A Very Simple Survey of the Old Testament

Block #2 — Lessons 9–16

Block #2 · Lessons 9–16 | Keith R. Blades | Enjoy the Bible Ministries®

Study Overview & Lesson Summaries

About This Block

Block #2 (Lessons 9–16) follows without alteration the next 8 lessons in the Bible in Felt outline, covering Genesis 17 – 41 — doctrinally speaking, from God's dealings with Abraham unto Joseph's rise in Egypt. Though many interesting personal details can be looked at in the lives of Abraham, Isaac, Esau, Jacob, Joseph, etc., the purpose of these lessons is to focus upon the outworking of God's plan and purpose in this world with Abraham and his seed. God had established that His plan and purpose for the repossession of the earth would be accomplished through the nation He would make from Abraham — the nation of Israel. Keith stresses that Matthew, Mark, Luke and John record God's program with Israel, not what God is doing with us today in this 'dispensation of Gentile grace.'

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Lessons at a Glance

Lesson	Core Focus
L9	Abraham's Visitors — Genesis 17–18
L10	Angels Visit Lot — Genesis 19
L11	Abraham's Faith — Genesis 21–22
L12	The Twin Brothers — Genesis 25–27
L13	Jacob's Dream — Genesis 28–33
L14	The Story of Joseph — Genesis 37
L15	Joseph Becomes a Slave — Genesis 39–40
L16	King Pharaoh's Dreams — Genesis 41

Lesson Summaries

L9 **Abraham's Visitors** *Genesis 17–18 • 3 very special things God did with Abraham*

Review: God's Kingdom Through Israel

- Through the nation of Israel the "kingdom of heaven" would be established on this earth, and God Himself would rule over it as King of all the earth.
- This is what the Lord Jesus talked about on the earth, as the 4 Gospels describe: He proclaimed to Israel that the time was at hand for God's kingdom, and the gospel being preached is called "the gospel of the kingdom".
- In view of the overwhelming failure of Christians to "rightly divide the word of truth", Keith says it must be emphasized constantly that the Gospels record God's program with Israel, not what He is doing with us today.

Special Issue 1: The Sign of Circumcision (Chapter 17)

- Because of the special-ness of Abraham and his children unto God, God gave Abraham a physical sign of it — the circumcision of his flesh — a reminder of their special relationship to God and of His plan and purpose with them.
- The Bible often speaks of Israel as "the Circumcision" and the rest of the nations as "the Uncircumcision"; Israel had in their bodies the sign that God had separated them from all others.

Special Issue 2: The Promised Son (17:15–22; 18:9–15)

- Abraham and Sarah were old — "it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women" — yet God meant exactly what He said: "I will make of thee a great nation". He Himself would perform the miracle of giving them a son.
- Israel is in truth a nation that God Himself has made: brought into existence by His direct intervention, it has survived all of Satan's attacks because it is God's nation, and it will yet fulfill His plan when this dispensation of Gentile grace is over.

Special Issue 3: Taken into God's Counsels (18:16–22)

- God informed Abraham of His intention to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, whose sins were "very grievous" to Him; God wasn't going to "hide from Abraham" the thing that He was going to do.
- Abraham and his seed would be the administrators of God's righteousness in His kingdom; so God told Abraham what He would need to do as "the Judge of all the earth", and Abraham began sharing as God's friend in the fellowship of His counsels.

L10

Angels Visit Lot *Genesis 19 • What Sodom and Gomorrah had become that necessitated their destruction*

Satan's Opposition Continued

- Satan's opposition didn't cease when God called Abraham; he focused upon making the very land God had promised to Abraham as vile and wicked as possible — and this is what Sodom and Gomorrah had become.
- Though most of the account relates God's merciful provision for Lot's deliverance, the children need to understand what the cities had become that necessitated their destruction.

Why God Destroyed the Cities

- The people were extremely ungodly and corrupt in view of their vile sins, especially the abomination of homo-sexuality; and these abominations were going on in the land God had claimed for Himself and promised to Abraham

for His righteous kingdom.

- It seems apparent they were functioning as Satan's hot-bed of ungodliness, as he tried to make the land God had claimed for Himself as wicked and corrupt as possible.
- "Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven" (19:24); the mark of that destruction still stands in the arid desolation of the area.
- As Peter says in II Peter 2:6, God made them an example; He left the mark of their destruction as a testimony to the judgment that will come when He judges all ungodliness and destroys Satan's dominion on this earth.
- That day of God's judgment will come after this present dispensation of God's longsuffering and grace is over, when the fire of the Lord's wrath will destroy all ungodliness.

Lot: A Believer Not Living Like One

- Lot was a believer, but he certainly wasn't living like one: having chosen to separate himself from Abraham, God's man, the things of the world became increasingly more important to him than the things of God.
- Lot "lingered" (verse 16) and the angels had to forcefully take him and his wife and daughters out of the city; God delivered him because of His mercy and because of Abraham's concern for him.
- In this dispensation of Gentile grace Christians shouldn't act like Lot; we should stay in close daily fellowship with God, learning from His word, so that we can do as Paul says in Romans 12:2: "be not conformed to this world".

L11

Abraham's Faith *Genesis 21–22 • God's faithful fulfillment of His promise and a special testing of Abraham*

God Fulfills His Promise (21:1–8)

- In Genesis 21:1–8 God fulfilled His promise to Abraham and Sarah of a son; with Isaac, God had begun the formation of the nation of Israel — His nation for the repossession of the earth.
- Because of what God did with Abraham and Sarah, He is often referred to as Israel's "father" — "thou, O LORD, *art* our father, our redeemer" (Isaiah 63:16); in Isaiah 43:1 He is Israel's Creator and Former, in Hosea 8:14 its Maker.

The Testing of Abraham (Chapter 22)

- God "tempted" or tested Abraham — not to sin, but regarding his faith in God and His word — by telling him to offer up his son Isaac as a sacrifice.
- God did this to prove and put on display Abraham's great faith; Abraham justified himself truly to be "the friend of God", fully persuaded that God knew what He was doing, and obeyed Him regardless.
- Abraham didn't argue with God but rose up "early in the morning" (verses 3–4); as Hebrews 11:17–19 states, he 'accounted that God was able to raise Isaac up from the dead.'
- In verse 5 Abraham told the young men that he and Isaac would worship "and come again to you", fully expecting that God would have to raise Isaac up from the dead.
- God withheld Abraham from slaying Isaac and, out of His joy and delight over Abraham's faith, gave him a high token of His own friendship — a personally

sworn oath concerning the fulfilling of His promises.

An Example to Israel, and to Us

- Abraham serves as an example to Israel and to us of implicitly depending upon God's word; in this present dispensation of Gentile grace, members of the church the body of Christ ought likewise to be such "friends of God".

A Fore-shadow of God's Own Son

- What God asked of Abraham was a fore-shadow of what He Himself would do: God the Father provided His own Son as a sacrifice for our sins upon the very mount that He had Abraham take Isaac to.
- Jesus Christ willingly submitted to His Father's plan and died in our place for our sins, so that by trusting in Him we could have forgiveness of our sins and be reconciled to God.

L12

The Twin Brothers *Genesis 25–27 • God carries on the making of His nation through Jacob*

Beyond the Time of Abraham

- God told Abraham that making him a "great nation" would take a long time, and that he would die beforehand but that God would raise him up from the dead at the appropriate time (Genesis 15:13–16).
- God engaged in the initial act of forming the nation with the birth of Isaac; now, Abraham having died, God engages in other things necessary to forming His nation — this is where Isaac's sons come in.

"The elder shall serve the younger" (25:21–23)

- God told Rebekah His plan of making His great nation would be carried on not with both sons but only through one — the younger: "the elder shall serve the younger".
- Esau, the eldest, was entitled to the 'birthright' and the leadership in the family; but God knew his heart in advance and knew that he would not be His, but that Jacob would.

The Birthright (25:29–34)

- The birthright involved the father's special blessing, the leadership of the family and the greater inheritance; with God now dealing with Isaac, it also involved being God's man for the carrying on of His plan and purpose.
- In selling his birthright Esau manifested his disregard and despisal for the things of God; Jacob, though he secured it without waiting for God to have it given to him, did believe the things of God and did value it.

The Blessing (Chapter 27)

- Isaac was going to bless Esau as if what God had said at their births wasn't true; Rebekah's plan was deception — fleshly scheming resorted to in order to produce what God had said — chosen in view of Isaac's own foolishness.
- Esau had sold the birthright and had corrupted himself and his line by marrying the Hittite women (26:34–35); in view of this it was foolish for Isaac to do what he intended to do.
- Isaac "trembled very exceedingly" but did not reverse what had been done; by faith in what God had said he let it stand — "By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come" (Hebrews 11:20).
- In sending Jacob to take a wife of his mother's relatives (28:1–5), Isaac certified to him that God was carrying on His plan and purpose with him and

his children just as He said.

L13

Jacob's Dream *Genesis 28–33 • 2 very significant events: the ladder at Bethel and the name "Israel"*

The Foundation of the Nation

- Jacob will have 12 sons who, with Jacob, Isaac and Abraham, are the "patriarchs" — the founding fathers of the nation; from these 12 sons will develop the 12 tribes, and God commences His nation by establishing His covenant with Jacob and his sons.
- When Exodus opens, the children of Israel number over 600,000 men, not counting women and children — in total probably around 2 million.

Part One: The Ladder (28:10–19)

- Jacob saw "a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it", portraying what the land was designed to be — God's own dwelling place on this earth.
- Jacob didn't see men going up the ladder on their way to heaven, but angels coming to God on this earth and going out in His service; when God dwells among His nation, heaven's will will be done on this earth.
- Jacob said, "How dreadful *is* this place! this *is* none other but the house of God" — 'dreadful' meaning awesome — and called the place "Bethel", "the house (or dwelling place) of God".
- What Jacob saw is the same basic issue Isaiah described in Isaiah 2:2–4: God establishing His house and rule on this earth in the land promised to Abraham, and the world blessed through His nation Israel.
- The Lord Jesus told Nathaniel (John 1:47–51) he would see Him, the "King of Israel", with "the angels of God ascending and descending" upon Him — fulfilled after this present dispensation of Gentile grace is concluded and God resumes His program with Israel.

Part Two: The Name "Israel" (32:24–32)

- About twenty years later, after fathering 11 of his 12 sons, Jacob wrestled through the night with what at first appeared to be a man but, as verse 30 and Hosea 12:4 show, was actually an angel of God.
- The angel declared from God, "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed". "Israel" means 'God's ruler,' or 'the ruling power of God.'
- Israel is to be God's ruling nation on this earth; that isn't God's plan and purpose with us today in this present dispensation of Gentile grace, but He will fulfill it with Israel once He concludes what He is doing today with us.

L14

The Story of Joseph *Genesis 37 • God's provision through Joseph for the growth of the nation*

The Foundation for the Nation

- Jacob's 12 sons would constitute the heads of the 12 tribes of Israel; eleven were born before he returned to the land, and chapter 35 gives the birth of the twelfth son, Benjamin.
- This lesson begins to focus upon what God did to work out the multiplying of the people and their sojourning, just as He had told Abraham would take

place.

What God Told Abraham (Genesis 15:13–16)

- Abraham's seed would be "a stranger in a land *that is* not theirs, and shall serve them", and be afflicted "four hundred years"; then God would judge that afflicting nation and bring His people out with "great substance" in the fourth generation.
- This was not going to take place while Abraham was alive; beginning in chapter 37 with the story of Joseph, God's word begins to describe the fulfilling of it.

The Coat of Many Colours (37:1–4)

- "Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he *was* the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of *many* colours" — a coat worn at that time by ones in positions of honour and prestige.
- Jacob's reason was not simply fleshly favoritism: Joseph had a love and desire for the things of God, and in bringing "unto his father their evil report" he recognized that what his brothers were doing was evil.
- Jacob made the coat in signification of what ought to be honored — the things of God; but Joseph's brothers responded in evil and hated Joseph.

Joseph's Two Dreams (37:5–11)

- God Himself also responded to Joseph's love for the things of God, giving him two special dreams in which He depicted how He was going to utilize him in a very special way.
- In the first dream (verses 5–8) the brothers' sheaves bowed to Joseph's sheaf: God was going to put Joseph into a position of rulership over his brothers, and so provide for them in that "strange land".
- In the second (verses 9–11) "the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me": Joseph's ascendancy over his family, and their dependency upon him; though Jacob rebuked him, "his father observed the saying".

L15

Joseph Becomes a Slave *Genesis 39–40 • God overrules the evil done to Joseph to accomplish His own purpose*

Part One: The Brothers' Evil (Genesis 37)

- Joseph wasn't told that he would be wickedly dealt with by his brothers, and that through this unlikely means God would provide for the fulfillment of his dreams; as he later said, "ye thought evil against me; *but* God meant it unto good" (Genesis 50:20).
- The brothers "conspired against him to slay him"; at Reuben's counsel they "cast him into a pit"; then Judah thought how they could be profited by selling Joseph to the Ishmeelites as a slave, and this they did.
- Their wicked hatred was most especially against God's use of Joseph; in 42:21 they remember how they "saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear".
- Right from the beginning the nation of Israel has rebelled against God: as Stephen traces in Acts 7:9ff, that rebellious history began with the patriarchs selling Joseph into Egypt.

Part Two: "the LORD was with Joseph" (Chapters 39–40)

- Egypt is the "strange land" where the children of Israel will multiply and

develop; Potiphar bought Joseph, but "the LORD was with Joseph", and since God had declared His purpose by the dreams, nothing is going to thwart it.

- Outward appearances fooled Jacob; but Joseph remembered the dreams God gave him and trusted in God — something in which Joseph ought to serve as an example unto us.
- God made Joseph a "prosperous man" in Potiphar's sight and "the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake", as God began to provide for Joseph's rise to prominence in Egypt.
- Evil was worked against Joseph because he stood for the things of God: Potiphar's wife accused him to her husband and he was put into prison; yet nothing is said about Joseph moaning, groaning or complaining.
- God gave Joseph the interpretation of the butler's and baker's dreams, yet "did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgat him"; what God began in the prison would bear its fruit in time.
- When Potiphar's wife took hold of him, Joseph "fled, and got him out" (39:12) — and this too is what we are exhorted to do in this dispensation of the grace of God, in view of who we are in Christ Jesus.

L16

King Pharaoh's Dreams *Genesis 41 • The next step in God's provision for fulfilling His purpose with Joseph*

Joseph Waits on God

- Joseph remained in prison for two full years, yet nothing is said about doubts or complaining; he trusts implicitly in God, and the circumstances don't blind him to God's truthfulness and certainty of counsel.

Pharaoh's Two Dreams (41:1–16)

- God gave Pharaoh two dreams — seven well-fed cattle eaten up by seven thin cattle, and seven good ears consumed by seven thin ears — and "*there was* none that could interpret them unto Pharaoh".
- These weren't dreams the demons behind the false gods of Egypt had anything to do with; the true and living God Himself had produced them, and by them He provides for Joseph's rise to prominence.
- The butler remembered Joseph; Joseph claimed nothing for himself but declared his understanding is of God, confidently relying upon God's own working out of things (verses 14–16).

The Interpretation and Counsel (41:25–36)

- Joseph told Pharaoh "the dream *is* one" — what God is about to do: seven good years, then seven years of very grievous famine; in dreaming it twice, God certified the certainty of it and the quickness of bringing it to pass.
- Joseph's counsel — to establish a man over Egypt to administer the storing up of food for the famine — was also from God, providing for Joseph himself to be established in that position.

Joseph Established in Egypt (41:37–57)

- Pharaoh established Joseph second only to himself, ruler "over all the land of Egypt", and named him 'Zaph-nath-pa-a-ne-ah,' meaning 'abundance of life' — that the land "perish not through the famine".
- God was fulfilling Joseph's dreams and what He had said to Abraham: Egypt would be the "strange land"; the famine would force Jacob and his children to

leave their land; Joseph would provide for them in Egypt.

- "the dearth was in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread"; Jacob sends his sons into Egypt to buy corn, and the next step in God fulfilling what He had said unto Abraham begins to be taken.

Key Doctrinal Distinctions

God's Program with Israel vs. This Present Dispensation of Gentile Grace

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are still recording God's program and dealings with the nation of Israel, and are not describing what God is doing with us today in this 'dispensation of Gentile grace.' Israel as God's ruling nation on this earth isn't God's plan and purpose with us today; He will fulfill it with Israel once He concludes what He is doing today with us. Jacob's dream will be fulfilled after this present dispensation of Gentile grace is concluded and God resumes His program with Israel; the day of God's judgment, of which Sodom is an example, will come after this present dispensation of God's longsuffering and grace is over.

"the Circumcision" and "the Uncircumcision"

Because God instituted the sign of circumcision with Abraham, the Bible often speaks of Israel as "the Circumcision" and the rest of the nations as "the Uncircumcision". The sign signified that God had separated Israel from all others and that His plan and purpose for this world would be accomplished through and in them as His chosen people and nation.

The Things of God vs. the Things of This World

Lot was a believer not living like one, the things of the world becoming more important to him than the things of God; Christians today shouldn't act like Lot. We ought not want to have any fellowship with "the unfruitful works of darkness", but ought to want to live unto God because we belong to Him; we ought to be "zealous of good works" and not indifferent about sinful things.

Outward Appearances vs. What God Has Said

For Joseph, the outward circumstances would seem to be working against what God had said to him; but as outward appearances so often do, they often tell lies. Outward appearances fooled Jacob; even with Christians today they blind us to what God has said or make us doubt it; but Joseph trusted in God, and in this he ought to serve as an example unto us.

God Overrules Evil to Accomplish His Own Purpose

What Joseph's brothers meant for evil, God overruled and used to accomplish His own purpose with Joseph, and to provide for his brothers and family. Through this God provided for the fulfilling of what He had said to Abraham about His people developing and multiplying in a foreign land.

Key Scripture References

Genesis 15:13–16	God told Abraham his seed would be a stranger in a land not theirs, afflicted four hundred years
Genesis 17	Circumcision: the physical sign of Abraham's and his children's special-ness to God
Genesis 18:17–19	God took Abraham into His counsels about Sodom and Gomorrah
Genesis 19:24–28	God literally consumed Sodom and Gomorrah with fire
Genesis 22:1–19	God tested Abraham's faith in God and His word
Genesis 25:21–23	"The elder shall serve the younger": God's nation carried on through the younger son
Genesis 28:10–19	Jacob's ladder: the land designed as God's dwelling place; "Bethel"
Genesis 32:24–32	Jacob's name changed to "Israel" — 'God's ruler,' or 'the ruling power of God'
Genesis 37:5–11	Joseph's two dreams: his ascendancy over his brothers and family
Genesis 39:2, 21	"the LORD was with Joseph" in Potiphar's house and in prison
Genesis 41:25–32	Pharaoh's dreams: seven good years, then seven years of very grievous famine
Genesis 50:20	God overruled the evil intentions of Joseph's brothers
Isaiah 43:1; 63:16; Hosea 8:14	God as Israel's Creator and Former, "father", and Maker
Hosea 12:4	Jacob prevailing over an angel
John 1:47–51	Jacob's dream fulfilled after this present dispensation of Gentile grace is concluded
Acts 7:9	Israel's rebellious history began with the patriarchs selling Joseph into Egypt
Romans 12:2	For us today: not acting like Lot, but "be not conformed to this world"
Hebrews 11:17–20	Abraham accounted God able to raise Isaac; Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau by faith
James 2:21–23	Abraham held up as an example to the remnant of Israel
II Peter 2:6	God made Sodom and Gomorrah "an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly"