

THE BIBLE

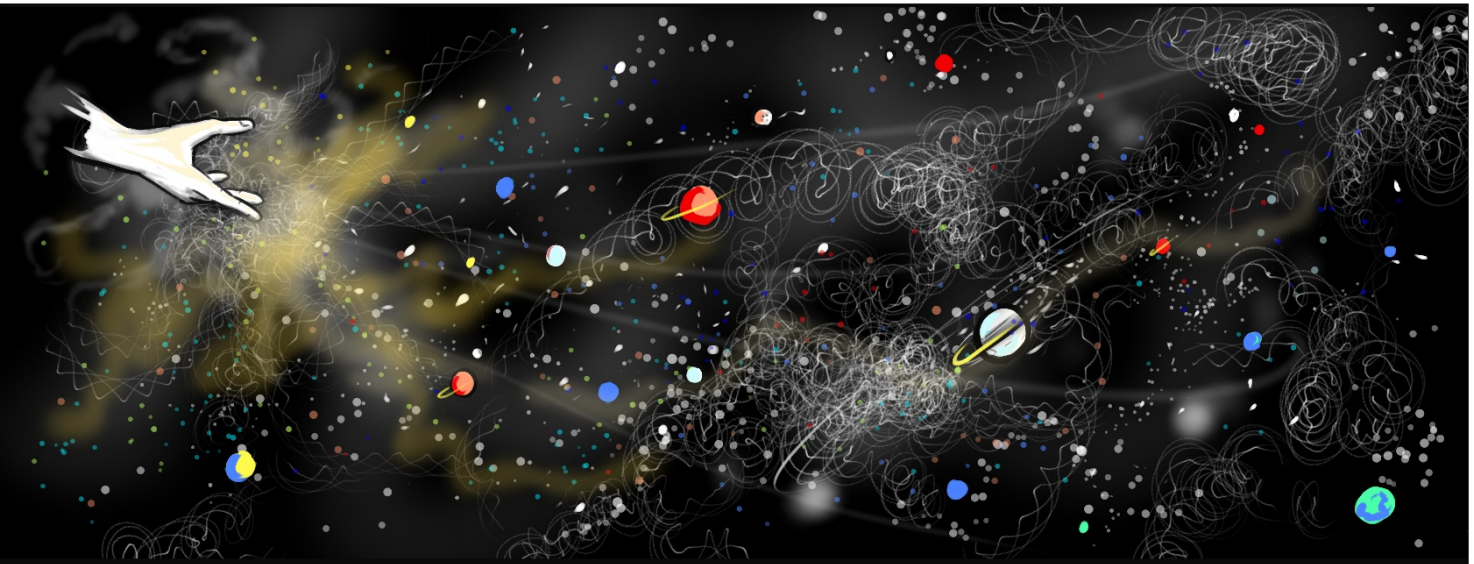
GENESIS

Illustrations by VINAY KURUVILLA

Copyright : Zac Poonen and Vinay Kuruville

Christian Fellowship Church
69 Paradise Enclave, Belahalli,
Kannur post, Bangalore - 562 149
India

GENESIS



The Scriptures begin with the words "In the beginning, God". This is how it must be with everything in life. In our goals, ambitions, finances...God first. There is no limit to what God can do in and through such a person

Genesis chapter 1 verse 1



God created and He never creates anything imperfect

Something happened between Genesis 1, verses 1 and 2

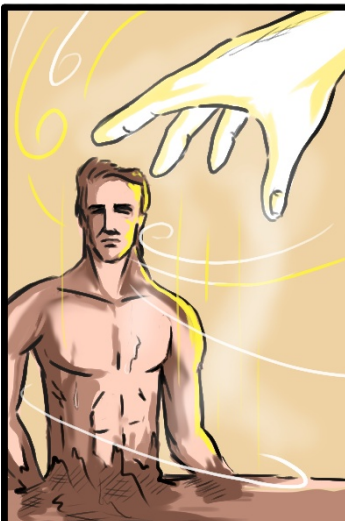


The angel, Lucifer, fell and became the devil. Sin entered the universe. But this is not mentioned here as the Bible was written for man

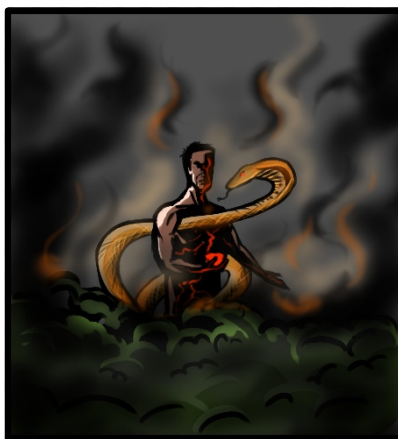
Genesis chapter 1 verse 2



Everything was dark, shapeless and void

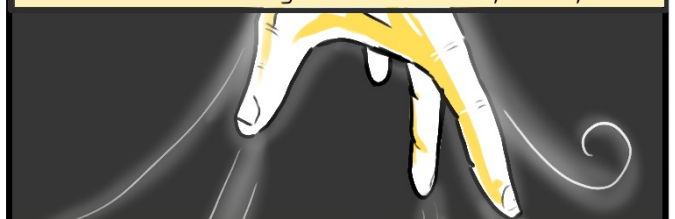


God created man perfect

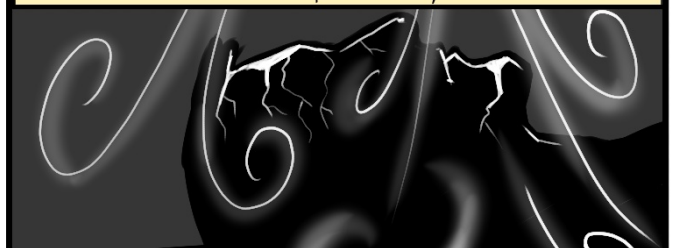


But Satan entered and made man dark, void and shapeless. We have lost the image of God. God had to begin to remake man

God is remaking ruined humanity today



He can make us so perfectly in His likeness



That He Himself can certify us "very good"

It was the combined working of God's word and the Holy Spirit that brought beauty to the chaotic earth



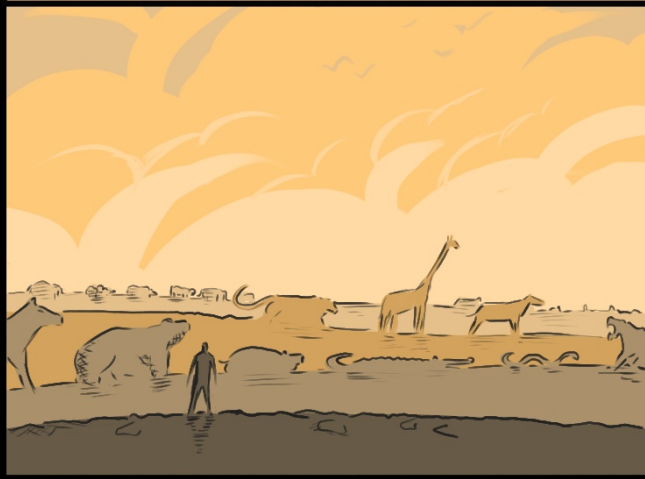
The great need in Christendom today is for balance

The first to make a division was God



When Christians don't separate from the darkness, confusion is the result

The animals were created from the same dust on the same day as man



Man is worth nothing apart from God's breath

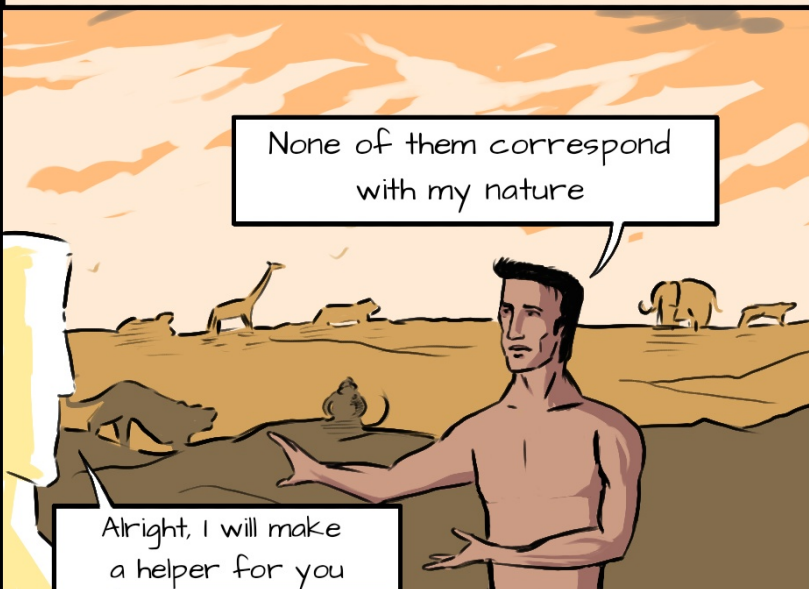


Man's first living day was a day of rest

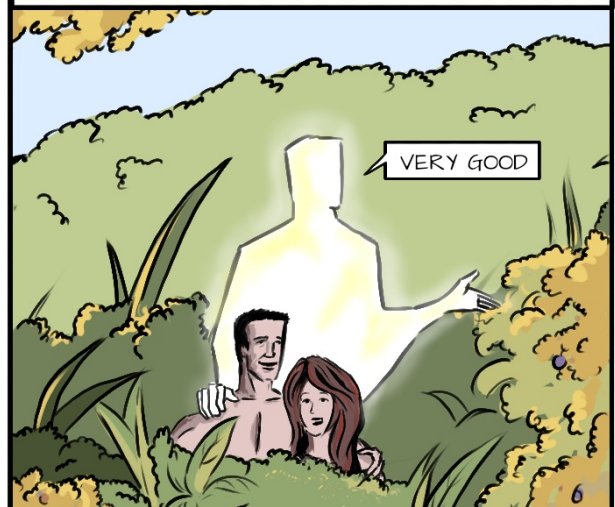


That is the Divine Order for man: Fellowship with God first and then service

In marriage, God may test you with many who do not have the Divine nature you have received. Will you be unequally yoked with an unbeliever or wait for God's plan?



Man's sexual function was included in..



Sex is very bad outside marriage but very good inside it

It is only when we're not being watched that God can test our heart. They could have chosen the tree of life but..



..they didn't. Our knowledge of good and evil must come through the Holy Spirit telling us moment by moment.

The devil is a deceiver. He implied..



If God loved you He would have allowed you to eat from this beautiful tree.

When Adam, the head of his home, saw Eve talking to the devil, He did not try to stop her

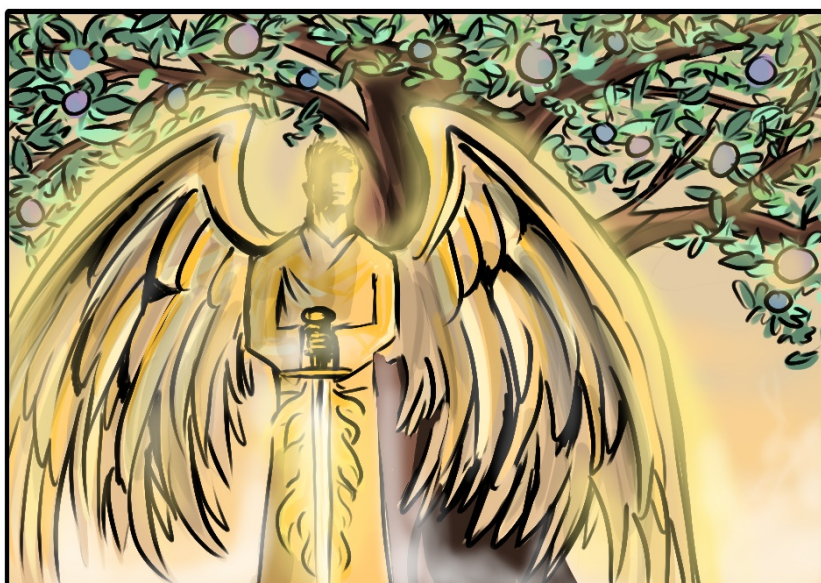


There are many husbands like Adam today

God is good. He did not curse Adam. He killed an innocent animal to cover Adam's sin. Its skin used to cover the nakedness of Adam and Eve.



Like at calvary, His Son's righteousness clothed us



There is now a sword in front of the tree of life. It fell on Jesus. When we're united with Jesus on the cross, it falls on our flesh. There is no other way to life.

As soon as Adam's fellowship with God was broken, his fellowship with his wife was broken. The proof was he began to accuse her instead of judging himself



When we are in fellowship with God we don't accuse others. Satan is the accuser of the brethren.

God rejected wicked Cain and his offering. Bible says The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to God



God sought and warned Cain of his anger. It is encouraging that God seeks us when we go astray

But Cain did not take heed. He allowed sin to destroy him.



Let us not be jealous when we see a more blessed younger brother.

Cain was more worried about his punishment being too much than his sin



Godly men are heartbroken by their sin

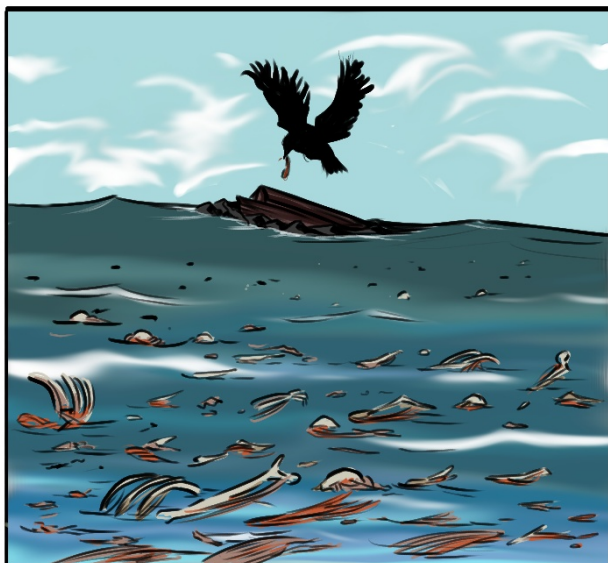
Noah did not ask who was going to pay for the ark. If the last days are going to be evil like Noah's time, God needs men like Noah, like the apostle Paul who support themselves and serve the Lord



He did what God said and left all else to God.



The ark is a picture of the church which may not be convenient but is the only safe place. Even if there are difficult people in it..



Those who live according to the flesh find world enjoyable, like the crow must have found a feast in the dead bodies floating ... but not the dove..

Then, we see the start of Babylon. Babel means "gate of God". Nimrod was not an atheist. He was a religious man whose profession was to lead people to God. Babylon is a religious system and a financial system. Money and the work of God are joined together. This is the deception of Babylon. People think they are doing the Lord's work but they are drawn to it because there is money and fame to be had too !



Christendom has become like that today. We see preachers using money given for God's work by poor people, to live lavishly like film stars rather than Jesus and the apostles. We don't have to judge them but we must not follow them either. Nimrod is a type of a Antichrist, a world leader, mixing religion and politics. Jesus ran away when they tried to make him a king. Human effort to reach God is a major constituent of false religion, relying on charismatic men rather than weak, unimpressive ones like Paul. There is unity in Babylon where they don't need to consult God. Babylon is built on man's ideas, through man's power, for man's glory ... and the Lord will examine it .. for whose glory is this built ?

In contrast, further, we see the beginning of the true Jerusalem, which begins with God telling Abraham to move. We must wait to hear from God and then move.



Let God alone move you, not men. We may consider other's opinions but the final voice we hear must be God's. Then we can accomplish something of eternal value

God tested Abraham. what would you do if God calls you to Canaan and there's a famine in Canaan?



Jesus did not live by what His eyes saw or ears heard. But Abraham followed his senses, not God and went to Egypt because of the famine in Canaan. Can't God preserve a man during famine ? Certainly He can !

What was the result of Abraham going to Egypt ? He had to tell a lie that his wife was his sister. You can get into a lot of problems when you go to "Egypt" .. tell lies , write false reports etc. It is when we are in a tight spot that we discover whether we love the truth or not.



Imagine a heathen king rebuking a prophet of God for telling a lie ! It is encouraging that such was the man God chose .. weak and selfish, like us .

Here's something more serious. Something that happened in Egypt that produced consequences for 4000 years ! Abraham took a maid, Hagar who helped Sarah and would help Sarah with the problem of childlessness too ! Through Hagar came Ishmael whose seed have been in conflict with Isaac's for 4000 years.



But all this started with one man not listening to God once. We must listen to God *all* the time

Abraham and Lot became wealthy after Egypt. That wealth brought problems. While Abraham himself would not fight , his herdsman did. The heathen in the land saw this. This happens today when two Christian groups fight with each other !



In the midst of all this , there was a godly man , Abraham who called worldly Lot and said " we are brothers". They were not brothers. Abraham could have said " Im older and your uncle. God called me, not you. " But he did not assert authority

Godly Abraham gave his nephew preference. Lot , greedy man that he was , with the spirit of Babylon , grabbed the lovely fields of Sodom with its opportunity to make money. Many Christian preachers migrate to wealthy countries and preach in wealthy churches because they love money. Invariably , they lose out spiritually . *Does money attract or God lead us to a place ?*



Now the Lord saw the godly conduct of Abraham God had separated him from his father and now separated him from yet another hindering relative. Have you given up your right to something because you are a Christian ? God takes note of it .

Then Lot gets into trouble like you do when you go outside God's will. Abraham could have said " serves him right. He grabbed something from me. ". Abraham was tested here.. What would his attitude be to the man who cheated him ?



Abraham's attitude was " So Lot cheated me of some garbage of earthly wealth , but now he's in trouble after pursuing earthly riches, I feel sorry for him ". You can discover whether you are a man of God in such a situation

After the battle, Abraham was exhausted, probably tempted by pride and greed. At this time, God sends an unknown servant of His, Melchizedek. He fulfilled his ministry in three verses and disappeared. He was king of Salem (Jerusalem), a picture of the true church. What did he do? First, he brought food for the hungry man. After the practical need, he blessed him.



His blessing reminded Abraham that his God was owner of all in heaven and earth, saving him from covetousness. He also reminded Abraham that it was God who had given him victory, thus meeting Abraham's three needs.

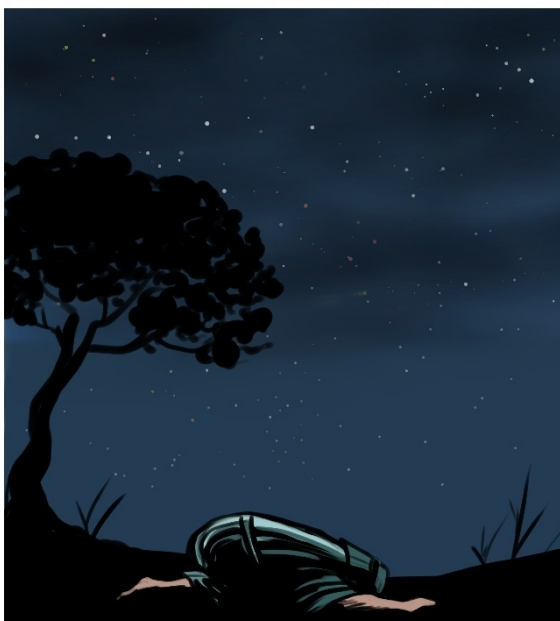


'Aman' is the Hebrew word for believe from where the word Amen comes from. This is what Abraham said when God promised him countless descendants.

Unfortunately, Abraham said Amen to Sarah too, when she suggested having a child through Hagar. But God doesn't need human help for His promises.



We should never say Amen to man's word when God has told us something else. and so Ishmael was born when Abraham was 86 years old.



After this, the next time we see God speaking to Abraham is when he was 99 years old. The Lord was silent for 13 years to teach Abraham a hard lesson. But God did not give up on him. He changed his name and Abraham said Amen once again to God. But now he had learned to say Amen to God alone. In a year, Isaac was born.

We then read about Abraham's hospitality. A godly man is always hospitable, warm and good, even to strangers. Hebrews 13:2 encourages us to be do so because some have entertained angels, like Abraham did in Chapter 18.



But now Lot was in trouble again. The Lord told Abraham that he was going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah for its sins. Again, Abraham was concerned about Lot. Lot hadn't learnt his lesson.



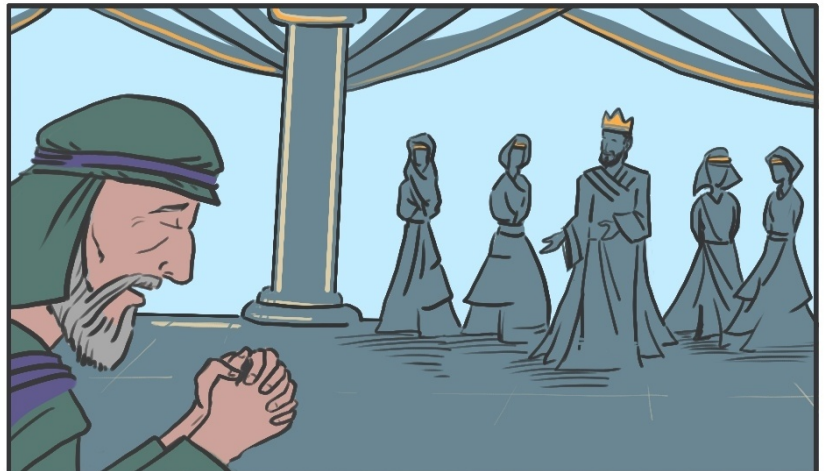
Lot had gone back to Sodom to make more money even after being captured as an enemy. But Abraham did not judge Lot. As a godly man, he prayed for Lot to try and save him. This is the first record of intercession in the Bible and it is for the salvation of souls.



Lot was saved as a result of Abraham's prayer but his wife was left behind as a pillar of salt. Jesus referred to this when He said at His second coming, two would be in one bed (husband and wife) and only one would be taken up. Lot's is a sad story. He lost his wife, both his sons-in-law and all his property in his *pursuit of wealth*. Finally he had to go, as a *pauper* to the place God had told him to go in the first place. His daughters then committed incest with him and bore two sons - Ammon and Moab whose descendants fought with Israel constantly. Abraham, on the other hand, would command his children to keep the way of the Lord (genesis 18 : 19)



We see Abraham failing for the *second* time in the area of telling lies to a heathen king in order to save his life. But God was good to Abraham and saved Sarah from being touched by Abimelech



It is interesting that God praises a heathen king for " *the integrity of his heart* ". This is why God stopped him from committing adultery. God will help any young man today, who has integrity, in the same way.

We see something wonderful following - Abraham praying here for many barren women in Abimelech's household, at a time when his own wife was barren. This requires much largeness of heart. But then not only did they conceive, Sarah also conceived. " *He who waters others will be watered also himself (by God)* " (Proverbs 11 : 25). When Job prayed for others, God blessed those others and Job as well (Job 42 : 10) Seeing the birth of Isaac, the heathen king, Abimelech, also recognised God is with Abraham.



Then God tested Abraham. He gave Abraham 3 days to **count the cost** as he journeyed to mount Moriah to sacrifice Isaac. God never asks us to do anything in a hurry. Then Abraham says " Lord, here you are. I love you more than my **dearest** earthly possession "

Now if Isaac hadn't been **wiling**, old Abraham would not have been able to tie Isaac down. That shows how a **godly** man taught his son to **obey** him.



Abraham called this an act of **worship**. This is the first time worship is mentioned in the Bible and the Father seeks such true worshippers even today. God saw Abraham's devotion to Him. This is the first time it is recorded that a man feared God when a man obeyed God totally. It was through such a man ,who **loved** and **obeyed** God that Jerusalem began.

Abraham called the place Jevovah Jireh. We can remember this when we face problems that " God shall **provide** all your need ". It was here Abraham caught a glimpse of the heart of **God** who would one day offer His Son as a sacrifice 2000 years later. Jesus referred to this in John 8 : 56 "

Abraham rejoiced to see my day ". God was so delighted with Abraham's attitude that He commanded the **temple** to be built on this very spot a 1000 years later. Yes, God's house is built ,**even today**, by those who fear and worship God like Abraham did.





There are many marriages mentioned in Scripture but only 2 that we see clearly as *God-ordained*. One was Adam's. The other was Isaac's. People ask if i believe in arranged marriages. I believe in marriages arranged by God! If you are fortunate to have a godly father , you should take his advice on marriage *seriously*. God maybe testing you here, to give you the partner He has chosen for you.

Abraham sending his servant to find a wife for Isaac is a picture of God the Father sending His *Holy Spirit* to earth to pick a bride for His son *Jesus Christ*. One of the tests that the servant applied was drawing water for camels... and camels drink a lot of water ! Rebekah proved to be *gracious , hardworking and modest*.



The servant then took Rebekah on that long and dangerous journey of 700 kilometers (that probably took a month) all the way from Mesopotamia to Canaan - a picture of *our journey in this world as the bride of Christ*.

What do you think they talked about ? I'm sure it was about Isaac. What do you think the Holy Spirit wants to talk to us about on our long journey of life? *About Jesus !* not about doctrine or heaven but Jesus! I want to know more and more about my wonderful saviour , from the Holy Spirit , until one day I see Him face to face (like Rebekah saw Isaac)



Hebrews 12 : 16, 17 says " Let there be no immoral or godless person like Esau , who sold his birthright for a single meal, for you know that afterwards when he desired to inherit the blessing he was rejected " . Esau thought he would outsmart his simple-minded brother by getting the porridge now as well as the birthright later. Many similarly wish to indulge in sin a little , *repent* ultimately and get the spiritual blessing *too* ! Let me assure you that they will not. one reaps what one sows. Esau wept bitterly but still did not get the blessing. We all come to that fork in the road of the temporal and the eternal.



We read of a time when Isaac reopened the wells his father Abraham had dug earlier and that the philistines had closed up out of jealousy. Those wells belonged to Abraham and now they belonged to Isaac. But the herdsmen of Gerar said the water is ours so Isaac gave it to them. Just like Abraham gave Lot the land Lot wanted. Then Isaac dug another well which the Gerarites quarrelled over again. *Again* Isaac said " give it to them " He moved away and dug *another* well. The Gerarites were ashamed and did not fight over this well.

So Isaac named it Rehoboth - " the *Lord* has made room for us." Isaac gave up his rights and did not make room for himself. This is the principle we must live by " *I won't fight for earthly things. Let others take what they want and God will make room for me with the leftovers* "



Isaac liked the **meat** that Esau would bring. His love for food resulted in their home being full of **partiality** which is the **best** way to split a home. Isaac on Esau's side and Rebekah on Jacob's. So the boys were lifelong **enemies**, jealous of one another. Isaac and Rebekah had a beautiful marriage, deeply in love but this partiality **ruined** it.

We see here that Esau brought grief to his parents by marrying Judith and Basemath, who were Hittite women. We see here that Isaac was not as **careful** as Abraham was in choosing a partner for his son. He spoiled Esau with his **favouritism**. Isaac was more interested in the food Esau brought him than in the wife whom Esau chose.



Towards the end of his life, Isaac's eyesight began to fail. This is natural but that sad thing was his **spiritual** vision was also **dim** and clouded. As we grow older, our outer man may decay but our **inner** man should become **stronger** and our spiritual vision must be **sharp**. But Isaac's was not. He **knew** God had said "the older will serve the younger". But he decides to go against God's word and to give his blessing to the older brother. **He asks Esau for venison, one foot in the grave**.. still thinking of food! No wonder he lost his spiritual vision. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 9.27 "If I don't subdue my body, I will preach to others and be **disqualified** myself." Rebekah schemed to get Jacob the blessing but the Lord **didn't** need her help! He certainly doesn't want us to cheat and tell lies to promote His work. The end **does not** justify the means. The goal and the way to the goal must be spiritual. It is better to build a **small** structure of gold, silver and precious stones than to build a **massive** structure of wood, hay and straw that will be **burnt** up in the final day!



Jesus referred to the ladder Jacob saw here as a picture of **Himself**. (John 1:51) We can praise God that the foot of that ladder came right down and **touched the earth** instead of hanging some distance above our heads. Indeed, Jesus was "made like us in all things" so that He might be our High Priest (Hebrews 2:17)

Jacob called this place Bethel, the house of God! God told Jacob "I am with you, I will keep you, I will bring you back and I will not leave you until I have done for you what I have promised" But see how Jacob responded to this fantastic promise from God. He says effectively in verse 20 "Lord, I am **not** interested in being a blessing to all the families of the earth, just give me the material blessings, take care of my food and clothing, protect me from accidents and **robbers**, bless my **business** and I will give you **10% of my profits**" Is this what God has called us for? Many settle for **earthly** blessings and miss out on "every **spiritual** blessing in the heavenly places".



Many Christians respond in the same way "Lord give me a comfortable job with a large salary. Heal my sicknesses, help me build a good house. Get my children married to rich, good-looking partners and protect us from all dangers... and we will give you a % of our earnings" They settle on the **temporal** when God wanted them to inherit the **eternal**



It's interesting to see how Laban **cheated** Jacob in getting him married to Leah instead of Rachel. In those days they used to have a big feast before the wedding. So Laban, crafty man that he was, had the wedding at night - so people's faces would not be clear. Then he got Jacob thoroughly drunk at the feast, so that Jacob would not know what was happening. The hand of the **heavily veiled** girl was placed in Jacob's and Jacob said yes, thinking it was Rachel. When he woke up next morning, He discovered it was Leah! **Jacob had met his match in crafty Laban** and had been **outsmarted** at last! Now he had to work **another** 7 years. Jacob worked hard in the fields for 7 years for Rachel. If Jacob could serve like that for a woman, how should I serve the Lord who **loved** and **gave** himself for me? Nothing can equal the **joy** of serving the Lord out of love, not for honour, money, comfort or fame. If I find my labour for the Lord a burden, it is because I don't love the Lord with **all** my heart



We then read how God met Jacob , wrestled with him and dislocated his hip. He does **drastic** things in order to bring us to the place He wants us to be.



It's a great encouragement for us to see that God picked a **selfish** man like Jacob and **transformed** him into an " Israel " . God **broke** him and said " From now on you are going to be a **prince** of God (Israel)" When could God call him " Israel " ? Only after 60 or 70 **years** of struggling with him , finally dislocating his hip and breaking him thoroughly. Then God says " Let me go now " . At last Jacob says " I will **not** let you go unless you bless me "



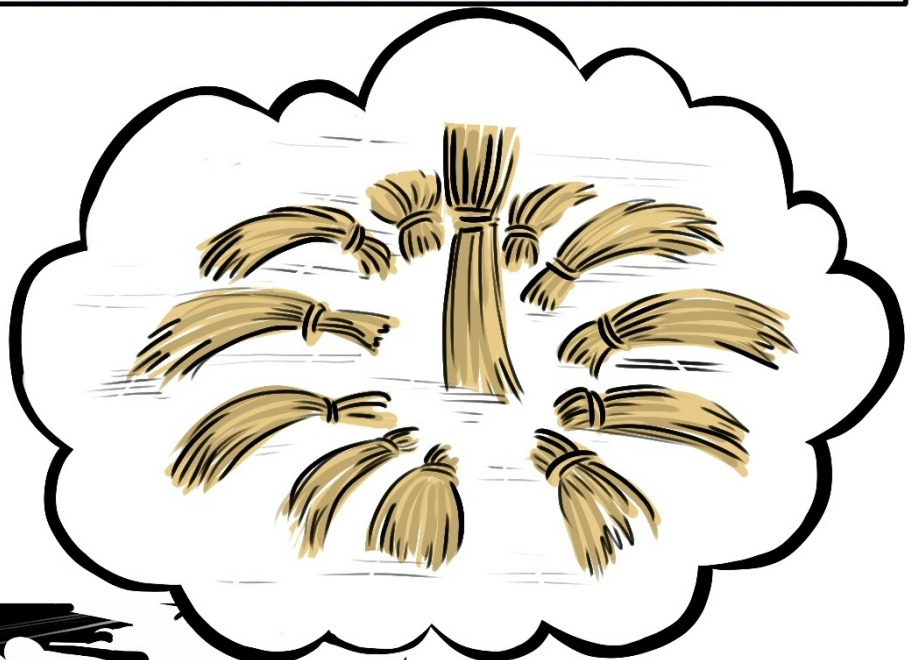
This man who had spent his life **grabbing** money , grabbing the birthright , grabbing property, grabbing women and grabbing sheep now leaves everything and grabs hold of **God**. He wanted God alone now. God is waiting for that day to come in our lives too. When did Jacob become an **overcomer** ? When his hip was **broken**. God has to **break** us to **empower** us. It is the broken man who **leans** upon his staff like Jacob, who becomes the prince of God , not the great and mighty man. Twenty years earlier the sun had spiritually set on his life , now it rose ... a geographical fact but **spiritually** true in Jacob's life





We then see how Jacob makes the *same* mistake of partiality his father had made. The best way to destroy your children is by being partial to them, giving them special gifts that the other children don't get. The other children become *enemies* of the favourite son and this is the parents fault !

By the time Joseph was 17 , God had already revealed His purpose for Joseph in dreams. It is *wonderful* to see a teenager so sensitive to God that he's having *dreams* from *God* instead of the filthy dreams ! Let us young people not *complain* that older brothers aren't giving us the opportunity to serve God. If we *submit to God sincerely* , *no one* can mess up God's plan for your life. Not your *foolish* father or your *jealous* older brothers. *The only person who can mess it up is you yourself.*



God *used* the jealousy of Joseph's brothers to fulfil His plan for Joseph's life. God does something *even better* than protecting us from evil ... He *makes* the very evil that people do to us to fulfil His plan for our lives. Just think: *if Joseph's brothers were good to him* , He would have never gone to Egypt .



We see then how Joseph's elder brothers plotted to *kill* him.

We see the *sovereignty* of God in making one of the brothers *stop* that plan and *change* it to selling him off to some slave traders who God sent at that time there... God *timed* their travel and *where* those slave traders were going !

So how was God's plan for Joseph fulfilled?

Step 1 - His brothers were *jealous* of him.

Step 2 - They *sold* him off to some slave traders.

Step 3 - The slave traders took him to Egypt and *sold* him off there.



If we *love* God ,as it says in Romans 8 .28 , the evil that others do to harm you ultimately fulfils God's plan in your life.



Thus God turns the tables on Satan ! You may face new trials. Joseph had a tough time as a slave too. But it fulfilled God's plan for his life! Praise God ! A man of faith will say " The God of Joseph is *my* God too. If I love God with all my heart, any number of people can be *jealous* of and plan *evil* against me but they will not *hinder* God's plan for my life. May we have *such faith* in our wonder- working God !

Chapter 38 is a slight diversion from Joseph's story. Here we read of Judah committing **adultery** with his **daughter-in-law**, Tamar and Tamar giving birth to twins. The interesting thing is that **Mary**, the mother of Jesus **descended** from one of the twins, Perez. The Lord chose it **deliberately** from heaven to show that He had come to call **sinners** - even the incestuous - to salvation. **Jesus identified with the worst transgressors in his family line.**



Chapter 39 is a wonderful story of a young man who was **faithful to God** when tempted **strongly** by an **attractive** and **powerful** woman. There is only **one** way to avoid immorality - **and that is to run away from it.** (1 Corinthians 6 :18) .. and that is **exactly** what Joseph did. He refused to be even **near** her , he ran away from the **source** of the temptation. As soon as that **evil** lady came near him , he would go off **somewhere** else. You cannot overcome temptation if you always hanging around people who tempt you! **God is looking for such men - who will run away from temptation.**

Look at the things Joseph suffered - **jealousy** from his brothers, **false accusations** from an evil woman , and **jail**. In those days the jails were **terrible** dungeons with rats, worms and cockroaches crawling all over the place ! But it says in verse 21 " **the Lord was with Joseph** " .. and that made all the difference . It doesn't **matter** if you're surrounded by every kind of **inconvenience**, if the **Lord** is with you.





In jail, Joseph gets an introduction to Pharaoh through his cupbearer. *How would that have happened if he wasn't in jail?* God made the **evil** that Potiphar's wife did, to work out God's **perfect plan**! If Joseph could have seen all this at the beginning, he would have been **praising** God like Paul and Silas in prison. It started because Joseph had a **concern** for others' problems even though he had his own! So let us **not** be taken up with **our own sorrows**. Let us open our hearts to the **needy**. In God's perfect time, he stood before Pharaoh. There is a **specific length of time fixed by God for all our trials**. During that time he will **test** us.



Joseph was **wise** in the 7 years of plenty. He stored up food. Therefore those who were lazy in times of **prosperity** had to come to him in famine. The Bible says "Go to the ant, you lazy man, and learn from it." (Proverbs 6.6-8) Apply this truth spiritually: In times when we have **plenty of opportunity** to study the Bible, say when we're bachelors, let us use our time **wisely**. Then, later when **pressures of life** are **more** and there is less time to study the Bible, say when we're married and have children, we will have **plenty of wisdom** to fall back on.



Nobody can frustrate God's plan for you life if you honour Him ! God turns the tables on Satan and uses the very harm that Satan does to **strengthen** us ! Now his **hungry** brothers had to come to him because of the famine in the land. They had to bow down to Joseph **exactly** as God had shown Joseph 20 years ago ! **God keeps His word**

Joseph dealt with his brothers in a **godly** way. He says " God sent me before you. It was **not** you who sold me to the Ishmaelites, it was God. It was **not** Potiphar's wife who sent me to jail , **it was God**"



Let us not say " This person is harming me " It is **God** who is allowing it. Joseph prepared a **great** feast and gave the **best** land of Egypt to these brothers who had prepared a **pit** for him! **Such is the attitude of a man of God !**

We now see Jacob in the closing years of his life as a **prophet** of God. He crosses his hands and blesses Joseph's children against Joseph's wishes. Jacob had **spiritual vision** unlike his **father** although his physical eyesight was dim like his father. Why is that ?.. because Jacob had been through **many a trial** and it is through trials God **sharpens** our vision. Jacob was the first man to prophesy of the **coming of Christ**.



Genesis began with the words " In the beginning , God" but it ends with the words " a coffin in Egypt " . This is a result of man's **sin**. But from that coffin in Egypt, God brought forth a wonderful redemption for fallen man ! **hallelujah !**