I. **The Jacob Cycle**

Theme: The Jacob Cycle focuses on God’s keeping His promised blessing to Jacob; the ultimate expression of that blessing is fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Key Verses: Gen. 28:13-15

13 And behold, the LORD stood above it and said: “I am the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants.

14 Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

15 Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you.”

Introduction

This is the third quarter in our summer studies in the book of Genesis. Two years ago we looked at the Primeval History – Genesis 1-11. Last summer we studied the life of Abraham, the man of faith, the Friend of God. And this quarter, Lord willing, we will be studying the lives of Isaac and Jacob. Like the stories of Abraham, this section of Scripture on Isaac and Jacob is familiar to most of us. Many of us have grown up all our lives knowing about Jacob and Esau, of Rachel and Leah, of Jacob’s dream of the ladder and his wrestling with God. These stories are comfortable to us like a pair of old slippers. And that’s the danger. Like a pair of old slippers, sometimes we overlook the deeper meaning of the text and slip back into our comfort zone, relying on our knowledge of the Sunday school stories we’ve known since we were children. In this course, I would like to challenge you to re-read Isaac and Jacob’s story afresh, to look beyond the stories to see what God was doing in redemptive history. For the story of Isaac and Jacob is one of God’s relentless grace, and it is a story that is repeated time and again throughout Scripture and throughout the church. Let us look upon the story of Isaac and Jacob with new eyes and listen with new ears to hear the truths contained there.

There are at least three ways to view OT texts; 1) the “Sunday school” way of learning the stories, focusing on the facts; 2) the traditional moralist way of interpretation, where we are to model the good behaviors and shun the bad behaviors – We learn how God works and how we are to respond to him – applying the examples in the text; 3) a typological view where we look at the big picture, the patterns, and look for deeper truths than the merely moral truths. We don’t ignore the facts or the moral messages – in fact we look at them both closely – but the key is looking at the overall flow of Scripture, and the common themes that point us to the larger truth. In this way, we can see that Isaac and Jacob’s story is not simply a series of examples of how to behave or not behave, but it is the story of God’s action in redemptive history. We learn how God acts in history, and we see the patterns repeated, time after time. This helps us learn more about what God has done in history, in Jesus Christ, and how we are to respond. This is different that the moralistic approach, and ultimately, much richer. We will be focusing on this approach during this class.

A. **Structure of Genesis 25-36**

Remember, Genesis is structured as a series of sections that begin with “These are the generations of …” or “These are the offspring of …” There are ten such sections in Genesis,
plus the creation account, for a total of eleven sections. This quarter, we will be looking at sections 9 and 10, the genealogical accounts of Isaac (25:19-35:29) and Esau (36:1-37:1). The main character in the genealogy of Isaac is Jacob, and so for simplicity sake, I will often refer to Genesis 25-35 as the “Jacob cycle.”

In high school, I learned how to write a “five-paragraph paper.” The first paragraph introduced the subject and stated the thesis you were trying to establish. The next three paragraphs developed that thesis; each paragraph had a specific point you were trying to make. The final paragraph was the conclusion where you put it all together and demonstrated that your subpoints added up to support your thesis. That’s a standard Western way of organizing information. You see it all the time in sermons. You have an introduction, three main points, and then applications. It is a linear organization that we are familiar with.

The Bible organizes information differently. The key element in Biblical organization is parallelism. In western poetry, rhyme or meter is key. In Hebrew poetry, it is parallel thoughts, either similar or opposite ideas compared or contrasted. But parallelism also plays a big part in the organization of Biblical prose. Often, a text will be arranged with idea 1, followed by idea 2, then 3, and so on until it reaches the main point of the structure. So far, not too different from my “five-paragraph” paper. But then, instead of summing up and ending with the main point, we get a reversal of the main points, with a new idea 3 that parallels or contrasts with the first idea 3, followed by a parallel idea 2 and then back to a new idea 1, where we started. This type of structure, where the main point is in the middle instead of the end, and there are parallel thoughts nested together, is called a palistrophe or chiasm.

The Jacob cycle is arranged as a palistrophe, or chiasm. Events early in the account are mirrored by similar events later in the cycle. The Bible is full of such chiastic structures. Usually the key to understanding the overall organization of the section is to look at the hinge point – the pivot point where the story changes direction and begins to mirror previous events. The Jacob cycle is interesting because it is composed of several concentric cycles – the Esau cycle and the Laban cycle.

There are many interesting features to this overall structure which give us some ideas of the theological flow. Toward the beginning and end of the Jacob cycle are two interludes – one with Isaac, and one with Dinah – which at first seem to have little to do with the flow of the Jacob story. However, we can see through this structure that these two stories are related and are inserted in the sequence for a particular purpose. One of the big questions that faces God’s people is: how do you deal with pagans? How do you deal with the Canaanites? Genesis was first written by Moses for the people of the Exodus generation. They were going to have to deal with this question. How do you deal with the Canaanites? Do you intermarry with them? No – you stay separate from them. Regardless of what you do, there will be strife with the world. There is a right way and a wrong way to deal with them. Isaac digs wells, representative of the water of life, and makes a peaceful covenant with Abimelech – this is a picture of conversion. On the other hand, Jacob’s sons use the covenant deceitfully to destroy the Canaanites who violated Dinah. We’ll discuss this more at the appropriate time, but already, we can see that the structure is helping us understand the organization of the text.

The Esau cycle opens with the theft of the blessing, resulting in Jacob having to flee the Land. The cycle closes with Jacob returning to the Land, reconciling with his brother, and sharing the benefits of the blessing with Esau. Jacob’s exile and return from the Land of Canaan are
bracketed by two supernatural experiences – the dream at Bethel of the ladder to heaven with the angels on it; and the vision of the angels camp at Mahanaim followed by wrestling with God at Peniel. God is with Jacob when he is leaving the land, as well as returning to it. **God’s presence is with Jacob throughout his exile.** The settings are interesting. It is night at Bethel – dark, symbolic of death as Jacob leaves the land. At Peniel, the morning dawns as Jacob is symbolically raised to new life and reenters the land.

The Laban cycle is at the center of the Esau and Jacob cycles. It is here that Jacob comes destitute, with nothing but himself (and the presence of God). By the time Jacob departs from his exile with Laban, he has gathered to himself, wives, sons, and herds – all visible reminders of God’s presence and of His blessing. **The pivot point in the whole cycle is God’s action in 30:22-24: “Then God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her and opened her womb.”**

It is clear that in Jacob’s eyes it is the birth of Joseph to the only woman he regarded as his wife that signals it is time for him to go home. God’s intervention in the birth of Joseph changes the direction of the story. Immediately after Joseph is born, Jacob desires to leave Laban, leading to his increase in wealth, enabling his return to the Land and the completion of the Laban, Esau, and Jacob cycles. The flood story is another prime example of a palistrophe in Genesis. It is noteworthy that both palistropies have a similar comment at the turning point (God remembered Rachel/Noah, 30:22; 8:1) to **emphasize that it is God who controls events and saves His people.**

**Ross:** Throughout the Jacob stories the attention is on the efforts to attain the blessing (or an alternate blessing) or to divert the blessings. But God works through deception, animosity, favoritism, jealousy, and human schemes to elect the line, produce the tribes, enrich the family, and restore them to the land. **The theological emphasis of this section, then, must be the further development of God’s blessing.**

Thus, this analysis of the Biblical structure tells us that **the focal point of the Jacob cycle is the fulfillment of God’s promises to Jacob** – the growth of his sons and flocks – God’s blessing upon Jacob. The Lord is keeping the promise of Bethel – He is building Jacob a house.

**B. Major Themes**

1. **Birthright & Blessing**

**Wenham:** The theme of the whole Pentateuch, the partial fulfillment of the promises to Abraham of land, descendants, covenant, and blessing to the nations, is set out first in 12:1-3. And all the subsequent stories in Genesis explain the fulfillment of these promises.

The key theme in the Jacob cycle is tracing the blessing of Abraham through the Seed line of Isaac (not Ishmael) and Jacob (not Esau). **The birthright and the blessing in these stories are more than an earthly inheritance; they are the spiritual promises made to Abraham and passed on to Isaac and Jacob.**

The blessings are repeated or implied in 25:23 (oracle); 26:2-5 (God to Isaac); 27:27-29 (Isaac to Jacob deceptively), 39-40 (Isaac to Esau); 28:3-4 (Isaac to Jacob); 28:13-15 (God to Jacob – ladder); 32:26-29 (God to Jacob – wrestling); 33:10-11 (Jacob to Esau); 35:9-13 (God to Jacob – Bethel II).

In the chiastic outline of the Jacob cycle, the term berakah (blessing) is used frequently. The related term bekorah (birthright) is also used. These are the Hebrew words that we use for blessing and birthright. In Hebrew, they are very close (brk and bkr). Highlighting the
blessing/birthright theme in the structure shows how frequently it appears in the Jacob cycle. Interestingly, while Jacob is out of the Land, during the Laban cycle, there is no mention of the berakah (blessing). However, except for the Land itself, that is where the blessing is coming – through the birth of Jacob’s sons and the growth of his herds. Is there a lesson in this for us? When does the blessing come? When we strive for it, or when we wait patiently while God gives it?

2. Struggle with Man & God

There is constant strife in the Jacob cycle. Isaac has strife with Abimelech in Gen. 26. Jacob’s sons have strife with Shechem in Gen. 34. Jacob struggles with his brother (over the birthright – Gen. 25), with his father (over the blessing – Gen. 27), with his uncle (over his wives and wages – Gen. 29-30), and with his wives (over affection and children – in fact, his wives struggle with each other as sisters – Gen. 29-30). Deceit and deception are key components of these struggles. Jacob’s name means “Supplanter” or “Deceiver.” Jacob supplants his elder brother to gain the birthright and the blessing. Laban deceives Jacob by replacing the younger daughter Rachel with the older daughter Leah. Laban tries to keep Jacob tied to him economically, but Jacob is successful in overturning the tables and increasing his flocks at Laban’s expense. The deceitfulness of Jacob is even carried on to the next generation. Jacob’s sons deceive Shechem in Gen. 34 in order to slaughter his people. But the sons of Israel deceive their father himself, when they sell Joseph into slavery in Gen. 37 (but that’s outside our scope for this quarter).

Duguid: The theme of conflict between brothers or within families is not new at this point in Genesis. Such a struggle was evident already between Cain and Abel in Genesis 4; there too the younger child turned out to be the one who bore God’s favor. Throughout the rest of the book of Genesis, there is a series of family conflicts. From the sons of Noah, through Abraham and Lot, Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Laban, and on down to Joseph and his brothers, there is a constant pattern of rivalry and discord within the family. And the ultimate reason for all such discord is election. Those whom God has not chosen, or who are living out of step with God, are always at war with those whom God has chosen.

Despite all of this human conflict in the Jacob cycle, the real struggle in this section is with God. God is the one in control. Jacob needs to learn to submit to God in order to receive the blessing and live at peace with man. This finally occurs at Peniel in Gen. 32. Even then, Jacob is not a perfect man, and deceit and struggles continue.

3. Purity in the Land

Throughout the Jacob cycle, there is an emphasis on keeping oneself pure, particularly from the sin of intermarriage. In Gen. 26, we see Isaac trying to protect Rebekah from the Philistines, much as his father Abraham did twice with respect to Sarah. Esau marries two Canaanite women, bringing grief to his parents. Meanwhile, Jacob, the heir of the promise, is sent to Laban in order to marry someone from the family of Terah. Esau tries to make amends by marrying a daughter of Ishmael, but this: 1) does not undue his marriage to the two Canaanites; and 2) does not meet the standard because Ishmael’s line, like his own, has been set aside. In Genesis 34, the sons of Israel are outraged at the defilement of their sister Dinah by a Canaanite, resulting in holy war against them. In this respect, they preview the actions of the nation of Israel in Numbers 25 & 31. In Genesis 35, Jacob’s household has to purify themselves to worship the Lord.
Basically, there are two ways to deal with pagans as shown here in the Jacob cycle. Both ways involve keeping separate, not intermingling, because that will surely lead to compromise (Esau). In Genesis 34 we have holy war against the pagans. This previews the conquest of the Land by Joshua. The other way is shown in Genesis 26. There Isaac maintains his separateness, but the Philistines continue to pursue him. Ultimately, we see Isaac making a covenant with them, just as his father Abraham did. In the context of well digging, of the water of life, it appears as if Abimelech and his men have converted. So, the pagans are either converted or they are destroyed.

4. Sins of the Fathers

Interestingly, in the Jacob cycle we see the Biblical concept of the sins of the fathers visited upon subsequent generations. For example, Abraham’s sin of trying to father a son through Sarah’s maid Hagar (Gen. 16), is repeated by Jacob and Rachel in Genesis 30 with Rachel’s maid Bilhah. Abraham’s weakness in lying about his wife Sarah in Egypt (Gen. 12) and to Abimelech (Gen. 20) is repeated by Isaac in Genesis 26. Isaac and Rebekah show favoritism toward their children (25:28) which results in the whole blessing fiasco of Genesis 27. Later on, Jacob shows similar favoritism towards Joseph and Benjamin, the children of his beloved wife, Rachel. In fact, Jacob shows favoritism towards his wives: Leah was unloved (29:31). Finally, as we have already seen, Jacob’s deception/deceitfulness (Gen. 25, 27, etc.) is repeated by his sons towards Shechem in Gen. 34 and Joseph in Gen. 37. If nothing else, the Jacob cycle should be a strong reminder to parents to walk blameless in front of their children!

5. Relentless Grace

Last, but certainly not least, let me summarize the theme of the Jacob cycle as described by Duguid. Duguid: In the lives of Isaac and Jacob we will see time and time again how God in His grace and for His glory overrules the weakness and sinfulness of His chosen instruments. Step by step, God was continuing to fulfill His promise to Abraham to turn a small family into a mighty nation (Gen. 15:5). Jacob, the man stumbling from one family conflict to another, demonstrates the triumph of grace over all obstacles. Jacob, with all his sinning, scheming, and plotting, is the perfect model of how God’s undeserved favor can succeed even with the most unpromising material. The gospel triumphs not through might or through human goodness but through God’s relentless grace.

C. When Was Jacob “Saved”?

When was Jacob saved? This is a question that has been bugging me throughout my study of the Jacob cycle. Apparently it’s not an obvious answer, because commentators are all over the map on this one. Here are the choices: 1) before or at birth when he struggled with Esau in the womb (25:22, 26); 2) when he bargained for the birthright (25:29-34); 3) when he schemed for the blessing of Isaac (27:5-29); 4) at Bethel when he saw the Lord and made his vow (28:16-22); 5) at Peniel when he wrestled with God (32:22-32); or 6) at Bethel the second time (35:1-7)?

Many commentators point to Jacob’s deceitfulness, his conniving nature in gaining the birthright and blessing to indicate that he was not a “saved” man at those points of his life. Furthermore, while some see Jacob’s vow at Bethel in a positive light, others see it much more cynically. They believe that Jacob is not responding in true belief to God, but is bargaining with God, testing Him to see if He will keep up His end of the bargain. Thus, Peniel seems an attractive point. Jacob’s name is changed at Peniel. Jacob submits to God at Peniel. And it is at Peniel that Jacob seems to change. Surely, this is the point of his conversion. But even though
Jacob becomes Israel at Peniel, there is still a lot of Jacob the deceiver left in this new man. He is not completely straightforward with Esau. He seems passive in the entire Dinah affair. So, when was Jacob “saved”?

Jordan: Contrary to many expositors, the Bible tells us that Jacob was a “perfect” man from his earliest years. This fulfills God’s command to Abraham: “Walk before Me and be perfect” (Gen. 17:1). Genesis 25:27 says that Jacob was a “perfect” man, though translators convinced that he was not such, render this as “smooth” or “peaceful.” But did God tell Abraham, “Walk before Me and be smooth”? Jacob wrestled with the unregenerate Esau even in the womb, so he was on God’s side even at that early stage of life! Esau despised God’s covenant, but Jacob loved it (Gen. 25:28-34 – notice that it is Esau, not Jacob, who is condemned in the text).

I don’t know if Jordan’s view is accurate or not. What I do know is that your perception of when Jacob was “saved” colors your interpretation of events. Like many of the other events in Genesis, the facts are related, but the motivations often are not. We are left to interpret the reasons why people did what they did. Did they have holy motives, or did they have selfish motives? Were they motivated by a love of God and of His covenant, or were they looking out for number one? Often the text is not clear. And the commentator, in an attempt to explain why things are happening, makes some assumptions about the moral status of the actors.

If you assume that Jacob is not saved until Bethel or even later until Peniel, then that pushes you toward interpreting all of his earlier actions as selfish and self-centered. He wasn’t trusting in God; he wasn’t all that concerned about the things of the Lord. However, if you assume that Jacob is saved at an early age, even in the womb, then that puts a very different spotlight on his behavior. Why did he bargain for the birthright? Why did he deceive Isaac for the blessing? Perhaps, rather than saying that Jacob sinned, we need to look at the sins of Esau and Isaac more closely.

For this class, I hope to present some multiple perspectives on the text, based on Jacob’s motivations. I trust you will keep an open mind and discover along with me what is happening and why. Regardless of when Jacob was saved, it is still true as Duguid points out that Jacob’s life is a testimony to the relentless grace of God, pursuing this trickster and turning him into the father of the nation of Israel.

D. Connections in the Pentateuch

1. Isaac and Abraham

Ross & Duguid: The literary parallels between Isaac and Abraham affirm the continuity of Genesis: Isaac’s wife was also barren for many years, but he prayed for the seed, Isaac too was faced with a famine, but he did not go down to Egypt, Isaac deceived a ruler about his wife, and he too was spared, Isaac reopened the wells of his father, and when hostility began he continued to enjoy God’s provision; and finally, Isaac also made a treaty with Abimelech. We can see clearly the ways in which he shared his father’s strengths and weaknesses. Isaac’s life was thus in a sense a rerun of the life of Abraham. The repetition of the motifs shows God’s faithfulness in that the promises were passed on from one generation to the next. The promise to Abraham was valid for Isaac too.

2. Jacob and Abraham

Jordan: There are a great many deliberate parallels between the Abraham and Jacob narratives. To begin with, Abram moves from Ur to Haran, and then to the land of promise.
Jacob starts out in the land, is exiled to Haran, and then returns to the land of promise. Yet there are clear differences. For one thing, Abram starts in a place of idolatry, sojourns in Haran until the older generation has died off, and then enters the land. Jacob begins in the land, though because of Isaac's sin and Esau's evil, it has become defiled. He is exiled to Haran, and then returns. The Abraham story is about taking the land, while the Jacob story is about maintaining possession of it. Upon entering the land, Abram sets up places of worship (altars) at Shechem, Bethel, and Hebron. Jacob dwells in the same places, but in context the emphasis is on his livestock and economic strength (33:18; 35:1, 27). The establishment of worship is the first form of the conquest of the land, preceding any other type of dominion in it.

Jordan: Both stories recount two struggles with relatives, and one climactic struggle with God. Lot and Ishmael correspond to Laban and Esau respectively. The Laban/Lot correlation is of special interest: both are men of means who are driven by selfish motives. They prosper as a result of contact with the bearer of God's blessing, and are finally deceived by their [two each] daughters, who deprive them of their manhood/authority. And of course, Ishmael's struggle with Isaac corresponds to Esau's with Jacob, although differing in intensity.

Jordan: One of the important similarities of the two stories is that human efforts, though well-intentioned, prove futile. Abraham's attempts to protect the bride and the future seed (on two occasions) come to naught, except for God's intervention. Sarah's plan is thwarted when Hagar refuses to let Sarah adopt Ishmael as the promised seed. It becomes clear that only God can provide and protect the seed. Similarly, Jacob's worthy attempts to secure the land prove fruitless. Jacob's efforts to gain the birthright from Esau and the blessing from Isaac came to naught, for Esau had an army and decided to kill Jacob and take the inheritances for himself.

Jordan: Both the Abraham and Jacob stories are bracketed by special visits from God. In the case of Abraham, the visits take place early and late in the narrative: as he leaves Ur and as he is told to sacrifice Isaac. In the case of Jacob, the special visits come as he leaves the land, at Bethel, and as he comes back into it, at Peniel. At these two first encounters, God appears as Friend (Life); but in the climactic encounters He appears as Enemy (Death). God comes to Abraham and commands that Isaac die, and puts Abraham through a death & resurrection crisis. God comes to Jacob and tries to kill him, putting him through a death & resurrection experience. As a result, Abraham's eyes are opened to see the ram as substitute for Isaac. Jacob's eyes are opened to see who the Wrestler really is. The result of both awful encounters with God is that Abraham and Jacob briefly see God "face to face," as is implied in Genesis 22:14 and stated in Genesis 32:30. Both men had come to a place of maturity.

3. **Preview of History**

Like the story of Abraham, the Jacob cycle is inspired redemptive history. What happened to Abraham, what happened to Jacob, will later happen to Israel. These stories were written down in part to encourage the generation of the Exodus. Prefacing the great Exodus of Israel from Egypt are a bunch of smaller exoduses. We looked at two during the life of Abraham last year. Now, in the Jacob cycle, we have the exodus of Isaac from Philistia with much spoil. We have the exodus of Jacob out of Laban's clutches, again with much spoil. Jacob's exodus out of Haran brings the children of Israel back into the Promised Land. There are many parallels between the destruction of Shechem with the destruction of Midian in Num. 31. Abraham's servant meets Rebekah at a well; Jacob meets Rachel at a well; Moses meets Zipporah at a well.
As we go through the text, we will see other examples of this concept of the Jacob cycle looking forward into Israelite history.

**Conclusion**

This quarter we are going to look anew into the lives of Jacob and Isaac, to learn the lessons of their lives. Most of our attention is going to be focused on Jacob, since he is the main character of the “Jacob Cycle.” Early on in the cycle we are introduced to Jacob the schemer, Jacob the supplanter. The early pictures of him are ones of his struggle with his brother over the spiritual birthright and blessing. *Genesis 28:10 is the low point in the life of Jacob as he flees the Land of Canaan.* All his life he had been scheming for the birthright and the blessing. Now he has them. But has it really helped him? The blessing has to do with family, wealth, and land. Jacob is now all alone for the first time in his life, exiled from his family and all he knows. He is penniless, as we will see when he arrives empty-handed at his uncle Laban’s house. All of Isaac’s wealth has been cut off from him. And he is an exile from the Promised Land. Family, Wealth, Land. All these things Jacob has schemed for, and now all seemingly lost. But there is a fourth aspect to the blessing, and that one is not lost. It is the presence of God.

God is still with Jacob, and in Genesis 28:10-22, God makes Himself known to Jacob in a special way, through the dream of the ladder between heaven and earth. Even though the other aspects of the blessing seem lost (for now), God is there. God is with Jacob. God is Immanuel – God with us. And so Jacob can go on to Padan-Aram confident that the most important part of the blessing is with him.

In Laban’s house, we will see a reversal of the other misfortunes of Jacob. There he will add to himself a family and fortune. He will eventually leave Syria and return to the Promised Land, buy a piece of it as did his grandfather Abraham, as a down payment of the inheritance that was to come.

The turning point in the Jacob Cycle is Gen. 30:22-24, where “God remembers Rachel” and she gives birth to a son – Joseph. Joseph will be a picture of the deliverer to come. It is immediately after God remembers that the Jacob story changes direction. When “God remembers,” God acts in history to change things. God remembers Noah in the midst of the Flood, God remembers the children of Israel suffering in Egypt, God remembers Jonah in the belly of the great fish, and God remembers us when we pray to Him and He hears us. Then God acts in history to change history. So it was with Jacob, so it was with us. When God remembers Jacob, he adds Joseph to his family. Jacob’s family is now nearly complete. Now Jacob turns his heart to home, toward the Land.

*Jordan:* The Jacob story is particularly important because it means that we cannot simply inherit the Land, the Kingdom. It must be given anew by God. Jacob must leave the land and come back into it. He must learn that possession of the land is not a natural right, acquired through birth, inheritance, or marriage, but a free gift of God that is granted to His people. It is a lesson that applies directly to the Church as she moves through history: every generation must receive the Kingdom from God anew.

Although the ultimate fulfillment of the blessing to Jacob would be many centuries off, still it would come, through Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the ultimate fulfillment of the patriarchal blessing to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He is Immanuel, “God with us,” in the flesh. Thus, Jesus Christ fulfills that aspect of the blessing.
But Jesus also fulfills the family, wealth, and land aspects of the blessing as well. Jesus Christ is our elder brother. He is our family. He is the promised Seed of Genesis 3:15, the deliverer through whom all nations of the earth are blessed. He is the one who reconciles others to God. He is also our riches and our wealth. We will receive crowns of glory in paradise, but we will lay them at his feet because of the wealth of the blessing of eternal life we receive in Him. And Jesus is our land – He is our inheritance – He is the author of our eternal destiny. We will go to be with Him and live in His presence forever.

So, the promised blessings to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob have come to pass. All nations of the earth are blessed in Jesus Christ. We are blessed in Jesus Christ. If you are children of Abraham, if you are true sons of Israel, then you have inherited the blessings as well. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

Close in Prayer.

Next week: Lesson 2 – Two Brothers – Gen. 11:27-12:5 (Duguid chapter 1)