



Traveling God's Word

A chronological study of the Bible

WEEK 6

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Read:

Genesis 24-36

The covenant that God made with Abraham continues to hang by a thread, single strands of humanity weaving together one after another to create the tapestry of God's plan for all of mankind. Here is the same Isaac that God had asked Abraham to sacrifice, then replaced at the last minute with a ram. The same Isaac raised by an elderly mother who has now died. He is joined in continuing the covenant with God by Rebekah, grand daughter of Abraham's brother Nahor. She first struggles with infertility, and then struggles with twins at odds with each other. God reveals Jacob as the intended covenant keeper of the next generation, but Jacob flees the land of promise and is absent for many years — the same land that Abraham was insistent that Isaac not leave. Infertility and family strife and division and absenteeism seem to threaten many times over to disrupt the plans and promises of God. The greatest threats to God's plans for the future of this infant nation seem to come from the very people He plans to bless. But, the twists and turns that make up the stories of these individuals prove to be part of God's greater story too.

I tend to see the happenings and events of my own life as MY story, with God as a welcome writer and narrator. The stories of Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah and Rachel, remind me that our lives, our stories, are not our own. We are also His covenant keepers, and our lives are also strands in the tapestry of God's plans. My choices matter in the stream of events that flow through my life. Their consequences may be more far reaching than I can imagine. But God's story is THE story that our lives are set within. His plans will prevail.

Isaac

I wonder what it was like to grow up as the child of Abraham and Sarah. I can imagine an elderly mother doting protectively on her long awaited child. Did she let him go on hunts with the men, or did she keep him close by her side? Was the appeal of Isaac's manly son Esau in being able, through him, to live a life that he had not been allowed? Did he ever tire of hearing Abraham tell stories about God? Did he ever secretly wonder if his parents were just a bit off their rocker? What did **he** think about a God who would instruct his father to kill him as a sacrifice? If it is hard to be a preacher's kid, what was it like to follow up Abraham?

In Hebrews 11:8-19, what is Abraham praised for? _____

In the following single verse, what is Isaac praised for? _____

What impact do you think Abraham's faith had on Isaac? _____

What kind of impact is your faith having on your children, or those you influence? _____

SPOTTING CHRIST Gen. 32:22-32

Why do you think that Jacob remained behind after sending his family and possessions across the stream? _____

Who did Jacob wrestle with? _____

Who did his opponent appear as? _____

Who was winning before Jacob's hip was injured? _____

Why? _____

In what ways had Jacob struggle with God and with men? _____



DINAH Gen. 34:1-31

What do you think Dinah's feelings were toward Shechem? _____

Why did Jacob's sons reject the treaty proposed by Hamor? _____

How did Jacob respond? _____

Sticking it Out

Isaac and Rebekah, a match made in heaven ... right? Abraham knew that not just any wife would do for the man through whom the covenant with God would be carried out. His servant Eliezer took the assigned task of choosing a suitable helper for Isaac seriously. Rebekah was the perfect choice. She was hospitable and hard working. She had a mind of her own, and was willing to express it. She even seems eager to accept Eliezer's invitation to travel to an unfamiliar land to wed a man she did not know.

Like most marriages, it started well. Isaac and Rebekah clearly loved each other. In 24:67 we read the simple, beautiful words "She became his wife, and he loved her." Rebekah brought comfort to the grief-stricken Isaac. Even when pretending to not be married while with Abimelech, their affection for each other could not be hidden. While they suffered infertility, Isaac did not take another wife as custom would have allowed. Instead, they sought God and surely found hope, and union, in His promise. But also like so many marriages, the passing of time and the arrival of children took their toll. With the coming of the twins, Esau and Jacob, we see a growing distance between Isaac and Rebekah. Isaac seems to favor Esau because of his robust qualities and his own taste for wild game. Rebekah, on the other hand, favors the child that God has revealed to her as the Covenant carrier. The strengths of Rebekah that had made her such a perfect wife for Isaac, so suited to playing a role in the covenant with God, now lead her to become manipulative and controlling. The quiet gentleness of Isaac that had been so endearing now make him seem passive and ineffective. It surely did not take long for the boys to learn to work their parents, too often against each other. The tension in the family becomes so extreme that Jacob must flee for his life, not what most of us would describe as a happy, healthy family. How Rebekah must have wondered what had happened to God's promises all those long years that Jacob was gone. How hard it must have been to resolve the tension created between she and Isaac. What were their remaining years together like? Disappointment seems to have replaced desire in their marriage, yet they persevered.

Strained relationships are never the goal for our families, but don't miss how God works in and through the strife. God's plans are carried out. This family endures. Isaac and Rebekah stay married, surviving betrayal and loss. Jacob eventually returns. Things are never the same, but we do see the God of redemption and restoration at work even in a bad situation. We too can find hope for the strained relationships in our lives. We too can trust that God's plans will not be thwarted, even in our own fumbling. I like to think that Isaac and Rebekah had a renewed love and devotion to each other, as well as to God, in their old age. I've seen it happen with others. I've also seen far too many give up in those difficult years and miss the possibility of restoration to come.

What are some of your hopes for your own family? _____



God is in This Place Gen. 28:10-22

What happened in chapter 27 to cause Rebekah to plan Jacob's departure? _____

Where did Isaac send him and why? _____

What influence did Rebekah have on Isaac's instruction? _____

According to 28:8, Esau had not realized the degree of his parent's disapproval of his Canaanite wives. Had Rebekah not had reason to contrive Jacob's departure, do you think they would have made a big deal about who Jacob married? _____

How did this situation differ from the marriage that Abraham had planned for Isaac? _____

What were Jacob's goals when he left Beersheba? _____

What did Jacob see in the dream he had on his journey? _____

What did the Lord say to Jacob? _____

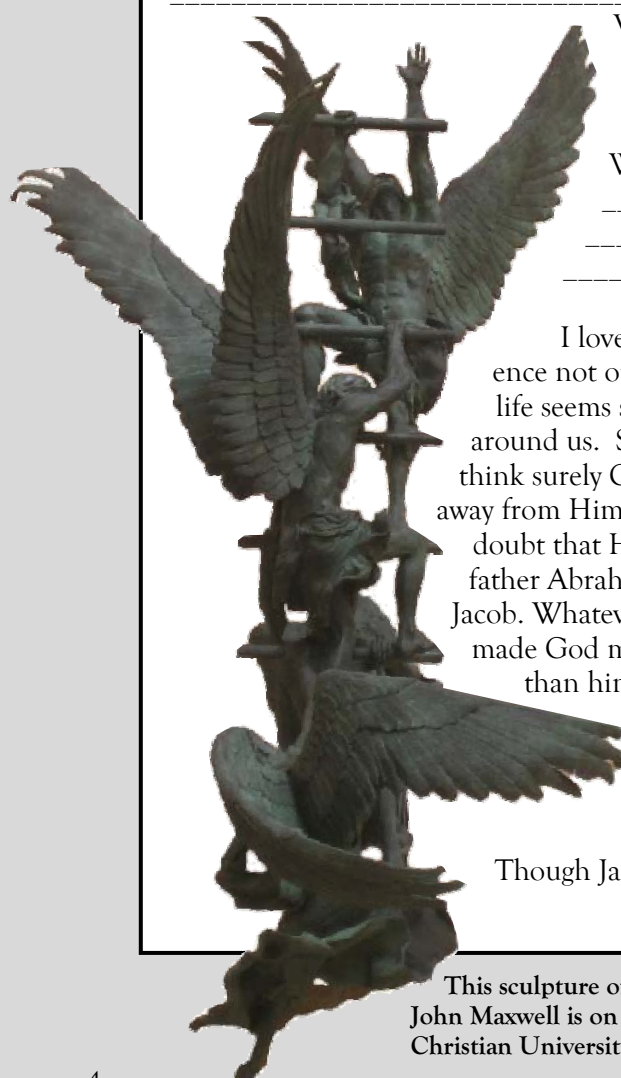
What vow did Jacob make? _____

I love this story. God brings Jacob to a new awareness of His presence not only in this place, but in Jacob's life. Sometime life seems so mundane that we fail to see the hand of God at work all around us. Sometimes life seems so full of wrongness and messes that we think surely God cannot be there. Sometimes we have just moved so far away from Him that we think surely He has forgotten us, or maybe we even doubt that He exists. Perhaps the God of his father Isaac and his grandfather Abraham was little more than a cumbersome tradition of rituals to Jacob. Whatever the case, this encounter with God opened his eyes and made God more real to him. His story began to have a meaning larger than himself. He had new purpose and direction. Like John the Baptist said well over 1,000 years later,

"He [Christ] must become greater, I must become less." John 3:30

Though Jacob is leaving the promised land, God is not done with him yet!

This sculpture of Jacob's dream by artist John Maxwell is on the campus of Abilene Christian University in Abilene, TX.

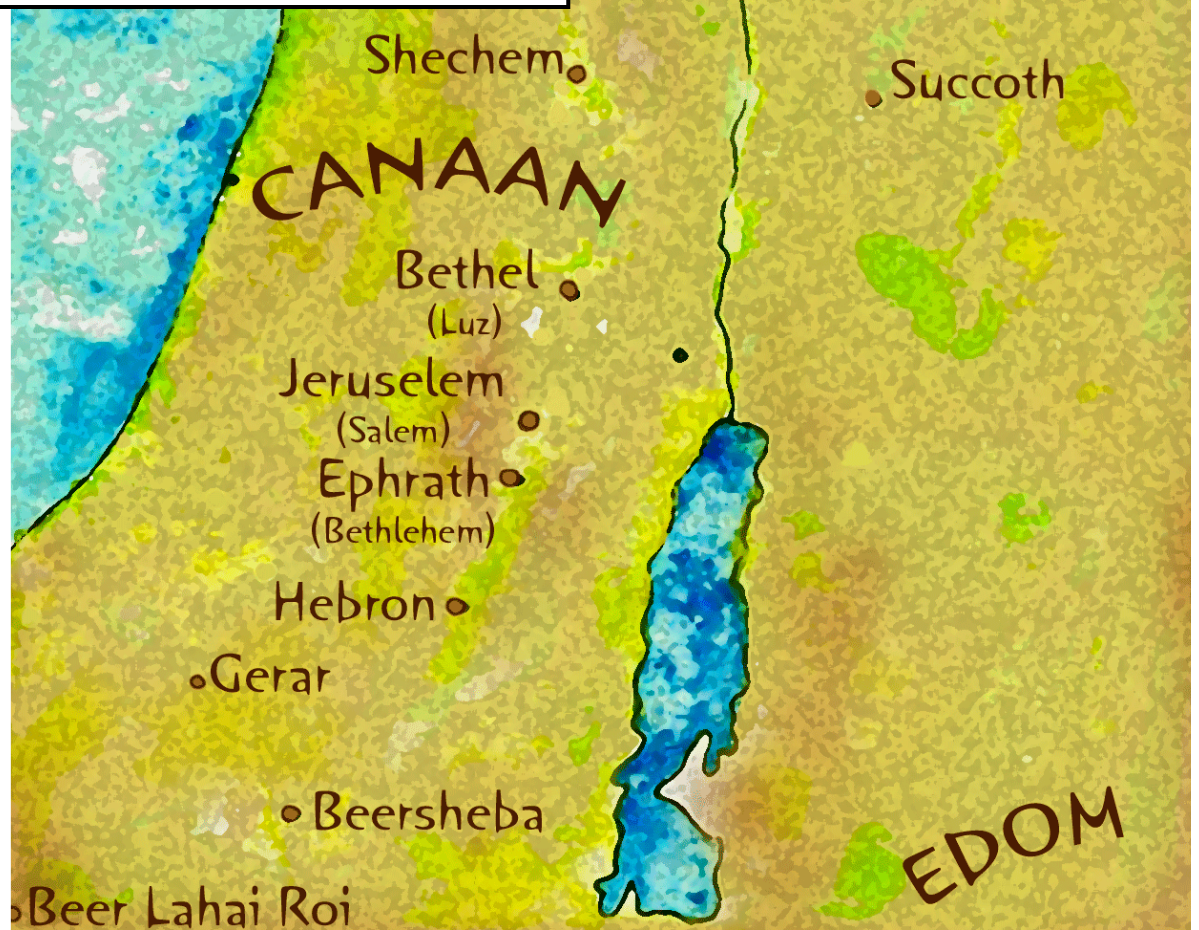


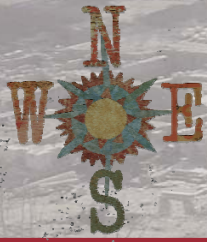
MAP OF GEN. 24-36

Where was Rebekah from? _____
Where did Keturah's sons settle? _____
Where did Ishmael's descendants settle? _____

Where was Abimelech king? _____
Where did Jacob leave from to find a wife? _____

Where did Esau settle? _____
Where did Jacob and Esau meet when Jacob returned? _____
Where was Dinah raped? _____
Where was Rachel buried? _____





Puzzle Page

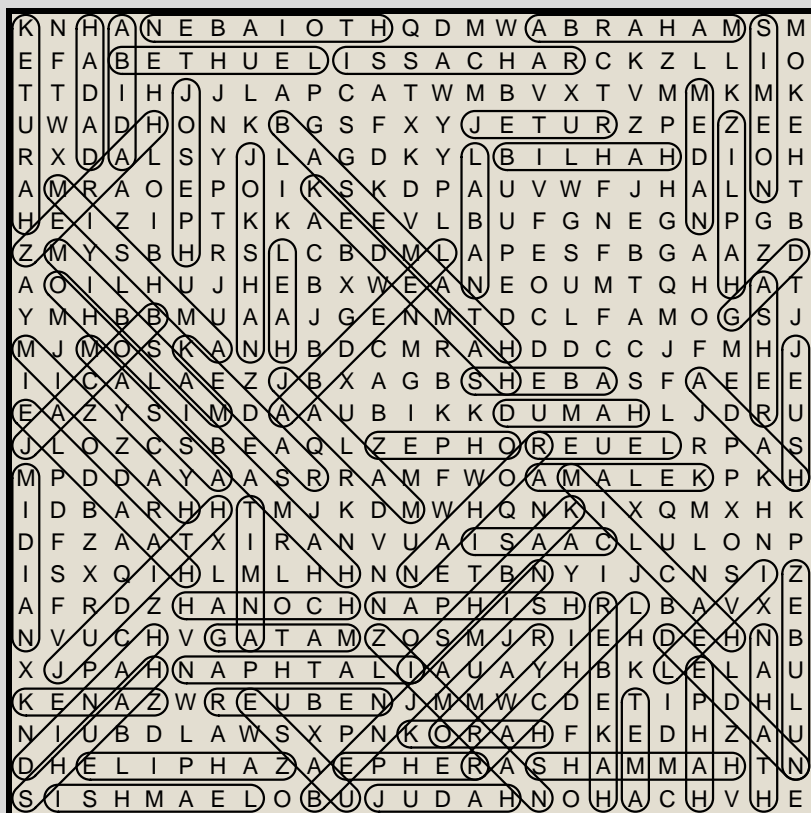
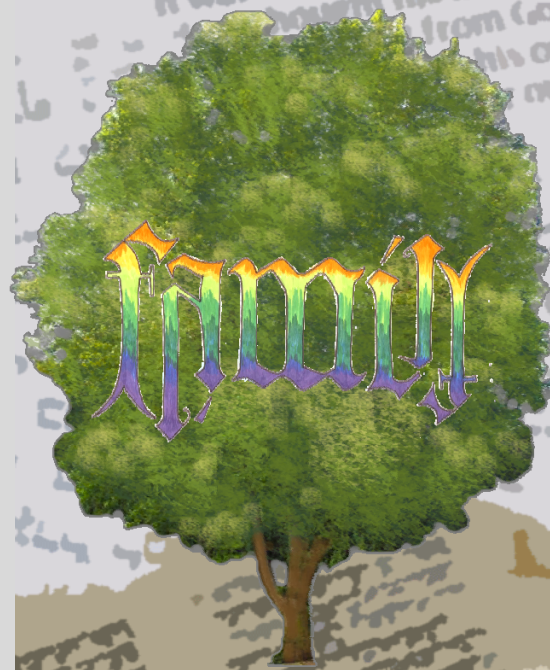
Which names from Abraham's family can you find ?

K	N	H	A	N	E	B	A	I	O	T	H	Q	D	M	W	A	B	R	A	H	A	M	S	M
E	F	A	B	E	T	H	U	E	L	I	S	S	A	C	H	A	R	C	K	Z	L	L	I	O
T	T	D	I	H	J	J	L	A	P	C	A	T	W	M	B	V	X	T	V	M	M	K	M	K
U	W	A	D	H	O	N	K	B	G	S	F	X	Y	J	E	T	U	R	Z	P	E	Z	E	E
R	X	D	A	L	S	Y	J	L	A	G	D	K	Y	L	B	I	L	H	A	H	D	I	O	H
A	M	R	A	O	E	P	O	I	K	S	K	D	P	A	U	V	W	F	J	H	A	L	N	T
H	E	I	Z	I	P	T	K	K	A	E	E	V	L	B	U	F	G	N	E	G	N	P	G	B
Z	M	Y	S	B	H	R	S	L	C	B	D	M	L	A	P	E	S	F	B	G	A	A	Z	D
A	O	I	L	H	U	J	H	E	B	X	W	E	A	N	E	O	U	M	T	Q	H	H	A	T
Y	M	H	B	B	M	U	A	A	J	G	E	N	M	T	D	C	L	F	A	M	O	G	S	J
M	J	M	O	S	K	A	N	H	B	D	C	M	R	A	H	D	D	C	C	J	F	M	H	J
I	I	C	A	L	A	E	Z	J	B	X	A	G	B	S	H	E	B	A	S	F	A	E	E	E
E	A	Z	Y	S	I	M	D	A	A	U	B	I	K	K	D	U	M	A	H	L	J	D	R	U
J	L	O	Z	C	S	B	E	A	Q	L	Z	E	P	H	O	R	E	U	E	L	R	P	A	S
M	P	D	D	A	Y	A	A	S	R	R	A	M	F	W	O	A	M	A	L	E	K	P	K	H
I	D	B	A	R	H	H	T	M	J	K	D	M	W	H	Q	N	K	I	X	Q	M	X	H	K
D	F	Z	A	A	T	X	I	R	A	N	V	U	A	I	S	A	A	C	L	U	L	O	N	P
I	S	X	Q	I	H	L	M	L	H	H	N	N	E	T	B	N	Y	I	J	C	N	S	I	Z
A	F	R	D	Z	H	A	N	O	C	H	N	A	P	H	I	S	H	R	L	B	A	V	X	E
N	V	U	C	H	V	G	A	T	A	M	Z	O	S	M	J	R	I	E	H	D	E	H	N	B
X	J	P	A	H	N	A	P	H	T	A	L	I	A	U	A	Y	H	B	K	L	E	L	A	U
K	E	N	A	Z	W	R	E	U	B	E	N	J	M	M	W	C	D	E	T	I	P	D	H	L
N	I	U	B	D	L	A	W	S	X	P	N	K	O	R	A	H	F	K	E	D	H	Z	A	U
D	H	E	L	I	P	H	A	Z	A	E	P	H	E	R	A	S	H	A	M	M	A	H	T	N
S	I	S	H	M	A	E	L	O	B	U	J	U	D	A	H	N	O	H	A	C	H	V	H	E



ANSWERS AND SOURCES

ABDEEL	GAD	KENAZ	OHOLI-
ABIDA	GATAM	KETURAH	BAMAH
ABRAHAM	HADAD	KORAH	OMAR
ADAH	HANOCH	LABAN	RACHEL
AMALEK	ISAAC	LEAH	REBEKAH
ASHER	ISHBAK	LEVI	REUBEN
BASEMATH	ISHMAEL	MASSA	REUEL
BENJAMIN	ISSACHAR	MEDAN	SHAMMAH
BETHUEL	JACOB	MIBSAM	SHEBA
BILHAH	JALAM	MIDIAN	SHUAH
DEDAN	JETUR	MILCAH	SIMEON
DINAH	JEUSH	MISHMA	TEMA
DUMAH	JOKSHAN	MIZZAH	TIMNA
ELDAAH	JOSEPH	NAHATH	ZEBULUN
ELIPHAZ	JUDAH	NAHOR	ZEPHO
EPHAH	JUDITH	NAPHISH	ZERAH
EPHER	KEDAR	NAPHTALI	ZILPAH
ESAU	KEDEMAH	NEBAIOTH	ZIMRAN



Sources

Sticking it Out p. 3

Brainerd, Gary. "Stages in Love Relationships." Relationship-Help.com (2003) 2 Mar 2009

<http://www.relationship-help.com/articlesdetail.asp?id=64&cat=All>



To find more studies go to:
<http://www.downvictoryrd.com>
To contact me by email:
victoryrd@hotmail.com