

01 Making our Way to the Promised Land – Wednesday Night May 26, 2021



Open your bibles tonight to Genesis chapter twelve.

*12 Now the LORD had said to Abram:*

*“Get out of your country,*

*From your family*

*And from your father’s house,*

*To a land that I will show you.*

*<sup>2</sup> I will make you a great nation;*

*I will bless you*

*And make your name great;*

*And you shall be a blessing.*

*<sup>3</sup> I will bless those who bless you,*

*And I will curse him who curses you;*

*And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”*

*<sup>4</sup> So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. <sup>5</sup> Then Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother’s son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people whom they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. So they came to the land of Canaan. <sup>6</sup> Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem, as far as the terebinth tree of Moreh. And the Canaanites were then in the land.*

*<sup>7</sup> Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, “To your descendants I will give this land.” And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him. <sup>8</sup> And he moved from there to the mountain east of Bethel, and he pitched his tent with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; there he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD. <sup>9</sup> So Abram journeyed, going on still toward the South.*

Then in Deuteronomy 4:40, the Lord gave the Israelites this command: “Keep his decrees and commands, which I am giving you today, so that it may go well with you and your children after you and that you may live long in the land the Lord your God gives you for all time.” Does this mean God gave Israel the Promised Land in perpetuity?

This passage contains a conditional offer. Israel would have the Promised Land as they kept God’s “decrees and commands.” The Israelites had to obey God’s statutes in order to remain in the land. History reveals that the Israelites often disobeyed, resulting in temporary times of exile from their land.

However, the end of this passage notes that God is giving Israel the Promised Land “for all time.” The Hebrew phrase translated “for all time” is a general statement, likely in reference to God’s original promise of a land to Abraham in [Genesis 12](#).<sup>1</sup>

Let’s review again the names of the first five books of the Bible. These are called the “Torah”. This is mistranslated at “The Law” and the Law is misunderstood to be the Ten Commandments. What we read in these first five books is God’s first instructions to man. There are many narratives, but they are here for a purpose. They are here to “instruct” us in how to live and how not to live. They are here to instruct us and inform us of God’s ultimate plan of salvation for all of the world. We find SO MUCH basic Bible doctrine in the Torah.

We see sin and its consequences. We see the shedding of blood being used for the remission of sins. We see betrayal. We see God’s sovereignty. We see God’s instructions to Abraham and we see obedience. We see Abraham trying to “help” God and the mess that it makes when we rely on our “own understanding” (Prov 3:5-6). All of the stories and all of the accounts that we read in these first five books are Torah. They are God’s instruction to man. Let’s take a brief look at the names of these first five books.

Hebrew – Ivrit (cross over – from the “other side”)

The Hebrews are peoples descended from [Abraham](#). The origin of the word *Hebrew* is thought to come from the proper name “Eber,” listed in [Genesis 10:24](#) as the great-grandson of Shem and an ancestor of Abraham. Another etymology traces the original root word back to the phrase “from the other side”—in that case, *Hebrew* would be a word designating an “immigrant,” which Abraham certainly was ([Genesis 12:1, 4–5](#)).<sup>2</sup>

**ΓΕΝΕΣΙΣ (Genesis)** The Greek word for “creation” is the name given to the first book of the Hebrew Bible, whose first word is בראשית, (*bereshit*), meaning “In the beginning...”.

**ΕΞΟΔΟΣ (Exodus)** The Exodus, “way out” of the Israelites from Egypt. In Hebrew, the book is called שמות, *shemot*, which simply means “names”, according to the principle we mentioned in Part One of naming the books according to the first words: “Now these are the names of the children of Israel who came to Egypt...”

**ΛΕΥΙΤΙΚΟΝ (Leviticus)** Having to do with the duties of the Levites, members of the tribe of Levi who administered the Temple rituals. In Hebrew, the book is called ויקרא, *vayyiqra*, “And (the Lord) called to Moses...”.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gotquestions.org/Israel-promised-land.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gotquestions.org/who-Hebrews.html>

**ΑΡΙΘΜΟΙ (Numbers)** The Greek word for number is ΑΡΙΘΜΟΣ, ΑΡΙΘΜΟΙ, in the plural. In Hebrew, it is simply called במדבר, *Bemidbar*, "In the Desert", where God requested the numbering. There follows very precise counting, tribe by tribe, of the eligible men, the total sum being 603,560!

**ΔΕΥΤΕΡΟΝΟΜΙΟΝ (Deuteronomy) (also Mishneh Torah – repeated instruction)**

ΔΕΥΤΕΡΟΣ = SECOND, ΝΟΜΟΣ = LAW. The second law? In the LXX, the Hebrew word *Torah* is translated by the Greek *nomos*, which has the sense of custom or tradition, rather than law. However, this was translated into Latin as *lex*, = law, which is perhaps a contribution to the mistaken notion that Torah = law and legalism.

Deuteronomy is known in Hebrew as, דברים, *Devarim*, from the opening phrase *Eleh ha-devarim*, "These are the words which Moses spoke to all Israel on the other side of the Jordan". So tonight we begin our journey to the promised land in the Book of Bereishit which we call Genesis. Turn in your Bibles to Genesis chapter 37.

Genesis 37

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

Abram was called and he answered the call. He left Ur and went south.

God made a covenant with him. And only God performed.

Finally, when Abram was 100 and Sarah was about 90 they had Isaac.

He first went into his wife's maid (Hagar) and he had sex with her and Ishmael was born.

Isaac was born. He had two sons: Esau and Jacob

Jacob has 12 sons

Genesis 37: Jacob favored Joseph and Benjamin

Let's read the text

*<sup>2</sup>Joseph, being seventeen years old, was pasturing the flock with his brothers. He was a boy with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives. And Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father. <sup>3</sup>Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his sons, because he was the son of his old age. And he made him a robe of many colors.*

*<sup>4</sup>But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peacefully to him.*

*<sup>5</sup>Now Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers they hated him even more. <sup>6</sup>He said to them, "Hear this dream that I have dreamed: <sup>7</sup>Behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and behold, my sheaf arose and stood upright. And behold, your sheaves gathered around it and bowed down to my sheaf." <sup>8</sup>His brothers said to*

him, "Are you indeed to reign over us? Or are you indeed to rule over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.

<sup>9</sup> Then he dreamed another dream and told it to his brothers and said, "Behold, I have dreamed another dream. Behold, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me." <sup>10</sup> But when he told it to his father and to his brothers, his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall I and your mother and your brothers indeed come to bow ourselves to the ground before you?" <sup>11</sup> And his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind. (ESV)

There are so many lessons to be learned in this passage, but I am only teaching it as background to getting to the promised land. So we remember what happened. His brothers took an animal and killed it and put the blood on the coat of many colors and they sold Joseph into slavery in Egypt. Interestingly it was the sons (descendants) of Ishmael that came and purchased Joseph and took him off.

Well, most of us know the story. Joseph was placed in a nobleman's house. The woman of the house tried to seduce Joseph and when he resisted, she claimed that he raped her. He spent time in prison and then through a series of events he got out of prison and slowly God elevated him from being a zero to being a hero in Egypt. He had dreams that came true, and through divine guidance he devised a scheme to store grain which resulted in the Egyptian people being saved from starvation due to a famine that struck the entire Middle East. He eventually became the prime minister of Egypt, and his brothers came to Egypt looking for grain to buy.

Joseph could have taken retribution against them for all the ill they had done him, but instead he forgave them and told them, "What you meant for evil God used for good."

*You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. (Genesis 50:20 NIV)*

It could change our lives if we realized that God truly causes "all things to work together for good for those who love God for those who are called according to His purpose." (Romans 8:28 my paraphrase). God works it out. People may do things to harm us or hurt us and God can and does turn it right back around.

After the time of Joseph, approximately 400 years passed and eventually the Hebrews became the slaves of the Egyptians. The Egyptians used them to make brick and they used them as slave labor to build many of the great cities in Egypt. They were miserable, but they learned to live in Egypt and they learned to enjoy Egypt. They loved

the vegetables that grew there and they loved the fish that were readily available. As their lives grew more and more difficult, they cried out in their misery and God heard them. A tension developed within them. They were comfortable in Egypt, yet they were miserable in Egypt. There is a mishnah in this. (a secondary teaching). We too grow comfortable in the pleasure of our sin while we are in the misery of being slaves to our sin. Let's get back to the story. Let's get back to part of the misery of what was being experienced in Egypt.

In order to wipe out the Jews, the King (Pharaoh) had passed a law that all of the Jewish males were to be killed. This was genocide. One of the Jewish mothers gave birth to a son and she hid him in a basket covered with tar. She placed him in the Nile River and he floated down, only to be discovered by the Pharaoh's daughter. That child was found in the rushes that grew along the river's banks and he was "drawn out" of the water, so he was named Moses (Moshe) meaning "drawn out".

Moses grew up in Pharaoh's household and scripture tells us that Pharaoh's daughter knew he was a Hebrew child. So, she must have related this to him as he grew up. Moses chose to remember who he was.

Of course, Moses himself deserves great credit as well. Many of us choose to forget our heritage and ignore our identity. Sadly, we are easily persuaded to construct a false front over our real selves by three forces acting upon us. (i) Friends; (ii) Entertainment and the culture; (iii) Inside doubts and fears. Moses reminds us to remain true to who we really are.

Wherever the call to truth comes from, whether amazing grandparents who inspire us to live our heritage or a quiet dream inside our souls, we can summon up the strength to turn our backs upon the false promises taunting us to join a decaying culture. Just as Moses remembered who he really was even while surrounded by the luxurious depravity of Pharaoh, so can we. It really is very inspiring.<sup>3</sup>

I would say that we too as Christians can take a great lesson from Moses. As sons and daughters of Almighty God should be careful to remember who WE are and WHOSE we are as we are assaulted by the world, the flesh, and the devil. We should be careful to listen to the wonderful promises of God instead of the promises that the world makes to us. God's promises turn into testimonies, and the world's promises turn into tragedies. The world promises to fulfill our greatest needs and the result always comes up short or empty. The promises of Satan never deliver the pleasure that they promise. They always come up short.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://rabbidaniellapin.com/moses-know-he-was-an-israelite/>

The Bible tells us that when Moses was around 40 years old, he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew slave. He killed the Egyptian. A couple of Hebrews saw him do it and when they confronted him about it, he fled in fear. He went to Midian where he spent another 40 years. In Midian he encountered God in the burning bush and he received his calling.

Sunday, we will pick up with the 10th plague which motivated Pharaoh to free the Israelites. The night before the Jews left Egypt they celebrated the first Passover Feast. Fifty days later, we will find them at the base of Mount Sinai where they became God's People in a very real way.

Curiously, in scripture we find the concept of the "moedim". This means "appointed times". Nothing in scripture is coincidence. Nothing is happenstance. The night before Jesus was crucified, He celebrated the Passover meal with His disciples. We know that He died on the cross for the sins of the whole world. He was buried and He rose again on the Third Day. Exactly 50 days after that Passover meal, Jesus' followers gathered in the upper room. And then as had been promised, the Holy Spirit descended on the believers who were gathered there, and they became the Church.

So, fifty days after the first Passover, the Nation of Israel came into being.

And, fifty days after the Last Supper, the Church of Jesus Christ came into being.

Of such things are the marvelous mysteries of God.

Let us pray.