UNDERSTANDING THE ONE STORY OF SCRIPTURE
Week 9 – The Patriarchs: Ordinary People...An Extraordinary God!
November 3, 2026

Israel – the nation whom God created and chose:

Isa. 43:1 - *But now, thus says the Lord, who created you, O Jacob,*
and He who formed you, O Israel: 'Fear not, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by your name; You are Mine.

Deut. 7:6-8 – *On the east bank of the Jordan River, across from Jericho in the land of Promise God had given the children of Israel, God told them through Moses, For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. 7 The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; 8 but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you* (physically delivered/rescued you) *from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.*

Israel is instrumental in God's plan of redemption promised through the Jewish Messiah...offered to the world. Israel is central to God's plan of restoration of Israel and of "Genesis again" – which we can describe as Paradise Again! Paradise is God's Plan A!!!

NOTE: In our understanding Bible chronology, please know that the Hebrew Scriptures don't end after Genesis 11. The complete Hebrew Scriptures/the OT are divided into two distinct parts: There are 39 books in the OT:
The OT is divided into two distinct parts:

- God Deals with Mankind: Genesis 1 – 11 – covers approximately 2,000 years and encompasses God's dealings with mankind. There were no Jews or Gentiles; there was just mankind.
- God Deals with the Gentiles Through Israel: Genesis 12 – Malachi 4 – covers approximately 4,000 years...and it continues as Israel continues to impact the world.

We're going to move from Abram ("exalted father") to Abraham ("father of many nations" [because of God's calling Abraham to bless the world]) and move on...to Isaac and to Jacob. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are the patriarchs, the "fathers" (Deut. 7:8). From Abraham, the promises of God moved forward in a way only God can orchestrate. When hope for a son had long since faded, Isaac was born to Abraham and Sarah. Isaac's birth declared that the Abrahamic covenant would advance by God's power and in God's time. God also told Abraham, *At the appointed time I will return to you... and Sarah shall have a son*. It is at this comment that Sarah laughed. The Lord said to Abraham, *Why did Sarah laugh, saying, 'Shall I surely bear a child, since I am old?'* Gen. 18:15 - *But Sarah denied it, saying, 'I did not laugh,' for she was afraid. And He* (God) *said, 'No, but you did laugh!'* !!! "Isaac" means "laughter."

God operates on His own schedule rather than on our urgency. God's WORD is **LIFE CHANGING**! "How are we reading the Bible?" We need to move past cynicism or doubt when facing seemingly hopeless or delayed situations and cling to, hold fast to God's word!!! How should we look upon what is going on in our lives? THROUGH GOD'S EYES!

We read of Isaac looking for a bride and marrying Rebekah. While Rebekah was pregnant with twins, *the LORD said to her: 'Two nations are in your womb, two peoples shall be separated from your body; one people shall be stronger than the other, and the older shall serve the younger.'* (Gen. 25:23) Esau and Jacob. God is determining the lineage who will inherit His promises. Jacob is the second born, yet Jacob is the son of promise! Jacob emerged grasping Esau's heel. Jacob's name means "heel-grabber" which means "one who follows after to supplant" - to take the place of another person through trickery, strategy, force, or by tripping them up! Jacob's life was shaped by conflict. He contended with his brother, deceived his father, Isaac, and...Jacob fled for his life as Esau vowed to kill Jacob!!! Jacob fled from Canaan as a young man and did not return for approximately twenty years during which time Jacob was being manipulated/deceived by his father-in-law, Laban. Yet throughout it all, God pursued Jacob through dreams and promises. While sleeping his first night away from home, Jacob had a dream...

Gen. 28:11- 21 - *...the sun had set* (that's an OBSERVATIONAL consideration!). *12 Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. 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.' 16 Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, 'Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it.' 17 And he was afraid and said, 'How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!' 18 Then Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put at his head, set it up as a pillar, and poured oil on top of it 19 And he called the name of that place Bethel* (House of God)*; but the name of that city had been Luz previously. 20 Then Jacob made a vow, saying, 'If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, 21 so that I come back to my father's house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God.*

Jacob continued on in his travels to Laban's home (his mother's brother's home) and met Rachel whom Jacob loved. But Leah was given to Jacob – having been deceived by Laban. Leah gave birth to Reuben, Simeon, Levi (chosen by God to care for the Tabernacle in the wilderness and the Temple in Jerusalem) and Judah – the Kingly tribe through Whom the Messiah would come (Gen. 49:10).

Tired of Laban's conniving ways, Jacob left Laban and took Rachel, Leah, and all the children.
Gen. 32:3-6 - *Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother* offering gifts of appeasement. . *5 I have oxen, donkeys, flocks, and male and female servants; and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find favor in your sight.' 6 Then the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, 'We came to your brother Esau, and he also is coming to meet you, and four hundred men are with him!!!!'*

Gen. 32:24-30 - *Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day. 25 Now when He saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob's hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him. 26 And He* (the Man) *said, 'Let*

Me go, for the day breaks.' But he (Jacob) *said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me!" 27 So He* (the Man) *said to him, 'What is your name?' He said, 'Jacob.' 28 And He* (the Man) *said, 'Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but **Israel**; for you have struggled **with God** and with men* (in Jacob's life)*, and have prevailed.'* (Jacob prevailed in his request of being blessed by this Man) *29 Then Jacob asked, saying, 'Tell me Your name, I pray.' And He said, 'Why is it that you ask about My name?' And He blessed him there. 30 So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: 'For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.* It appears that Jacob was turning a life of scheming, his life of deceiving, into a life of reliance upon God!
Gen. 32:31 - *31 Just as he crossed over Penuel the sun rose on him, and he limped on his hip.*

Jacob is called Israel – the one who struggles with God and lives! The promises of God move forward not through human power but through divine grace. Israel is the father of a nation that will carry his name, inherit his promises, and reflect his story. Israel's descendants will struggle and survive only through God's love and sustaining power!

The tribal leaders within Israel are Jacob's twelve sons: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, and Benjamin. They are far from ideal. Rivalry, jealousy, and moral failure run through the family. Yet, God's purposes move forward through their brokenness.

In Jacob's final words spoken over his sons in Genesis 49, their futures are foretold. Judah is central among them. Authority will not depart from Judah. He will become the Ruler to whom the obedience of the people belongs. Jesus is a descendant of Judah!
Gen. 49:8-10 - *Judah, you are he whom your brothers shall praise; Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies* (Psa. 110:1 - The LORD said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.) *Your father's children shall bow down before you. 9 Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He couches down, he lies down as a lion; and as a lion, who shall rouse him? 10 The scepter* (symbol of kingship) *shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes; and to Him shall be the obedience of the people.*
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The final chapters of Genesis show God preserving this growing family through unexpected means. Joseph is hated by his brothers and sold into slavery but rises to power in Egypt.

Joseph's family travels to Egypt in the midst of the famine. The brothers who sold their brother into slavery now bow down before Joseph.

Gen. 46:27 – *All the persons who went with Jacob to Egypt, who came from his body, besides Jacob's sons' wives were 66 persons in all. And the sons of Joseph who were born to him in Egypt were two persons. All the persons of the house of Jacob who went to Egypt were seventy.* God ordained a plan by which the number of nations (70 according to Gen. 10) corresponded to the number of the children of Israel (Gen. 46:27). This is further confirmation that God called Israel to bless all the nations!

Deut. 32:8-10 - *When He* (God) *separated the sons of Adam, He set the boundaries of the peoples according to the number of the children of Israel.* ***9*** *For the Lord's portion is His people; Jacob is the place of His inheritance.* ***10*** *He found him in a desert land and in the wasteland, a howling wilderness; He encircled him, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye.*

Seventy descendants of Jacob/of Israel enter Egypt...small in number yet carrying promises that reach far beyond their present circumstances. Scripture does not treat Israel as a symbol/a metaphor. Israel is a national ethnic people group created by God and chosen by God to accomplish His purposes for the world.

QUESTIONS

What was new to you?
How does this further enhance the one story of Scripture?
What questions do you have?
How does God use ordinary man?
What attributes of God caught your attention?

SUGGESTED HOMEWORK

Reread Week 9 with the Bible references.
Continue making observations and asking questions.
With whom will you be sharing these Scriptures – and for what purpose?
Invite a Jewish neighbor, friend, relative, shop owner to the Chanukah/Christmas Celebration.
Read Week 10 when you receive it.