night, the next morning, this man asked in Verse 54, Send me on my way to my master. This was early the next morning. It had been a long journey and it was going to be another long journey back. Since he had accomplished his mission, he could stay at least one more night or two and then go on his way. But he wanted to go back that very next morning. We should also be careful not to enjoy our lives in the mission of God, we must focus on accomplishing His will. Through the life of this servant, we can understand that he was strong and focused. Who made this man like this? Who influenced his life like this?, The life

Abraham did. The servant looked at the life of Abraham and knew and realized what is to live in front of God. Remember the will and mission of God in your life and try to accomplish it completely. Then he came back to his master Abraham.

Through these chapters, we can see that Abraham's lifestyle influenced the lives of two kinds of people. The Hittites and his servant. They both knew who God is through the life of Abraham. They followed the life of Abraham. Now there was one more who also saw the life of Abraham and followed Abraham's lifestyle. He was Isaac.

Chapter 25:20. When did Isaac marry Rebecca? Bible says, Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebecca Yes Isaac was quite old when he married. But Verse 21 says, Isaac prayed to the Lord on behalf of his wife, because she was barren. Remember this was the same problem of his mother. He knew his parents' story. It took 25 years for God's promise to come true. For those 25 years, Abraham wasn't fully believing God and took Hagar as a wife. And this brought trouble in Abraham's life. So when Rebecca couldn't conceive, Isaac started praying and prayed for years and years. Then Verse 26 says, Isaac was sixty years old when Rebecca gave birth to them (Esau and Jacob.) He prayed for twenty years. Isaac believed the power of God. Remember that Abraham failed on this matter of not having a son.

However, Isaac prayed and didn't doubt the power of God or take another woman. He waited for twenty years until he received his twin sons.

Today we also have many problems, if we cannot overcome them through the name and power of God, the same problem will also affect and attack our children. So, if we want our children to overcome our problems, we must also overcome them now through the name of God. We must cut off perfectly so that these problems don't affect our sons and daughters. Abraham couldn't overcome, the same situation happened in the life of Isaac. But Isaac overcame that problem through prayer. Through his father's life he learned that God is Almighty.

Now in chapter 26, there was another test and problem. Verse 1 says, "Now there was famine in the land— besides the earlier famine of Abraham's time..." When Abraham arrived in Canaan, because of famine, he couldn't stay there and went down to Egypt. Also for Isaac, the same situation happened. There was famine and he considered going to Egypt as a solution. God said to him in Verse 2, "Do not go down to Egypt There was famine. There was no other solution to this problem but Isaac believed God and stayed in Gerar. When he stayed there, what happened? Verse 12 says, Isaac planted crops in the land and the same year reaped a hundredfold,

because the Lord blessed him. Even though there was famine, Isaac believed God's power. The same year, God blessed him a hundred times. His father Abraham couldn't believe the power of God and he went to Egypt. Because of his mistake, Hagar came into their life. Isaac was different because he overcame the temptation of the environment.

Now while he stayed in Gerar, Isaac was also filled with fear in front of people with authority. Just like his father, he also feared for his life because of his wife. Even after she had given birth to twins, he saw her still very beautiful. Just like his father he said, 'She is my sister'. The exact same thing happened to him as it happened to his father Abraham. God tested Abraham through 3 different kinds of tests.

The problem of a son/child.

The problem of famine

The problem of fear of people of authority.

This fear was also with Isaac and he failed this test. Maybe Abraham explained to him; when I believed God, even though I was weak, God gave me a son. When famine came, I also couldn't overcome. Maybe Abraham didn't share the story of his failure from the fear of human power. He couldn't say, my son, I denied your mother as my wife. Surely maybe he didn't share this with him because it would be so shameful. Isaac faced the same situation and couldn't see any protection.

Very naturally, fear came to Isaac like it filled Abraham. As you know, Isaac was now an old man and Rebecca was also an old woman. But he also said you are my sister. You are beautiful and because of your beauty, people will kill me. The same failure repeated. Share your failures with your children so that they might not fail. If you can't tell them about your failures, repent from your heart and pray for them.

Through the lives of these 3 kinds of people, we see the influence of the life of Abraham. You are the sweet fragrance of Jesus Christ. You must spread the fragrance of your perfume. People will know who your Lord is through your life. The life of Isaac was very interesting because when he had settled in Gerar, the Philistines came and disturbed him. Isaac dug up wells that had been closed by Philistines. Then they came and claimed ownership of the wells. Isaac didn't fight and yield the wells to them. When they claimed any well, he said; oh sorry. Please take it. It's OK. He went to another one. When the Philistines followed him and claimed that well also, he didn't argue with them. 'Oh sorry, you can take it also.' He moved several times away from the wells that his father had dug but the Philistines had claimed. We cannot understand why he didn't at least try to fight for them. So he finally dug a well and nobody claimed it. When no one claimed this one, he named it Rehoboth in Verse 22 saying,

Now the Lord has given us room and we will flourish in the land. In the eyes of humans, we can say this man had a problem because he yielded several wells to others. But what is important is that many people saw the life of Isaac and in Verse 25 says, Isaac built an altar and called on the name of the Lord. Yes, when no one quarreled over that well, he built an altar and worshipped the Lord. People saw this. And now in Verse 28 the Bible says, We saw clearly that the Lord was with you This was because in Verse 27 Abimelech had come to him and asked that there be an agreement between him and Isaac. Isaac also asked them “Why have you come to me yet you were hostile to me and sent me away? So they said that We saw clearly that the Lord was with you. This was hard to understand because when Isaac dug up a well, they came and chased him away and he left peacefully. They did this several times and it’s like his life had failed. But the people of Abimelech believed that God was with Isaac. Don’t quarrel with people but rather believe God. God can help you. God can bless you. During that time, wells were very important in such an arid place. Without water, they cannot survive. Though they almost took everything from him, Isaac believed God. They took almost everything but instead of becoming poor, he became richer and they wondered how this happened. So they realized that God was with him and feared

Isaac finally. They came, apologized, and made an agreement of peace with him. When you want to quarrel and fight with people, they will see you and your power and find a scheme to destroy you. But when you trust God and keep your peace, they will know the God who is with you and they will fear you and ask for forgiveness. They saw clearly that God was with Isaac and they thought, 'there must be a sworn agreement between you and us.'

God wants to touch the life of other people not just through your message but through your life. They may not understand the message of God from your mouth, but they will experience the power of God through your life.

People will know that you are a real servant of God, a real Christian, a real missionary. If your life can influence people positively through the name of God, God will also remember your name like Abraham, like Isaac.

GENESIS 27-31

THE LIFE OF JACOB

We already heard about Abram's life and that of Isaac. In these chapters, we are going to understand Jacob's life. God called Abram even when he could not understand who God was. He followed God and through his life he understood who God was. So throughout his life time, Isaac understood who God was. In this chapters we will study Jacob's life, the son of Isaac.

Chapter 27 Verse 1 says, When Isaac was old and his eyes were so weak that he could no longer see, He understood that he was old and tried to summon his sons to bless them. He had two sons, Jacob and Esau. Isaac tried to bless Esau because he was born first to Esau. But something happened and he finally blessed Jacob.

Verse 5 says, "Rebekah was listening as Isaac spoke to

Esau. when she heard this message she remembered God's promise in chapter 25 verse 23~34, When Rebekah was pregnant these two boys fought, and Rebekah inquired of God what was happening with her womb. God said to her that 'the older will serve the younger'. When Isaac was about to bless Esau, Rebekah tried to make God's blessing come to Jacob for she remembered God's plan to bless Jacob instead of Esau. God had told her that the older would serve the younger. So when Esau left for hunting, Rebekah Called Jacob and said "listen carefully and do what I tell you. Go and bring me two Choice goats and I prepare it to your father the way he likes it. But Jacob was afraid because his body was not like Esau's body so that his father would notice of the cheat. Jacob was not hairy as Esau, his voice was different. Jacob didn't get afraid of cheating, but he was afraid of being discovered. His mother helped him, she put Esau's clothes on Jacob and let him to enter father's tent. In this way Isaac happened to bless Jacob instead of Esau. Esau hated his brother and wanted to kill him for stealing his blessing.

So Esau said in Verse 41, The days of mourning for my father are near; then I will kill my brother Jacob. Esau was angry with his brother and in order to protect Jacob's life, Rebekah sent him away to Haran to his brother Laban's house. So she said to Jacob in Verse 43, Now then my son,

do what I say: Flee at once to my brother Laban in Haran stay with him until your brother's fury subsides. When your brother is no longer angry with you and forgets what you did to him, I will send word to you to come back from there. So from this time on, Jacob's life was full of suffering. Isn't it an irony that though Jacob was blessed but suffering was waiting for him? He needed to leave his parents and hometown. Chapter 28 verse 11 the Bible says, When he reached a certain place he stopped for a night because the sun had set. He got a stone and lay down to sleep. God appeared in his life and said to him in Verse 13, I am the Lord the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you're lying. God continued proclaiming and said that All people on earth will be blessed through your off spring. I am with you and I will watch over you wherever you go and I will bring you back to this land. I will never leave you until I have done what have promised you. This message was very important in his life because he was afraid and had no hope. But certainly God appeared to him and encouraged him.

Then Jacob said in Verse 16, Surely the Lord is in this place and I was not aware of it. How awesome is this place. This is the house of God and the gate to heaven. Very early next morning, Jacob said in Verse 20, If God will be with me and

he will watch over me on this journey I am taking and he will give me food and clothing to wear so that I will return safely, then the God will be my God. Though God promised him “I will bless you and I will go with you wherever you go, Jacob prayed to God, “I only need food and clothing please protect my life. When I return, really you will be my God. So he promised to God, “father if you protect me, I will keep my promise to you. And he said in Verse 22, 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.

When Jacob arrived in Haran, he met Laban who welcomed him to his house. In Verse 14, Laban said to him You’re my own flesh and blood. And then Jacob stayed with him for a whole month. In Verse 15 Laban said to him, Just because you’re my relative should you work for nothing? Tell me what your wage should be. At that time Jacob told him in Verse 18, I will work for you for seven years in return for your younger daughter, Rachael. He himself decided to serve Laban in order to marry Rachael. Laban accepted it.

Jacob in Verse 20 served seven years to get Rachael but they seemed to him like a few days to him because of his love for her. Why God prepared Rachael? If Jacob had not had other goal in his life at this time, it would be too painful for him to sustain. The hope of marriage gave a meaning to Jacob’s

life for now. At the end of seven years he was happy saying, “Today I will achieve my aim. But what happened at the first night? Laban deceived him and sent Leah into Jacob’s room that night. More surprising was that Jacob only noticed it the next morning. Jacob felt bad and said to Laban, Why have you deceived me? He cried out but Laban said, “Cool down. In our Custom, you have to first take the elder one. Laban told him “I will also give you Rachael for seven years’ labor. Jacob came to have two wives.

Jacob loved Racheal more than Leah, but Leah produced 6 sons and Racheal none. Rachael complained to Jacob. “Jacob, I need a son. Give me a son or I will die. Chapter 30 verse 1, When Rachael saw that she was not bearing Jacob any children, she became jealous of her sister. So she said to Jacob, ‘give me children or I will die. This was not a life that Jacob wanted nor expected. In verse 2 Jacob was angry with her and said, Am I in the place of God, who has kept you from having any children? Now Rachael prepared her servant, Bilhah, as a wife for Jacob. She said to her husband, “I can’t produce so take my servant. Lay with her and give me children. After Jacob took Bilhah, Leah also gave her servant, Zilpah, to Jacob. So by that time Jacob had four wives, for 7 years after marriage, Jacob’s life was full of fighting and complaining from his wives. In the nights he

needed to watch Laban's sheep. When he came home, he needed to deal with a lot of requests and issues from four wives and their children. After 7 years, God remembered Rachael and blessed her with a son. Verse 22 says, God remembered Rachael; he listened to her and opened her womb. She gave birth to a son and named him Joseph. When Rachael produced a son, Jacob thought 'my dream is fulfilled now I can go back to my home.' So he decided and told Laban in verse 25, Send on my way so I can go back to my own homeland. Laban said to him, "Jacob, you should understand your situation. You have 11 sons and 4 wives; do you have money to look after them? Do you want to return without anything? How will you help them with transport for their trip to your homeland? He had nothing even though he had worked for 14 years for Laban except his wives and children. Laban told him to start making money from now on, "You'd better stay here and make money.

So Laban told him in verse 27, If I have found favor in your eyes, please stay here. I have learned by divination that the Lord has blessed me because of you. Laban saw that God had blessed his life because of Jacob. Laban said, Because of you, I have become rich. He had seen how God helped Jacob. Every day his wives were fighting and he was very poor but Laban believed, "I became rich because of Jacob. So Laban

started to deal with Jacob and said, “tell me your price and I will pay you. Jacob agreed to make a deal with Laban as seen in verse 32, Let me go through all your flocks today and remove from them every speckled or spotted sheep, every dark-colored lamb and every speckled or spotted goat. They will be my wages. They agreed like this. Verse 42~43, But if the animals were weak, he would not place them there. So the weak animals went to Laban and the strong ones to Jacob. In this way Jacob grew exceedingly prosperous and came to own large flocks, maid servants and men servants and camel and donkeys. After six years, Jacob became a rich man. Before, he was a poor man with 11 sons and 4 wives. Even though he wanted to go back to his hometown, he couldn't because he had nothing. But after 6 years, when he became a rich man, he didn't try to go back to his hometown. He thought, ‘here was very okay, I have become a rich man with my 11 children and 4 wives and many servants.’ He forgot Bethel, but God remembered the prayer of Jacob and then touched the life of Jacob. In the past Laban was good to Jacob, but this time he changed and he disliked him. This was because he thought Jacob took away his wealth. Due to this, Jacob started to consider returning home. This story is explained in chapter 31.

In chapter 31 Verse 3, “The Lord said to Jacob Go back to

land of your fathers and to your relatives and I will be with you. When Jacob left for homeland without Laban's approval, Laban chased to kill Jacob. However, in a dream God warned Laban not to harm Jacob. Now Laban said in verse 29, 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. Laban had to calm down his anger. Then Jacob reminded Laban from verse 41~42, why he had left. He said; It was like this for the twenty years I was in your household. I worked for you fourteen years for your two daughters and six years for your flocks, and you changed my wages ten times. If the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, had not been with me, you would surely have sent me away empty-handed. But God has seen my hardship and the toil of my hands, and last night he rebuked you. This explains how Jacob spent 20 years at Laban's house. He finally worked for more seven years in order to get Racheal. The first 7 years were like a nice dream and he was so happy. Another 7 years it was terrible because of many wives, jealousy, fighting and many children. The last 6 years he focused on money with all his heart. When he spent the 20 years, the relationship with Laban was broken. Why was their relationship broken? Because God promised to him, I will be with you and I will bring you back to this land. When was he

supposed to go back to his hometown? If Jacob had returned earlier even when Esau still has hostility against him, still God would have protected him from his brother. On the other side, while Jacob was with Laban, God has protected Jacob and blessed him. God used 20 years to subside Esau's anger. Jacob couldn't understand why he happened to stay for 20 years in his uncle's house. But all was in God's control. When Jacob came back after 20 years of the matter, Esau was ready to welcome Jacob. In our life, we may not understand certain situations. Sometimes God gives us beautiful days full of hope and joy like the first 7 years of Jacob. Sometimes God allows us to through difficult situations like the second 7 years. Know that through all these, God will accomplish his good will for us. So if you are in such situation, please wait upon the promise of God. When Jacob finished his 20 years, he decided to go back to his hometown, God was with him He took him back to the father's house safely, He kept his promise. Through this message, do not be afraid. Do not lose hope because Jesus is a living Lord!

GENESIS 32-36

When God called Jacob, his life was in trouble. He was supposed to leave his home and travel to Haran which was a foreign land to him. When he reached Bethel, he saw God in a dream. God promised to protect him and go with him and Jacob believed it. When he came back from Haran, he remembered how God's promise had been fulfilled in his life. Though Laban deceived Jacob so many times and Jacob needed to stay with him for 20 years, still God was still with him. At God's time, Jacob was able to leave for his homeland but remember his relationship with Esau wasn't good. God had prepared both sides of Jacob's life: protection from Laban and appease of Esau's anger. Even Jacob himself learned a lesson through 20 years of life in Haran. Though God promised to go with him, he was deceived by Laban more than ten times. Jacob might have doubted God's promise.

However, for 20 years God was working to subside Esau's anger. After 20 years, when he came back, Esau welcomed him. At times we don't understand God's work in our lives but all is in God's hand. Even though we doubt it, we will see God's love and power. During the 20 years, Jacob's life was not easy, but God was working for Jacob and brought him back to his father's house.

When he was rich in the house of Laban, he didn't think about returning that much. But God triggered Jacob to consider returning by deteriorating the relationship between him and Laban. In such a moment, God asked Jacob to go back to Bethel. At that time, Jacob believed God's promise of protection and left for Haran. However, in his return, when he arrived Jabbok, he was deeply troubled. He prepared lots of gift for Esau and sent his servants ahead of him to meet Esau but when his servants came back, their message was very shocking. They told him that Esau was coming to meet him with 400 men. The mind of Jacob was filled with fear asking himself, 'Why is my brother coming with 400 men? Is he still harboring hatred against me and wanting to kill me?' Verse 2 says, When Jacob saw them he said this is the camp of God. But when he heard the news from his servants in verse 6, "We went to your brother Esau, and now he is coming to meet you, and four hundred men are

with him. He was so afraid and divided his family and his flock into two groups. He prayed as in verse 9 O God of my father Abraham, God of my father Isaac, and I Lord, who said to me, 'Go back to your country and relatives and I will make you prosper When tough time came in Jacob's life, he remembered the promise of God. Until that situation, Jacob didn't remember God's promise and sought God's will for he wanted to do his own ways.

This applies to us also, when we are in troubles, we remember God and we pray loudly, "Father we are your children, remember us and fulfill your promise. But when we are well-off, we rarely think about God's ways. Jacob continued and said in verse 11, Save me I pray, from the hand of my brother Esau, for I am afraid he will come and attack me and the mothers with their children. He prayed to God fervently and also did something by himself. Verse 13, He spent a night there and from what he had with him he selected a gift for Esau. He prepared many gifts for his brother and put them in care of several servants. Do you think that he prepared this for his brother? No! He prepared this for himself. Jacob stayed 20 years in Laban's house and learned how to survive in the world. Though Laban cheated him many times, he managed to survive and even became rich. While he prayed to God to protect him from his brother Esau, at the

same time, he was also thinking of what he should do to cool down the anger of his brother. Jacob trusted God but at the same time he also trusted his experiences and know-how. What about you? Do we pray to God and trust own power same time? Jacob prepared a lot of gifts and sent off the first group to meet Esau, he sent the second and the third. They all went but he remained there thinking what to do. 'Should I go back to Laban? But God called me to return! Should I cross the river and meet my brother Esau?' He thought again and again if he would cross the river or not. Today, we do the same because of fear in our hearts, we hesitate to cross the river because Esau is there. Even though we know what the Bible promises, we have failed to trust what it says.

Therefore, God appeared to Jacob and persuaded him to cross the river. Remember, there is no other way apart from following God's words. When he met Esau after crossing the river, the situation was so different than he had expected. Chapter 33 verse 4 says, But Esau ran to meet Jacob and embraced him; he threw his hands around his neck and kissed him. And they wept. Yes, he feared Esau so much but when he met him, God had prepared Esau to meet him in a peaceful way. Who is your Esau today? It can be your problem you're struggling with. But without God you cannot meet and manage the problem with a peaceful mind. No one knows and

can decided what will happen to you tomorrow because all people are filled with fear. So when you decide to trust the direction of God, you won't be afraid of your tomorrow. You can face fears and worries only because God is faithful to his word. Therefore, brothers and sisters we have nothing to do but to believe in God alone. Jacob was a very smart but had failed until he decided to go with God. That's when he saw the grace of God from the meeting with Esau. Don't fear about tomorrow because God has prepared it for you. Just go with the promise of God. When you are with God, your future is certain and, to your surprise, even your enemy will try help you. Just trust in God and follow His word.

When Esau met Jacob, he was so happy and offered him protection through 400 men. But Jacob refused the offer and asked Esau to go ahead of him. Jacob did not believe what Esau had told him. At this, Esau was so nice and offered another favor that he would leave Jacob with his soldiers. But Jacob also refused this offer. Throughout his life, Jacob was deceived so many times and finally he didn't trust anyone.

After Esau returned to his home, Seir, Jacob didn't go to Seir even though he had promised to Esau to do so. He didn't go to Bethel even though he had promised to God 20 years ago. Verse 17 says, Jacob, however, went to Succoth, where he built a place for himself and also shelters for his livestock.

This was not Bethel. And Verse 18 says, After Jacob came from Paddan Aram, he arrived safely at the city of Shechem in Canaan and camped within the sight of the city. Though many times God asked Jacob to go to Bethel, he didn't say no but he didn't go there. He took his own ways. This man was so wise. We can tell the reason why he didn't go up to Bethel was that Bethel was a desert place, not a town. However, God was there. God wanted to come back into Jacob's life. God would surely welcome Jacob in such a desert land, but he wanted to live in the city of Shechem. He didn't mind where God was calling to.

However, Jacob and his family experienced tough situation in Shechem. The king of Shechem raped Jacob's daughter. And even more is this. Chapter 34 Verse 8~9 say, "But Hamor said them, 'My son Shechem has his heart set on your daughter. Please give her to him as his wife. Intermarry with us; give us your daughters and take our daughters for yourselves. Hamor suggested the union of two families from good motive. However, Jacob's sons, in their deceptive trick, asked all Shechemite men to be circumcised in order to intermarry with them. Being so naive the Shechemites agreed to be circumcised as they were asked. Three days later, two sons of Jacob entered the city of Shechem and killed all Shechemite men when they were suffering from circumcision

pain. Jacob's sons used circumcision, given by God for a good purpose, as a trick to destroy the men of Shechem. When Jacob heard this, he realized that the danger had come upon them because of what his two sons did. By that time, there were many Canaanite cities. If they heard about what Jacob's family did to their neighbor city, they would come and annihilated Jacob's family.

Jacob said to his sons Simeon and Levi in verse 30, You have brought trouble on me by making me a stench to the Canaanites and the 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. Jacob had enjoyed the life in the city of Shechem, but he could not live there anymore. Now God spoke to Jacob again in chapter 35 Verse 1 saying, Go up to Bethel and settle there, and build an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you were fleeing from your brother Esau. Always, God's message to Jacob was this. "Go up to Bethel. It means, 'I want to meet you in Bethel'. During 20 years, he didn't consider God's message seriously. Even after he returned from Haran, he didn't go to Bethel enjoying the life. Today, we do the same. God wants to meet us through His message, but we don't pay attention to God's word. We know what the Bible tells us to do, but we enjoy our life in the world.

Only when we have problems, we pray to God, “God help me help me. Jacob did the same. Because of his daughter’s affair, he sought God and tried to go to Bethel. When our life goes fine, we don’t pay attention to God’s will.

When Jacob moved to Bethel, he recognized that it was a place with God. Nothing was in Bethel, not even a guest house or anything that would make the place attractive. 20 years ago, when Jacob was in Bethel, he was much pressured. He even used a stone as pillow. Bethel was the place only God was, no other things. In the times of trouble, Jacob compared the life he lived all together and decided to move back to Bethel. Then the Lord said to Jacob “Go up to Bethel and settle there and build an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you were fleeing from your brother Esau.

Jacob spoke to his household in Verse 2, Get rid of all the foreign gods you have with you, and purify yourselves and change your clothes. Why did he ask this? Jacob knew that no one can meet God when he/she is still having other gods. If we have something else in our mind, we cannot meet God. As we have many gods that we rely on, they had many idols. Verse 4 says, So they gave all their foreign gods and rings to Jacob and he buried them Until this time, they have believed many foreign gods even though they knew a bit about living

God. Surprisingly when he left the house of Laban, he prayed and believed in the Lord and promised to stay with the Lord alone, but up to now, he still had relied on those foreign gods. What about you? You know God but you still believe in the power of gods in the world. As we come to the worship, are we still double minded? Remember you have to prepare yourself and fully cleanse yourself as we come to God. Let's not have double minds, not focused on God. We have to change our clothes before we come to God. Surely, many Christians these days don't come to God, in regular Sunday service, except when they have troubles.

Now God appeared to him and blessed, in verse 10~12, 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 will come from you and kings will come from your body. The land I gave to Abraham and Isaac I will also give to you; and will also give this land to your descendants after you. Where was this place? It was Bethel. Jacob's life starts here. God's promise for him was confirmed here. Therefore, your life need to start from Bethel according to God's promise. You should live in the word of God. Even though Jacob didn't want to go back to Bethel, God continuously pushed him to Bethel. Each time he moved to different places, he got problems.

So he realized that there was no other way except going to Bethel. Many people do not want to go to Bethel. Why? Because there is no entertainment, there is no culture but there is only the word of God, the message of God. However, you should know this. When you try different places but end up with troubles, it's because God wants you live in his presence. Remember that before we go to Bethel, we should put away all the other thoughts and desires than God. As we recognize God who created us, we shall recognize the will of God in our life. God want to bless the world through you. Reinitiate this mission as you come to your Bethel. Let's not be like Jacob today. We should go to Bethel directly when we hear the message of God and God will surely bless us. There is no other thing in Bethel but full of God's word. Because we hear God's will for our life, Bethel is the place where your new life starts. In the place of Bethel, God will show you your next vision and you will see God's power in your life. Follow God's way to Bethel.

GENESIS 37-38

In the previous chapters, the promise of God was fulfilled, and Jacob returned to Bethel. This meant that his work was done and at Bethel, he built an altar and worshipped God there. He got rid of all the foreign gods.

In Verse 16, They moved up from Bethel. They didn't stay but moved on from there. They wanted to go back to the land of their forefather Abraham and Isaac. But immediately after they left Bethel, something happened.

Verse 17, when they were on their way to Ephrath, Jacob's wife Rachael died immediately after giving birth to her second son, Benjamin. She meant a lot to Jacob, When Jacob fled to Laban's house, he met Rachael there. Although God promised to protect him, Jacob was still afraid of many things, God promised to make him the father of many countries but was thinking about what to eat and what to wear.

For 20 years, he worked hard to marry Rachel for the first seven years. But Laban deceived him and gave him his oldest daughter Leah instead of Rachel. So Jacob had to work for Rachel for another seven years. This means that Rachel is very important to Jacob.

But remember that God had promised to be with him wherever he would go. But Jacob worked at Laban's house for 20 years. It was for Rachel, not God but by this time Rachel was already dead and so Jacob was heartbroken. So after this, verse 21 explains that they moved again.

But again something happened, through Verse 22, the Bible says, When Israel was still living in that Region, his firstborn Reuben went in and slept with his father's concubine, Bilhah and Israel heard of it. This is one of the most terrible sins of adultery. This happened in the Jacob's family. The first son slept with one of the wives his father Jacob had acquired when he was at Laban's house. But this was still not the end of the tragedy; there are still many things in Chapter 37.

Jacob lived in the land of Canaan, the land where his father lived. There was still another sad tragedy in this family. After the death of Rachael, Jacob gave all his love to the first son of Rachael, Joseph.

Genesis 37 Verse 3 says, Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in

his old age and he made a richly ornamented robe for him. Israel had 12 sons and Joseph was born a second from the last. Jacob loved Joseph much more than the others. He even prepared the best clothes to bless him in a special way. The other 11 sons were heartbroken by this act of their father Jacob and became got envy on Joseph. One day Joseph, in his dream, was tying a bundle of wheat, and he saw only his wheat stalk standing and others' stalk bowing down to his. When he told the other brothers this dream, they were annoyed.

Then Joseph had another dream, which was more serious than the first. He dreamed of the sun, moon and 11 stars bowing to him. The sun and moon represented his mother and father, and 11 stars symbolized his brother. This made even his father worried. And it irritated his brothers even more.

One day his father sent him away to see his brothers who were taking care of the flock. When they saw Joseph coming, they planned to kill him because he had taken away all their father's love. When they wanted to kill him, Reuben objected. When Reuben was absent, the other brothers accepted Judah's idea. They did not kill their brother, but sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites, and the Ishmaelites sold him to Egypt. They took his decorated robes and tore them up, and shed some blood from the goats they slaughtered. Then they took

it to their father and asked if he recognized it. When Jacob saw Joseph's robe, he thought that his son had been eaten by wild animals.

In Verse 35, his sons and daughters came to him to comfort him but he refused and said No, in morning, I will go down to the grave, to my son. Jacob wept every day. He didn't want to enjoy anything. Jacob truly had Joseph in his heart.

And in chapter 38: When the sons saw their father not happy and missed his son Joseph, it was not easy to see their father so grieving. Judah, who suggested to sell his brother felt more guilt than the others when he saw his father that he could not stay there. Verse 1 says, And at that time, Judah left his brothers and went down to stay with a man from Adullam named Hirah. Then who's Hira? In the last sentence, Verse 5, we realize that Hirah was a friend of Judah. Judah could not find happiness in their families, so he decided to leave his father and brothers plus sisters and went to make friends with gentile. So he met a man named Hirah. It is the first time in the Bible that an Israelite was going to be friends with a gentile. Abraham had no friends in Canaan. Isaac also had no friends among the gentile. But now Judah wanted to find out from the gentile race and make friends. But this gentile friend Hirah stayed with him, and Judah met Shua's daughter, a Canaanite and married her. He didn't go back to his father's house to

get a wife like his grandfather Isaac. He got a wife from the Canaanites and he had three sons. His first son was Er, the Bible says that Er was evil in the sight of the Lord and that the Lord put him to death.

And according to Verse 10, the second son was also put to death by the Lord because he was also evil in His eyes. This is the first time in the entire Bible someone did evil in God's eyes and God put him to death himself. Now look at this bad situation in the house of Judah and in the house of Jacob. Judah sent the widow of his firstborn after his two sons died and said, "Go home, wait for Shelah my youngest son to grow up and get married. But Judah thought, 'When I see my second son dead, I'm afraid my third son will die like the rest of his brothers.' He was afraid. When his third son grew up, Judah did not fulfill his promise. He didn't give Shelah to the widow. So the widow began to find a solution by herself. One day Judah went to meet his old friend Hirah, and Tamar, the widow of his first son, heard it. She went out into the street disguised as a prostitute and sat with her face veiled.

Judah thought she was a prostitute and told her that he wanted to go and lie down with her. She asked him what he would give her in return. He said he would give her a young goat. But Judah had no goats with him, so he gave the prostitute his staff, seal and string as a deposit. Later Judas

sent his friend Hirah to get his stuffs back in exchange with a goat. But his friend could not find the prostitute. Verse 21, Where is the shrine prostitute who was beside the road at Enaim? And they answered him that there has never been any shrine prostitute there. Tamar became pregnant with Judah, her father-in-law, and gave birth to twins: Perez and Zerah.

After Jacob left Bethel, there were a few problems as soon as he left, first, he lost the beloved wife, Rachel. Then Reuben the firstborn slept with his father's concubine. And his favorite son was "eaten by animals. Then Judah left his father's house and went to wander around the world. And he married a gentile wife, and the two sons of Judah died because they had done evil in God's eyes. Judah then actually slept with his daughter-in-law.

All this happened when and because Jacob left Bethel.

What is the meaning of Bethel? In chapter 35:1, God said to Jacob, Go back to Bethel and settle there. God wanted Jacob to settle there. Not to go there and worship and stay there for a short time, but to settle there until the end of his life or until God gives him a different direction. Though he knew that it was the only place where he could receive the blessing of God, he left the place.

Being in God's house means you've given up the world.

Living and settling in Bethel means that when we meet God, when we are saved by God's grace, he wants us to live and be with him. God wants us to live in his house forever. Living in a house of God means living a life distinct from the world but Jacob soon left Bethel. That means he didn't have a good life.

Now look at the sadness that came to his house for this. When he left Bethel and returned to worldly life, he lost his beloved wife Rachael, his son had committed adultery with his wife, and Jacob did not return. Then he gave all his love to his son Joseph but he couldn't see him again. He loved Joseph more than other sons because he was born in his old age. This is the pattern of the world. Looking at all the families in the world, most parents always love the last kid born. When they were still young, they were busy working so hard, so usually they didn't have much time for their elder kids. But when they are old and their families are stable, they want to spend time with family, but since the elder kids have grown up, they tend to pour their love into the last. So Jacob lived like a man in the world. As you know, God loves us equally, but now Jacob had shown favoritism among his sons, which has caused trouble and hatred in his family. He did not stop such unfair love, but when Joseph was lost, he cried every day and wanted to go to the grave. This means Joseph was

his light and his hope. So when he lost Joseph, he felt his life was hopeless.

But as children of God, God must be our hope. But when he left Bethel, his hope would be on someone or something else. This was the secular life of the gentile. Therefore, Jacob could not live a good life. When he was in Bethel, he built an altar there. But nowhere in the Bible has it been said that he built altars elsewhere since he left Bethel. So Jacob couldn't keep the life of worship. His family all followed his path, they gave up on the way of God. They walked the way of the world. They sold their younger brother in Egypt because of hatred. Judah saw that no one was worshipping God, and that there was no presence of God in the house, and he was in despair. He left his brothers and went to find a friend to be with. He ended up marrying a gentile woman through a worldly friend. He lost two of his three sons but still didn't return. He wanted to enjoy worldly pleasures because his wife was also dead. Then he wanted to enjoy the pleasure with the prostitute. Although this prostitute was supposed to be a shrine prostitute, he just went ahead and slept with her but he felt no guilt in him.

All this trouble arose because Jacob's family had left Bethel. As Christians, we must live in Bethel. When we sin, our God calls us back to Bethel through repentance so that we

can worship Him. God does not want us to worship him only once; he wants us to settle in his house. And we must live according to God's word and his promise.

We need to keep a distinguished life from the life of the world. In the house of God, there is light, and therefore we have to live in the light and not in the darkness. The house of God is light, and the world is darkness. As children of God, you cannot live in light and darkness. Righteousness and sin cannot be together. Look at the life of Jacob. Even though he came into the house of God, he did not want to remain there. He didn't want to keep a distinguished life and that's why misery came to his household. The title of Christian cannot protect us. Only the kingdom of God can protect us. Every day we have to live in the kingdom of God, that is, the house of God and that is our Bethel.

What's the difference between Bethel and other places? Bethel in our eyesight is a deserted place. There is no city there and there is no development but that is the place of God. God wants us to live only by his side. When we live in Bethel, when we live a distinguished life and God will provide for us. But Jacob didn't believe that. He believed in the life of the city he wanted to enjoy the life of the city as the worldly people do. So he left Bethel, and those problems happened to him. Joseph's story starts with this background. Jacob came

back to Bethel, his misery should have ended. But because he failed to live a distinguished life, the Bible started to prepare the story of Joseph. Joseph was sold in Egypt, and he started to live a distinguished life there.

When he was a slave and prisoner, Joseph didn't compromise anything with anyone. He lived a life for God and God was with him. In whatever he did, God was always with him. When the right time came, Joseph became the Prime Minister of Egypt. God prepared him for the salvation of all Israel. And during the famine, Jacob and all Joseph's brothers all came to Joseph. They all came to Egypt. When they entered Egypt, because of the power of Joseph, they lived a distinguished life. They live in Goshen and never mixed with the Egyptians. Although God brought them from a hard life, they lived a distinguished life. God trained them in the desert and later gave them the land of Canaan.

So dear brethren, through today's story, we should check where we are. If we are in the wrong place, some problems are going to happen to us, hard times are going to be around us. Whenever we are in hard times facing serious problems in our lives, let us check where we are. Maybe we are in that situation because we left our Bethel and because we did not keep a distinguished life. So through all the problems we go through, God wants to call us and ask, Where are you?

Come back to Bethel and settle there. In the house of God, live distinguished lives. When we come back to the house of God and lead a distinguished life, all the hardships will stop, and blessings will come to us.

Dear brethren, all our lives are in the hands of God. The most important thing is to ask ourselves, Where is our Bethel? Bethel is the house of God. The will of God is for us to go back to the house of God and to settle there. It means that we should come to the word of God and in everything we do, let us welcome God to be your king. When our everyday life is full of God's grace, we will live according to His will and his way, and we will live a distinguished life. And in this way, we can keep our life in Bethel. Now is the time for us to come back to God and leave the Egyptian life. Our life should be restored to God's way in Bethel. We should live in the way of the Bible. Let us live a distinguished life from this world.

Look at Judah, because he could not keep a good life in the house of God, he made relationships with the world and stayed with worldly friends. Through his worldly friends, Evil entered his house. He married a gentile woman, his sons did some evil things in the eyes of God, and he committed adultery with his daughter in law. Brothers and sisters, we need to be protected. Someone needs to restore the hope of God through our life. When Jacob didn't keep a distinguished

life, Judah also lost hope, he felt there was no God in his father's life. He felt the world had a better life than their lifestyle, and so problems happened. Therefore, we should consider that the blessings are not only for ourselves; we should also consider that the blessing should also be for the next generation after us. If we can keep our lives in Bethel and live a distinguished life from the world, our children and family will see and have hope and finally will receive peace. They will be glad because God will be with them.

Whenever you build altars in your home, in your workplaces but when you cannot keep your life in Bethel, your children will be lost and they will follow the world way. We do not want our children to live a life of clubbing and because we cannot control them all the time, you find that you cannot tie chains on their hands and feet. If there is no God in your life, they will go by themselves. But if you can live a distinguished life and if God is with you, your children will not get lost.

Even if their friends want to take them, they will refuse. Let us learn from this story and the problems of Jacob and change our life styles. These are what we need to do. We should pray to stay in the house of God for it is to get His blessings. That is living a distinguished life. We should keep ourselves from worldly life. And if we can come back today, remember we should pray to God. Even if you are in hard

times, God can turn them into a blessing. In our lives today, there are no problems like in the house of Jacob, Joseph was sold as a slave, Judah left his father's home and married a gentile woman, Tamar committed adultery and their children died for doing evil in the eyes of the Lord. When they started a new life through the influence of Joseph, God turned all the hard times into blessings.

In chapter 37:36, when Joseph was sold to Egypt, he was in the house of Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officials. Today it looks like it was a bad thing, but when the people of God came back to His house; He gave a blessing to Israel through Joseph.

When you go through chapter 38:29, when Tamar slept with Judah, this was a sin of adultery. But they gave birth to 2 sons; Perez and Shelah. When the Israelites restarted their distinguished life, God turned the curse into a blessing. But remember Perez was the son of Tamar, the daughter-in-law of Judah. Judah slept with his own daughter-in-law. His act was surely adultery. So Perez was born as a result of adultery as the firstborn. So when Jacob's house returned to God, God blessed Perez. So Perez became the grandfather of King David and David became a great grandfather of Jesus Christ.

Brothers and sisters, through this story, let's check our lives. Is there anything good in us? We should praise God

because He has blessed us. Is there any bad thing within us? Let's not complain to God because in all circumstances, God wants to call us back into His house. He wants to teach us to leave the worldly ways, to cut-off from the adultery of the world, to come back to our Bethel, to live a distinguished life. When we come back to God, today we will live a distinguished life. Joseph became the prime minister of Egypt; Perez became a father to a great king of the Israelites. So all our hardships will turn and become a blessing of God. So God is calling you today. Where are you?

Come back to Bethel and settle there. Live a distinguished life. That is the blessing of God for you and the next generation. That is the origin of the blessings from curses for your descendants. Therefore Let us live a distinguished life from the World and may God bless our hearts.

GENESIS 39-41

As we continue to study the life of Joseph, we will realize that God has called us as Joseph in this generation. Although Joseph had received God's vision for his life, what happened in his life was not easy, Because of the jealousy of his brothers, Joseph was sold as a slave in Egypt.

At a sudden, Joseph became a slave in a foreign land, he received the vision of God, but his life was difficult. Nevertheless, Joseph remembered the vision and overcame the tough situation.

If we remember the vision of God in our lives, then we can stand beyond our situation. The problem you are struggling with is not the final result of your life. That is just a process you are going through. At the last moment, we shall understand why God prepared the problems we face today in our lives.

So through the story of Joseph, let us understand our God and His direction. When Joseph received the vision of God, it was a good vision. He could not even imagine God planned to make him a prime minister of one of the greatest countries in the world. Despite of this plan of God, he became a slave in Egypt. He must have cried to God, “God, I believed you, I believed your vision for me. But now look at me. Did my dream mean this? Maybe momentarily, he stopped seeking God.

However, Joseph was different, he accepted that God was living in his life. When he became a slave in Egypt, how was his life there?

Genesis 39:2, The Lord was with Joseph and he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master. The Bible says that God was with him, but remember he was a slave. How can anyone say that this is a blessing? But the Bible continually says that God was with Joseph. So we must understand what a blessing is.

Although he was in Potiphar’s house as a slave, the important thing was that God was with him. So Verse 3 says, When his master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord gave him success in everything he did. So today, even though you are going through a hard situation, if you believe who your God is, He will do the same like what He did for

Joseph. Do not try to compare your life with others' lives, you should try to know where God is in your situation and then God will lead your life through that the situation which seems unpleasant to you.

In Verse 4, Joseph found favor in his eyes and became his attendant. Potiphar put him in charge of his household, and he entrusted to his care everything he owned. Joseph became a slave; if it were you, you would be discouraged. May be you would have said “yesterday my life was so nice at home, but I am now a slave, there is no hope and joy, Let me drink waragi and enjoy my life in my own way. That is how you may respond when you are in a bad situation but Joseph was different. Whatever he did, he did it in front of God. That was very important since God is living. God wants to bless you, but before He does so, he wants to first test your life. So when Joseph became a slave, he did all he could for the glory of God, even though the situation at hand was very pressing and difficult for him.

Because of Joseph's life, they all understood who Joseph's God was because of that, Potiphar put him in charge of his whole house. When he got this 'promotion', maybe he said to himself, “thank you, Lord, when I believed you, you made my life better. I have now become the manager of this house. However, this is not all. Some thing again happened Joseph's

life. Since when he went to Potiphar's house, Potiphar's wife started seducing Joseph.

It looked a perfect chance for him to overcome his identity as a slave. If he had listened to words of Potiphar's wife and fall in temptation, she was going to give him wealth and freedom from slavery. This kind of expectation could be true. But there was another fact in Joseph's mind, Joseph knew God was watching over his life.

Gen 39:9 "No one is greater in this house than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?"

So the Bible says clearly that it is not against Potiphar, but [the sin against God]. Joseph knew that God was watching his actions. Today, if we understand that our lives are being seen by God, we cannot easily sin. Joseph was very clear about what he had done. Although there were no others, the timing was perfect; the situation was perfect for sinning; God can see everything, that's why he didn't complain when he was a slave. He believed that God could see everything.

So when he turned her down, it showed his faith. At this point, at least we believe that God must bless Joseph because he has overcome this temptation. But instead, more problems are coming to his life.

The woman spread false information to the family and her boss, Potiphar and because of this false information, Joseph was put in prison. He kept faith, and protected his life from sin. Therefore, God's blessing was expected. But when he believed in God, his life began to diminish. When he believed in God, he became a slave. When Joseph survived before God, he became a prisoner.

Do any of you want to have the same experience? If you believe in God and pray, you would have problems. Then, you pray more, but you will have more problems.

Who can trust God during that period? But that was Joseph's life. According to human understanding, this situation was unacceptable. He tried to keep his faith, but his life was getting worse every year. Remember that at one time he was Jacob's most precious son, his outer clothes were very nice (it was decorated), and his father loved him so much, and God gave him a wonderful dream, but now he is a slave, and worse, and a prisoner. Perhaps he could have lost all hope, but according to the Bible God was with him.

You must stand before God to overcome today's situation. Your present situation is not the end of your life, believe in your God. And God will do everything for you. Let us overcome the temptations of everyday life as Joseph did. When Joseph overcame the temptation of Potiphar's wife, he

was young. It was not easy, but he remembered one thing; God is here. When he overcame it, God sent him to prison instead of blessing.

When he entered prison, the Bible says in 39:21, The Lord was with him; he showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden.

It is not easy to understand the meaning of “The Lord was with him. Most of us expect something that goes like this. “When God is with me, He will bless me and I will enjoy chicken and soda for ever and ever. But that is not the case here. Let’s use this message today to understand what ‘God is with us’ means.

May be you have believed in Jesus for a long time but are still in a difficult state. Sometimes you ask yourself a question that Is there a difference since I believed in God? Then you may get the answer that No, it seems like there is no God in my life, but the Bible says, “I’m going to be with you.

When we look at our real lives, it’s like there’s no difference at all. But I want you to remember this, in His time, He will show His true power in your life. When Joseph was put in prison, his life was worse than that of a slave, may be other prisoners even mocked him saying “Oh, you tried to rape the wife of your boss. And perhaps he tried to deny all the charges, but they wouldn’t believe it. In prison, all

other prisoners would have thought Joseph was a serious sinner. But Joseph kept his faith. Although no one believed him, nor respect him, he lived a wonderful life of faith. The same is true of our lives. Maybe no one understands you, but remember God knows everything. Don't expect anything from man, only God can bless you. Through the comfort of God, we could be strong regardless of what happens to us.

Long ago, when one of the pastors of our church was in trouble, this was his only prayer. Lord, you know this situation, you know what I am going through. And at that time, God said to him, "I know this, I know what you are going through. So he continued to pray to God, and said "I will not pray about this again, I will not ask for any other solution because you know what I am going through.

He then heard God's word saying "I know your situation. From that time, God prepared a new life for him. So in your life, when you cannot find out any solution, pray one prayer and say, "Father, you know me, you know this situation. Then, God will say to you, "I know your situation. In His time, He will show a miracle to you. In bad situations, Joseph kept a holy and distinguished life as a man of God. Although nobody believed him, he believed that God knew the situation he was passing through.

In the prison, God made Joseph to become the manager of

the prison. If it were you or me, we might not be happy to be in charge of the prisoners because you are still in prison. Since he knew that God was with him, maybe he complained to God why he was in prison.

Sometimes may be he complained to God saying “You were with me; in this situation? Then how can I get out?, It looks like I am going to die here. Is this your blessing? Don’t say that you blessed me when I am in prison. This was the life of Joseph.

But God kept His promise and Joseph also kept his life holy. After a while in prison, two of the king’s servants were locked in the prison. One night they both had dreams. So they couldn’t understand the meaning of their dreams and told Joseph about the dreams. Joseph told each one of them according to their dreams: restoration and hanging.

To the one who was going to be restored to his position, Joseph said, verse 13, Within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your position and you will put Pharaoh’s cup in his hand, just as you used to do when you were his cupbearer.

Then in Verse 14 he told him, But when all goes well with you, remember me and show me kindness; mention me to Pharaoh and get me out of this prison. Joseph asked the servant to ask Pharaoh for his release. He was also a human

being and happened to trust in human power. He might have asked for the petition for him again and again. Maybe the cupbearer also assured Joseph that he was going to mention his name to Pharaoh. Joseph might have believed that after three days he will be freed.

But after three days, nobody remembered Joseph. That is exactly who human beings are. Look at the Bible story. Verse 23 says, The chief cupbearer, however, did not remember Joseph; he forgot him. This is what happens when we believe in men. Without God's touch, nobody can help you. Only God can help you. Joseph was disappointed. His situation got worse. Today, we should not trust in man or human power. They cannot help you that much. Let us trust God only. When God empowers us, we can do any and everything. Through the story of Joseph, we can understand who can follow God's ways. If you believe God, please believe his message. Let His word become your vision and goal. People's words cannot help you. Their prophecies are useless. The cupbearer promised Joseph that he would save him, but he did nothing. He completely forgot Joseph.

So chapter 41 is another interesting one. Verse 1 says, "When two full years had passed, Pharaoh had a dream, He was standing by the Nile, The Bible clearly mentions two full years. Nowhere else in the Bible is it mentioned two

full years? The Bible usually talks about one year, three years ten years, but not two full years. By the end of this preaching, we will understand why the Bible says two full years.

At that time, Pharaoh had a dream but could not understand its meaning, He therefore started looking for someone who could interpret it. Finally the cupbearer remembered Joseph, This was God's time.

In the same way, God will intervene into your life in his right time. So in Verse 14, the Bible states, "So Pharaoh sent for Joseph, and he was quickly brought from the dungeon. When he had shaved and changed his clothes, he came before Pharaoh. In his time, God will shave off your shame, cover all your weaknesses, change your clothes and change your identity.

"Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I had a dream, and no one can interpret it. But I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it."

It seemed a good chance for Joseph to be saved from the prison. When Pharaoh asked him, "Can you interpret it? most people would readily say, Yes, I can interpret it. This must be a good chance to get out of prison.

Interpreting dreams is a bit tricky. When you interpret a dream of yours or others, you cannot assure the correct

interpretation of the dream, nobody knows the meaning. A dream is a dream. If someone walks up to me and says, “Oh Pastor, someone came to me with a dog, what could be the meaning of this dream?”

I could interpret that God is going to send a guide or protector for you. Through this dog, God wants to protect your life. God has blessed you. Believe what I tell you. You will believe because you also don’t know. May be Joseph could have said to Pharaoh, “look, this is my evidence. I interpreted his dream and today he is here. Ask him (cupbearer), he is my witness. Ask him and he will tell you.

But then, Joseph was different. The Bible says in Verse 16, “I cannot do it, Joseph replied to Pharaoh, This answer shocked the cupbearer. He must have thought to himself, “I brought this man out because he can interpret dreams. And now he is saying that he cannot. Pharaoh can kill me right now. It was a good chance for Joseph in his life to forget all his past problems by saying anything that seemed pleasing to Pharaoh for a dream is a dream. But Joseph said, “I cannot do it.

On such a good opportunity, he remembered all he had gone through and his God. He added, “But God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires. Even you understand that there is nothing we can do by ourselves. Only God can do through

us. Do not believe what you did before. Do not believe your previous experiences. Today, you do not know it, you do not know what will happen next, but God will lead us according to His will. So Joseph said to Pharaoh, “God will give you the answer you desire. Let’s remember this message. We cannot do anything, but God will do anything through us.

The most important thing is this in 41:34 Let Pharaoh appoint commissioners over the land to take a fifth of the harvest of Egypt during the seven years of abundance

After Joseph had interpreted the dream, he did not stop at interpretation; he also had the answer to overcome the problem that was to come. Verse 35, They should collect all the food of these good years that are coming and store up the grain under the authority of Pharaoh, to be kept in the cities for food.

Verse 36 says, This food should be held in reserve for the country, to be used during the seven years of famine that will come upon Egypt, so that the country may not be ruined by the famine.

So Joseph explained the dream but what was important was that he also gave Pharaoh a solution to save Egypt. Now the dream was understood and a solution was given. The issue was who would be in charge of this plan to save Egypt.

When Joseph had said those words, verse 37 says, The

plan seemed good to Pharaoh and to all his officials. Then verse 38 continues, “So Pharaoh asked them, Can we find anyone like this man, one in whom is the spirit of God?” Now Pharaoh believed that it was a good solution to save his people. He believed in Joseph’s ability and he made him the prime minister of all Egyptians from that day on because he had a solution to save Egypt. He did not only interpret the dream, he also had a solution to save the people. You have to be like Joseph to save the people of Uganda. People only want to talk about the problem and cannot find solutions to those problems. People only complain about corruption, corruption, corruption. If we all keep complaining, who will save the people of Uganda? If you can find a solution to the problem, God will also put you in charge of this nation. We tend to blame our problems on situations and restrictions and do nothing but keep complaining. When you have a problem, please ask your God. “God, please show us your answer, we will do. God will let you know his solution to your problem.

Joseph did not focus on the problem but prepared a solution. So we also need to focus on the solution, not the problem. In your life, God is ready to help you, find out a solution in Him. What we are supposed to do therefore? Most people say what is on their minds, worries about the problems. When Joseph found a solution, people believed that he came from God

although he had been locked up in prison.

In Verse 41, Pharaoh said to Joseph, I hereby put you in charge of the whole land of Egypt. Joseph's life was completely changed from that time on, imagine from grass to grace. I want to encourage you, please propose to your God and prepare a good idea to God about your solution to save God's people. If your proposal touches the heart of God, God will make you like Joseph. Do not cry because you have a problem. Don't focus your mind on the problem. Try to find a solution, and in His mighty name, His power, He will give you authority because you know the Bible. Through the Bible, you will know His true power. Through the Bible, try to find a solution to save God's people. It was what Joseph different from many others. When Joseph became the in-charge of Egypt, Joseph was 30 years old.

Why does the Bible mention his age? Two years before, he told the cupbearer that "when you reach pharaoh, mention my name to him. But that was not the time of God yet. But after two full years, he made 30 years old; he was put in charge of Egypt. Why does this matter?

According to the Egyptian laws, someone less than 30 years could not become the prime minister. He could be the prime minister if he were released two years earlier. After two full years, Joseph couldn't understand why God still put him in

prison for two full years. But after two years, at the perfect time of God; Joseph came out prison.

Today also, we face the same situation. Sometimes, God might lock us up in a certain situation. We should stay there until God's time. Some are impatient and complain, asking "where is God in my life, when will God remember me, when will God help me? but God knows everything. In His time, He will lift you up. He will lift up your name. From today, let's restart our lives to follow God's ways.

When you feel it takes too long, don't doubt. He is the same God. He called us to lift our name up. God wants to save his people through your life. So please keep your life today for God's glory. Let us try to follow the Bible lessons to confirm these promises in our lives. When you seek your vision from God and overcome temptation, God will guide your ways like he did Joseph.

GENESIS 42-45

After Joseph was sold as a slave by his brothers because of jealousy, his life became miserable. He felt terrible for he had not done anything wrong. He was a good son of Jacob, then he became a slave, and he was put in prison. Maybe he couldn't accept his situation. Though the Bible says that God was with him, it looked like God's promise were far away from his life. Every day God showed his love and mercy upon his life, but Joseph, was a slave, and later a prisoner. Finally, God called him out of prison and elevated him high to become the prime minister of Egypt. Is this the purpose of God in Joseph's life? Through this sermon, we want to recognize what the will of God is in his life. Sometimes we are sad, sometimes we are extremely happy. Sadness or happiness, it is all a process to fulfill the will of God. When Joseph became in charge of Egypt, he recognized what the will of God was.

So through this message, let us learn how God blessed his family and his life. How God restored the relationship with all his family. When we understand this message, all your family, friends and relatives will begin to come or go to Church. So from chapter 42:1~2, the Bible says, “When Jacob learned that there was grain in Egypt, he said to his sons, “Why do you just keep looking at each other?” He continued, “I have heard that there is grain in Egypt. Go down there and buy some for us, so that we may live and not die.””

At that time, there was a great famine in Canaan. There was no food but Jacob heard that there was food in Egypt. So he sent his sons to Egypt to buy food but he didn't send all of them. Verse 4 says, “But Jacob did not send Benjamin, Joseph's brother, with the others, because he was afraid that harm might come to him. He sent the ten brothers but did not send Benjamin. This was because he loved Benjamin more than anyone else, he also loved Rachel the mother of Benjamin and Joseph. Though he loved Rachael, God still sent three other wives for Jacob. He had 12 children but he loved Benjamin and Joseph more than other sons and today, we may not be much different either. Sometimes we don't want to accept our relatives, we just want to accept what's good for us. To understand this in our lives, let's first understand what was in Jacob's life.

Because Jacob only loved Joseph, all the other sons became jealous of him. This jealousy turned to hatred. Finally, they sold their brother Joseph to Egypt. They wanted love from their father Jacob, but Jacob only loved Rachel and her children. After the disappearing of Joseph, his obsessive love for Benjamin got stronger. So at that time, Jacob loved Benjamin so much and did not send him to Egypt.

When the ten brothers arrived in Egypt and saw Joseph, they could not recognize him. Verse 6~7 say, “Now Joseph was the governor of the land, the one who sold grain to all its people. So when Joseph’s brothers arrived, they bowed down to him with their faces to the ground.

As soon as Joseph saw his brothers, he recognized them, but he pretended to be a stranger and spoke harshly to them. “Where do you come from?” he asked. “From the land of Canaan, they replied, “to buy food.””

When Joseph realized that they could not recognize him, he said to them 42:9, “Then he remembered his dreams about them and said to them, “You are spies! You have come to see where our land is unprotected.””

Long-time ago, when he was still with his family, God gave him a dream to him. The dream seemed to be nonsense but by this time he started to realize that what he had dreamt was true. All his brothers bowed down to him.

While Joseph was going through the life of slavery and imprisonment, he remembered the dream he got before. So when he saw his brothers bowing before him, he remembered the dream. This time God was going to accomplish His vision. It is the same today, God wants to accomplish his will through you and me. He knows and remembers his promises. All you have to do is remember his words through the Bible.

Though he knew they were his brothers, he said, You are spies! You have come to see where our land is unprotected. He tried to test his brothers. When Joseph told them that they were spies, they were surprised and defended themselves. They explained the situation of their family, how many they were, and where they were living.

However, Joseph pretended not believing them and put them all in prison. They couldn't understand how this happened to them. They came to buy food but were wrongly accused and thrown into prison. They were really heart broken. They tried to find a solution to their problem but they couldn't find any. They spent three days in prison. Verse 18, "On the third day, Joseph said to them, "Do this and you will live, for I fear God: They were happy knowing that he was going to release them. However they were still afraid because they were from Canaan and Egypt was a very big country. So they believed that the Egyptians were going to kill them on the way. But

Joseph said to them “Do this and you will live···for I fear God. They never expected this message because Egyptians did not believe God and they were sure this man was an Egyptian. When they heard “God, they remembered one thing in their lives, they recognized their sinful life. They started to remember the sin they had committed some years ago.

So they thought that they were in prison because of their sin. When Joseph proclaimed that one word “God, immediately they interpreted the situation that God put them in that situation as punishment for their sin. So they said to one another, Surely we are being punished because of our brother. We saw how distressed he was when he pleaded with us for his life, but we would not listen; that’s why this distress has come upon us.

When they heard “God, immediately they knew what their problem was. When you remember your God, you will start to reverse all your sinfulness.

So Verse 22 says, “Reuben replied, “Didn’t I tell you not to sin against the boy? But you wouldn’t listen! Now we must give an accounting for his blood.”” Through what happened to their life, they now recognized the sin in their lives. When you have a problem, do not just try to find a solution. Check your life in front of God. God loves us and He wants to change us through the problems we are passing through.

He gives us an opportunity for us to review our lives and repent. When they heard “God, immediately they tried to find out what their problem was in the sight of God. We may seem like there is no any problem in our lives (for some) but there are a lot of sins in our lives. When you meet a tough situation, you will try to find out the solution. But if you are wise, from today, please listen to the message of God and please try to get rid of all sinful thought from your life. As they were discussing among themselves, they had no idea that Joseph could understand what they were saying because; when he was speaking to them, he was using an interpreter. But actually Joseph understood everything they talked.

So the Bible says in Verse 24, “He turned away from them and began to weep, but then turned back and spoke to them again. He had Simeon taken from them and bound before their eyes.

So Joseph cried out. Why did he cry?

Joseph saw that God started to touch his brothers’ hearts. So when he heard the words they were saying to each other. They were regretting selling Joseph. They thought that because they sold their brother Joseph, now they were in trouble. When Joseph heard this, he cried. He saw the real heart of his brothers. For a long time, maybe he hated his brothers because they had sold him to be a slave. He might

have hated them even more when he was thrown into prison. So when he heard this, God touched his heart because his brothers had started to repent. Although he had gone through this tough situation, he did not try to revenge on them but he tried to know the real heart of his brothers. So he said to them, But you must bring your youngest brother to me, so that your words may be verified and that you may not die.

Nine went to their father. Simon was still in prison. So they explained to Jacob everything that had happened during their time in Egypt. Jacob could not believe what his sons were saying to him and therefore he began to ask them why they said they had a brother left there. So they told him that the man asked them step by step. “He asked how many children there were, and we said we were twelve. He asked where my father was, and we said he was in Canaan. He asked us very detailed information. So they explained to him exactly what happened in Egypt. “After we said this, he said that we should bring our youngest brother. No one expected him to tell us that. So Jacob could not trust them and didn’t want to send Benjamin with them. But the famine was still ongoing. Not many days, they ran out of food. Chapter 43 verse 1, Now the famine was still severe in the land. So Jacob wanted to send again his sons to Egypt to buy food. But all of them refused and said they could not go without Benjamin because

they were told they could not see Joseph's face without bringing Benjamin. So Jacob also said to them, "you must go and buy food but you must not touch Benjamin. He was the last he had remained with. So his sons also said they wouldn't go unless Benjamin was with them. So in 42:37, "Then Reuben said to his father, "You may put both of my sons to death if I do not bring him back to you. Entrust him to my care, and I will bring him back."

Jacob still refused but the famine became more severe and there was no other solution. So Jacob finally decided like this, 43:13, "Take your brother also and go back to the man at once. He added and said in 43:14 that "And may God Almighty grant you mercy before the man so that he will let your other brother and Benjamin come back with you. As for me, if I am bereaved, I am bereaved.

So at that time, he laid down his thought and started to believe God. Even though I love Benjamin so much, everything is in the hands of God. So when Jacob stopped protecting Benjamin by himself, God opened their ways to save their lives. Jacob only loved Benjamin and Joseph. But through this problem, the life of Jacob has changed. He started to trust in God. So when he trusted in God, he granted to send Benjamin.

If you cannot believe God, you will try to protect your

children and your family by yourself. Because of his excessive love for Joseph and Benjamin, the other sons got heartbroken and jealous. If he had loved all sons, Joseph would not be sold to Egypt. But unfortunately, that situation happened. Through all his life, he believed that Rachael was his true wife and her sons were his true sons. He didn't accept what God has brought to his life.

In our lives, sometimes we shall face good situations; sometimes we shall face bad situations, and sometimes we shall face unexpected situations. So we should understand that everything is in the hand of God. God is going to test our lives continually until He gets the best results from us. Through this situation, Jacob believed God and he let Benjamin go. When they arrived in Egypt again on their second journey, Joseph saw Benjamin and all his other brothers, he wept. He asked again about their family.

Why didn't he try to reveal himself to them? Remember when he sent them the first time, he didn't tell them. When they came back the second time, still he hadn't told them. Since Benjamin had arrived, it would have been a good time for him to reveal himself to them. But he did not reveal immediately. When they had bought all the food that they wanted, we find another interesting story in chapter 44 as they were going back home. "Now Joseph gave these

instructions to the steward of his house: “Fill the men’s sacks with as much food as they can carry, and put each man’s silver in the mouth of his sack. Then put my cup, the silver one, in the mouth of the youngest one’s sack, along with the silver for his grain.”

So Joseph ordered that his silver cup to be put into Benjamin’s bag and nobody knew about this. As they were on their way, suddenly the servants of Joseph chased after them. And when they approached them, he asked them why they had taken the silver cup that belonged to his master.

So they were surprised at what he said and very naturally they denied because they were innocent and did not know anything. So they checked each one from the eldest to the youngest until they found the cup from Benjamin’s bag. At this, they were speechless.

Maybe they could rebuke Benjamin for stealing the cup. But they didn’t do that. They were changed. Even though the silver cup was in Benjamin’s sack, Joseph said to them that according to what they had agreed, they were going to become his slaves. Verse 16 says, ““What can we say to my Lord? Judah replied. “What can we say? How can we prove our innocence? God has uncovered your servants’ guilt. We are now my Lord’s slaves—we ourselves and the one who was found to have the cup.””

But Joseph said in Verse 17, “Far be it from me to do such a thing! Only the man who was found to have the cup will become my slave. The rest of you, go back to your father in peace.”

Only Benjamin was to be a slave, not all the brothers and his was a serious problem for them. If this had happened twenty years ago, they would have been happy. They would say, among us all, God has chosen Benjamin. “Since the cup was in his bag, it is his problem and not our problem. We are going to tell your father Jacob that you have stolen a silver cup. However, they were changed now. Judah went and begged Joseph, “Please don’t do that way, for this boy is very precious to his father. He begged Joseph to accept him to become a slave in place of Benjamin. This attitude of Judah was shocking enough because in the past it was Judah who encouraged the brothers to sell Joseph. But this time the same person Judah tried to protect Benjamin and gave himself in to be a slave. Joseph was moved at that his brothers since they had restored love for one another. Through the three days they spent in prison, they realized their sin of selling Joseph. Through this second test, now Joseph recognized that there was real love in their family. Judah and Reuben were willing to become slaves instead of Benjamin. This was real love. Through the life of Joseph, the thoughts, decisions,

and actions of the brothers were changed. Their father Jacob, his life also was changed. Previously, Jacob couldn't believe God's purpose. He only loved Joseph and Benjamin. But he realized that everything was in the hand of God. When their lives were changed, God opened new ways for them. When Judah had pleaded with Joseph for Benjamin, Gen 44:3 says, Now then, please let your servant remain here as my Lord's slave in place of the boy, and let the boy return with his brothers.

Judah thought his family had a problem. Jealousy and envy destroyed the family and their relationships were broken. They didn't love each other and so they sold Joseph to Egypt. Because of this hopeless situation, Judah left his father's house and went to another place and also his family was torn down. But in the past, God had promised them that they were his chosen people. He promised them that through their lives and their families, they would inherit the land of Canaan. But because of Joseph's dreams, the life of Jacob was shattered. Because of those problems, it looked like this family was never going to inherit Canaan. So God sent Joseph to Egypt to change the whole family. If Joseph had remained in Canaan, God would have never changed their life. Jacob would not be changed. The brothers would not be changed. So to save their family, God prepared this plan. When Joseph

became a slave, though it was suffering, this was a process according to God's plan to accomplish God's mission. Today we are the same. Although we cannot understand our real life, sometimes we do not want to accept reality and we keep complaining about our situations and problems. Through the life of Joseph, God surely changed the whole family of Jacob. But this was not because of Joseph's power as the prime minister of Egypt, but through voluntary sacrifice and forgiveness, and according to God's purpose. So God changed all the family situation of Jacob. So the brothers started loving each other truly.

When Jacob saw that, chapter 45 says, Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all his attendants, and he cried out, "Have everyone leave my presence! So there was no one with Joseph when he made himself known to his brothers.

Then Joseph proclaimed in Verse 3 "I am Joseph! Is my father still living? But his brothers were not able to answer him, because they were terrified at his presence

Why did Joseph disclose his identity at this particular moment? It was because his relationship with his brothers was restored. They stood in the sight of God and they restored their brotherly love. So, he said, "I am Joseph! and when he said that, all the brothers were surprised and

terrified. They couldn't believe it because they thought he died after they sold him.

So in Verse 4, Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come close to me. When they had done so, he said, "I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt!"

And because he knew their mind, he encouraged them through Verse 5 saying, And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you.

This time Joseph was able to understand why God made him to go through this tough situations. Let's understand the reason why God sent him ahead of his brothers. In your life, if you understand the will of God, you will not fear any situation. You will love all the people. There are some who we cannot love or we cannot accept because we don't know them or don't like them. We have to believe that everything is in the hands of God. God prepared everything, to save your family and to save your mind.

In Verse 7, "But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

And Verse 8 also continues, "So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me father to Pharaoh, Lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt.

In the past, Joseph thought that his brothers betrayed him and sold him. He must have thought, “If I meet them, I will kill them. But when he recognized the will of God and God’s purpose for his family through his sacrifice, he said this. So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God.

So in your life, neither hate your relatives nor your brothers for it is God who created your life. You are still alive today because God wants you to save His people especially those who do not know Him. So through your life, God wants to save your whole family. When Joseph realized this, everything was ok. So when he met his brothers who had sold him, he called them close to himself. So believe God. Your life is in the hand of God. Do not be afraid for no one can destroy you.

However, people think other way, they point fingers at each other “maybe this one, maybe that one, maybe the other one, thinking they can kill you. Let’s remember the story of Joseph. God will show his love to you. Through your life, God wants to save you and your family. If you can’t understand the will of God, fear will cover you. Remember Verse 9. Why God made Joseph ruler over Egypt, it was for this reason, Now hurry back to my father and say to him, ‘this is what your son Joseph says: God has made me Lord of all Egypt. Come down to me; don’t delay.

Let's remember the situation of Joseph, the life of Joseph.

His life looked like problems keep coming; his brothers betrayed him; he became a slave, and became a prisoner. But when he became Lord over Egypt he did not revenge his brothers for what they had done to him.

Surely God accomplished his mission and Joseph's dreams came to pass. Joseph said, "You did not send me here, God sent me. Through you, God will open a new way, people will know who our living God is.

GENESIS 46-50

In these chapters, we are going to continue looking at the life of Joseph and through this, we want to understand the will of God in our lives. When Joseph met his brothers, he welcomed them to Egypt with the entire family. So when Jacob heard these news, Bible says in 46:1, “So Israel set out with all that was his, and when he reached Beersheba, he offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. For once Jacob decided to prepare sacrifices for God. In his whole life, he had never called the Lord before the Lord called him. Whenever he needed to make a decision in his life, he followed his own desire, but through the situation of his family, God changed Jacob bit by bit. In the past, he often refused and denied the will of God to work in his life.

In this chapter, Jacob’s life changed perfectly. When he heard about Joseph in Egypt, he offered a sacrifice to God and

finally realized that everything was in the hands of God.

His life perfectly changed and at first, he ran away from his brother Esau to in order to protect his own life. Then he arrived at his uncle's house and worked so hard for a long time to get a wife, Rachael. He worked hard to get money to look after his large family. Then he refused to go to Bethel and went to Shechem to enjoy his life in the city. Jacob lived according to his own will. But now, when he was to go to Egypt, he offered sacrifices to God and asked for God's will. He had realized that everything was in the hands of God. He knew that only God could lead to where he was going successfully. As you know, when Abraham went to Egypt, his life was a failure, so when his son Isaac tried to go to Egypt, God didn't allow him to go there. Jacob asked God's confirmation for the decision to go to Egypt.

In the past, God promised to make a great nation through Jacob, to make his name great, and to give the land of Canaan to his descendants. That time God decided to send him to Egypt. It seemed like God had changed his plan. Because of their life and behaviors, they were not getting good reputation in the land of Canaan. When Jacob's family came back to Canaan from Haran, they went to Shechem instead of Bethel. The prince of Shechem raped Jacob's daughter Dinah. Two sons of Jacob killed all the men of Shechem while they were in

pain of the circumcision, which Jacob's sons had tricked them and when all Canaanites heard of it, they grudged against his family. Later, his sons sold their own brother Joseph to Egypt. Then his other son Judah's failure follows. Also, they were God's chosen people but they failed to be the light in the world rather, they followed the patterns of the Canaanites. They were supposed to live a distinguished life, but they were about to assimilate into the life of Canaanites. Therefore, they needed to be deported to Egypt for a while.

Today also, God is telling us the same great promises to make us into great nations and to make our names great. Even though this promise is true, when we assimilate ourselves into the world, God will put us in an isolated environment where He purify our faith from. Jacob's family was not able to influence the people of Canaan, God prepared another step and solution to bless him and his descendants because God had promised to fulfill his mission through his family.

As a part of God's plan, Joseph was sent to Egypt at first. Nobody understood what the will of God was in Egypt. But finally, Joseph recognized God's will in his life's journey to Egypt. At first when he was sold by his brothers, he couldn't understand why it happened to him. When he became a slave in Potiphar's house, he finally landed in prison, he didn't

understand why all these were happening to him. But in every situation, Joseph believed in God seriously, and one day he recognized God's will when he became a Prime Minister of Egypt. He didn't try to enjoy his position as a leader in Egypt but he tried to know why God had given him that position. One day, he understood that God sent him to Egypt to save Jacob's family. God sent him there to restore his kingdom. That was the life of Joseph. When he realized that everything was in the hands of God, he was able to overcome all the hatred towards his brothers.

If Joseph had not understood the will of God, he would kill his brothers when he met them as the prime minister. But when he understood the will of God, his mind changed and he tried to save his family. In 45:10, the Bible says, "You shall live in the region of Goshen and be near me— you, your children and grandchildren, your flocks and herds and all you have. After he had revealed himself to his brothers, he advised them to ask for the land of Goshen. He told them to stay in Goshen. Why? He understood his family and their weaknesses in Canaan. In his family they were only 70 and God wanted to increase them, he did it because he wanted to keep them from other parts of Egypt. When they were in Canaan, they were not different from other people, they didn't behave like God's people. Their family didn't get a

good reputation because of what they did in Canaan. Joseph chose Goshen to help Jacob's family live a distinguished life as a family. If you want to see God's glory, then remember your identity and live a distinguished life. Please believe the Bible and believe that you are called to be distinguished. Don't compare your life with others', God will open your ways and use your life to show his glory. You are different because you are a child of God.

Joseph believed that because there was nothing in Goshen, the land was isolated; they would try to serve God only. They needed God. When Jacob left Paddan Aram, God asked him to go and settle in Bethel. But he went to Shechem because it was a city. He tried to enjoy city life there and neglected the instruction of God. Joseph was a very powerful man in Egypt and would have prepared the best of cities for his family. He knew that his family needed God but not city life. So there was one solution for them, Goshen! It was a very nice place to meet God. In your life, your family, your future, you need a relationship with God. Restore your relationship with God today, and your entire life will be well. Maybe when his brothers asked pharaoh for the land of Goshen, he couldn't understand why they asked for such a place. But Joseph was sure that this was the best place for his family.

God wants to save his people through you. You cannot save

them on your ability. If you prepare a good environment, “a Goshen, for your family to meet God, you will be called the Joseph of this age.

When they reached Goshen and stayed there, their family started to grow. As we know from the book of Exodus, they went 70 people but when they were leaving Egypt, they were about two million people. Through the life of Goshen, they became a nation. We need to isolate ourselves from the life of sin and sinful people for the glory of God. Do not follow the ways of the city but believe God and his power only. For the problems in his family, Joseph was in the position of power to do something fix those problems. But he didn't do any. Rather he entrusted all problems into God's hands. So today, believe Jesus because he is your Lord. Joseph's family was weak but under the power of God through Joseph, the family started to grow in numbers. God wants to do the same for you in your life. If you want to make disciples for Jesus, God will endorse his authority to you. Under your blessing, God's people will begin to increase. That's how Joseph was. Through his authority, he protected the descendants of his father Israel.

First, believe that your life is in the hands of God. Even though we may not understand some things, God is living and every plan is in his hands. Believe that tomorrow God will do great things. Sometimes, it looks like your life is getting

trouble and you're going to die. Believe that in his time, he will save you; not only for you but also for his people and your people. When Joseph was in charge of Egypt, he realized that his authority wasn't for his benefit but for saving his family, God's people.

In 47:27, the Bible says, Now the Israelite settled in Egypt in the region of Goshen. They acquired property there and we're fruitful and increased greatly in number. Even though Goshen wasn't a city, when they went there and settled there, God helped them and their numbers increased greatly.

After this situation, Jacob died. He said to Joseph in Verse 29~30, Do not bury me in Egypt, but when I rest with my fathers, carry me out of Egypt and bury me where they are buried. Joseph accepted and obeyed his father's will and buried him in the land of Canaan. Through this story, we can understand that Jacob's family changed. Jacob believed that God had given him and his descendants the land of Canaan. So he said he wanted to rest in Canaan. Before he died, he blessed the sons of Joseph and he overcame all human direction. As Joseph's two sons sat there, Jacob put his right hand on the Second Born and his left hand on the firstborn. Joseph couldn't understand why Jacob did this because he wanted the opposite. But Jacob knew the will of God. He had tried to show his power by saving his family. But finally, he

knew that everything is in the hand of God.

In 50:15, Jacob died. Jacob's sons didn't believe God as their protection. Though Joseph had told them not to worry because it was not themselves who decided to go but it was God who sent him to Egypt, they feared Joseph after Jacob's death. They thought Joseph would revenge them. So they said, please forgive us because we are your servants. They also said in Verse 18, we are your slaves. But Joseph spoke to them in Verse 19~21 saying, Don't be afraid. Am I 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. So then, do not be afraid. I will provide for you and your children. Even though Joseph explained the will of God to them, they didn't believe him because, in their lives, they never even believed God. But through the words of Joseph, they tried to believe the word of God. Today we are also the same. Through hearing the message of God, we can understand and believe the will of God. You must meet God in your life just like Joseph.

Do you see the difference between Joseph and his brothers? Joseph believed the will of God in his life but his brothers never understood the will of God. Today, the situation isn't much different. We all read and believe the same Bible but our lives are different. Recognize the will of God in your life

and confirm who God is throughout your life. Joseph was different because through his life, he recognized his God. His brothers tried to harm him but God changed his destination and direction. Joseph in his life recognized the mighty God. In Verse 21 he promised to provide for them and their children. He tried to help the Israelite, not because they were his family but because Joseph believed the next step of God. He knew that these people would take Canaan. So until the time came, they had to increase. So he provided for them for the glory of God. As you know, when indeed they increased greatly, God called the Israelites to take over the land of Canaan and this is also true in our daily lives. Do you want to help God's people to grow up and believe the will of God? God has called you as Joseph of this Era.

When the Israelites received the blessing of Joseph, they had a beautiful life, and no one wanted to leave Egypt. So then, God changed the Pharaoh of Egypt, and he started to persecute the Israelites. At that time, they cried out to God for help, God called them to go and take over Canaan. Today, don't be comfortable with your current lifestyle. Understand the direction of God in your life for his glory, and if you find out your direction for the glory of God, you are called today's Joseph. Joseph believed that even though his people were with him on that day, one day they were going to back and

take over Canaan. He couldn't know which day exactly but he believed that God would bring them to Canaan someday. Verse 25, God will surely come to your aid and then you must carry my bones up from this place. Maybe his life in Egypt was very nice but he told them that they would go back to Canaan one day. He told them to take his bones to Canaan. He believed in God's will and power. When the Israelites were leaving Egypt in the book of Exodus, they took Joseph's bones with them to the land of Canaan.

We have heard the entire story of Joseph. If we see problems in our life and know they are in God's hands, you are called as today's Joseph. Focus on the will of God. God wants to use you for his glory. You must prepare your boundaries like Goshen to stand in the presence of God. Then you take care of God's people. He took care of his brothers because he realized that God would accomplish his great work through these people. Try to accomplish the work of God through your neighbor and your family. Sacrifice your life to accomplish the will of God. Your present life is not the final destination. You must anticipate God's blessing and power that will reveal in the future.

Through the book of Genesis, believe God. He will accomplish all his promises. Sometimes your life will be like for Abraham, Isaac, Jacob or even Joseph. But important is

the fact that God wants to show his glory to you. He wants to show his blessing to you. Believe the Bible and let God use your life. God accomplished his plan through Joseph, and later, the Israelite came up from Egypt and entered the Promised Land, Canaan. So through you, some people will grow, and through them, God will accomplish His plan in their lives.

May God bless your life like Joseph and accomplish His great will through you!