



Park Community Church

GENESIS ————— //

# BOOKENDS

// ————— REVELATION

Part Two | Genesis: 15 – 50 | The Story of God's People

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# Curriculum Guide

## The Goal

Park Community Church's small groups are built upon three pillars: gather, transformation, and impact. Using these three fundamental pillars, we anticipate the Holy Spirit to mold everyone in our small groups into the likeness of Christ as we push back the darkness in our city. Much of this work comes from knowing God personally, correctly, and intimately. Our hope is that the small group curriculum will facilitate a deeper understanding of God through his revealed Word in a way that transforms our lives together and moves us into Christ-like action.

## Context Questions

Context is key when it comes to interpreting the Bible. Each week, we hope that you will take a few minutes to remind one another of where you are at in Genesis. Don't feel bound to the suggested questions, but feel free to let the conversation flow naturally. Especially as we study the Old Testament, it is important to understand the context in which the scripture is written.

## Textual Questions

As a group, you will observe the text and look for the details. What you are looking for in this section is simply what the *text* is saying. Do not feel the need to jump into application, that time will come. This section will help build a textual framework for the reflection questions that follow.

## Reflection Questions

This section is designed to help your group move from hearing and understanding the Word to letting it shape your life. Each week you'll reflect together on questions that invite vulnerability, personal sharing, and accountability. Use this time to consider how the lesson applies to your daily life, whether through a new way of thinking, a fresh heart posture, repentance, celebration, or a conviction to live differently. The goal is that faith would be stirred in both belief and practice, encouraging one another toward growth in Christ.

# Week Eight

## *God's Covenant with Abraham / Genesis 15*

### Context Questions

1. What events immediately precede the passage we're studying today?
2. How does the cultural context impact how this text is understood?

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### Textual Questions

*Before using the questions, have the group simply observe the text. Listen to what they discover as the Holy Spirit leads them. You may naturally cover some of the questions provided below in that discussion.*

1. Genesis 15:6 is the first mention of righteousness in Scripture. What does this verse communicate about its nature?
2. In Genesis 15:8, Abram asks, "O Lord God, how am I to know that I shall possess it?" prompting God to establish a covenant through a unique ritual (verses 9-17). What elements of this covenant ceremony stand out to you and what do they suggest about God's commitment to His promises? What do the elements in the ceremony signify?
3. Why is the covenant significant in the context of Abram's doubts?
4. God's promise to Abram includes both a vast number of descendants and a specific land (verses 18-21). Consider the whole book of Genesis. Why do you think the promise of land is so central to this covenant and what does it reveal about God's desire to establish a place of rest for His people?
5. How does this chapter contribute to the broader narrative of God's relationship with His people?
6. If Genesis 15 were not included in the Bible, what insights about God's character, faith, and the nature of His covenants would we miss?

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## Reflection Questions

1. In verses 2–6, Abram voices his doubts and fears to God, suggesting that Eliezer of Damascus might be his heir. But God reassures him that His promise still stands: “This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir” (v. 4). Abram believes, but later his patience falters and he takes matters into his own hands with Hagar.
  - a. Have you walked through a season like this, torn between trust and self-reliance?
  - b. What was that struggle like for you and how did God meet you there?

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2. Before entering into a covenantal relationship, God tells Abram that His promises won’t be fulfilled without pain. He says that before his offspring inherit the promised land, they will be “sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years” (v.13).
    - a. Why does God include this piece before establishing his covenant?
    - b. What does this tell us about the way God works in our lives and Israel’s story?
    - c. Do you have any examples of this from your own life?

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3. In Abram’s time, it was common for both parties in a covenant to walk between the pieces of sacrificed animals. This symbolized that if either party broke the contractual agreement, they would share the same fate and death as the animals. But in this passage, Abram never walks through the sacrificed animals; only God does. This means the weight of the covenant and consequences of failure rest entirely on God. This foreshadows the gospel; God Himself bearing the cost of his people’s failure in Christ.
    - a. What does it reveal about God that he entered into a covenant with His people, knowing the cost it would have for him?
    - b. What comes to mind when you think about the fact that God would rather take

death upon Himself than abandon you?

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4. Abram had to look forward in faith to promises that he would never see fulfilled in his lifetime (v. 13–16).

- a. Why do you think God made these long-term promises to a man who would never see them fulfilled?
- b. How are you being called to live faithfully in areas where you cannot see the full outcome? What promises are you clinging to?

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# Week Nine

## *Lot Escapes Sodom & Gomorrah / Genesis 19:1-29*

### Context Questions

1. What events immediately precede the passage we're studying today?
2. How does the cultural context impact how this text is understood?

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### Textual Questions

*Before using the questions, have the group simply observe the text. Listen to what they discover as the Holy Spirit leads them. You may naturally cover some of the questions provided below in that discussion.*

1. Read the verses preceding this story (18:22-33). What does this textual context reveal about God's act of judgment on these cities?
2. Why did God decide to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah? Where does the text show the evil of the city?
3. Lot sat at the gate of Sodom, a place of social prominence in a wicked city. What might this reveal about the pull of influence, comfort, or reputation in shaping where we "sit."
4. What is the author communicating when he writes, "But before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old, all the people to the last man, surrounded the house"?
5. Genesis 19:29 notes that God remembered Abraham and saved Lot for his sake. How does this verse connect the events of Genesis 19 to Abraham's intercession in Genesis 18:22-33?
6. The angels warned Lot to flee the city. How did he respond? How do others respond when they are told to flee?

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## Reflection Questions

1. This story is filled with hesitations to heed God's warning and flee, despite the promise of impending destruction. Lot's sons-in-law dismiss his warning as a joke (v. 14–15), Lot himself lingers until the angels must drag him out (v. 16), and Lot's wife looks back at the city and is turned into a pillar of salt (v. 26).
  - a. What do these different responses teach us about the attachments humans have to sin, even when God calls us to obedience?
  - b. What might "looking back" look like in your walk with God today, and what does it reveal about where your heart finds security?

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2. God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah because "the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave" (v.18:20). In other words, God heard the cries of those suffering from their injustice and He acted accordingly by destroying the cities.
  - a. What does this reveal about God's response to human suffering and the finality of all injustice?
  - b. What terrible injustice is happening around us today and what responsibility do we as Christians have in crying out to God against it?
  - c. Spend time as a group praying that God would bring His justice in those areas of our broken world.

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3. Ultimately, even Lot hesitated to leave Sodom despite the angels' clear warnings of God's judgment. He had to be forcibly carried away to safety (v. 16). This hesitation shows how deeply sin and worldly comforts can grip the human heart, even when salvation is offered.
  - a. What does this reveal about the nature of salvation?
  - b. How have you experienced God's mercy pulling you out of places or patterns you couldn't escape on your own?

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4. Each person in this passage responds differently to God's mercy: Abraham pleads for it, Lot hesitates to accept it, his wife looks back at the life she was saved from, and the angels act urgently.
- a. Which of these responses do you recognize in yourself today and how is God speaking to you through it?
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# Week Ten

## *The Sacrifice of Isaac / Genesis 22*

### Context Questions

1. What events immediately precede the passage we're studying today?
2. How does the cultural context impact how this text is understood?

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### Textual Questions

*Before using the questions, have the group simply observe the text. Listen to what they discover as the Holy Spirit leads them. You may naturally cover some of the questions provided below in that discussion.*

1. How does the description of Isaac as "your son, your only son, whom you love" intensify the emotional and spiritual weight of God's command to Abraham?
2. At what point does the angel of the Lord intervene and what is said (v. 11–12)?
3. What is the author trying to communicate by repeatedly using Abraham's name? What is significant about this name in light of God's covenant with him (Gen. 17:5)?
4. What name does Abraham give to the place and what is the meaning given in the text (v. 14)?
5. What parallels do you see between this story and the Gospel?
6. How does God reaffirm His covenant promises to Abraham (v. 16–18)?
7. What specific blessings are promised to Abraham and his descendants as a result of his obedience?

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## Reflection Questions

1. Imagine you are Abraham in this story, asked to sacrifice your only son whom you have been anticipating to come for decades.
  - a. What do you think was going through Abraham's mind throughout this narrative?
  - b. Has there ever been a time when God asked you to give up something that seemed good for His sake?

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2. Abraham's call to sacrifice Isaac shows us that before God uses someone greatly, He often tests them deeply.
  - a. What other examples in Scripture can you think of where God tested someone before using them in a significant way?
  - b. Can you think of a time in your own life when God tested your faith? How did you respond?

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3. Abraham was asked to give up his only son, Isaac. Tim Keller, in *Counterfeit Gods*, points out that we can often identify our idols by looking at our greatest fears. These things may be good in themselves, but they become idols when we refuse to give God access to them. What you are most afraid of losing (fear of being single, unemployed, unrecognized, unsuccessful, etc.) often reveals what you love most.
  - a. What is the 'Isaac' you hold most dear - the thing you are most afraid to surrender to God?
  - b. How might He be calling you to trust Him with the things you love, even when it feels impossible or painful?

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4. At the last moment, God spared Abraham from sacrificing Isaac. Yet Scripture shows

that God would not spare His own Son, offering Him up for the sake of the world and the forgiveness of our sins.

- a. On a *human level*, how does this story help you grasp the incredible cost and love involved in God giving up His Son for you?
- b. How does this reflection draw you into a deeper love for Him and a fuller understanding of the Gospel?

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# Week Eleven

## *Isaac Blesses Jacob / Genesis 27-28*

### Context Questions

1. What events immediately precede the passage we're studying today?
2. How does the cultural context impact how this text is understood?

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### Textual Questions

*Before using the questions, have the group simply observe the text. Listen to what they discover as the Holy Spirit leads them. You may naturally cover some of the questions provided below in that discussion.*

1. Considering the literary context, why did Rebekah help orchestrate Jacob's deception to gain the birthright? (see verses 26:34-35; 27:46)
2. What do we know about Esau in the verses leading up to these chapters?
3. What do you notice about the significance of birthright and blessing in this context and why are they so important in this story (v. 27:1-4, 27:30-33)?
4. What unhealthy family dynamics do you see in these chapters? How does sin multiply them?
5. How does the author use the transition from deception in Genesis 27 to God's revelation in Genesis 28 to advance the overall story of the covenant (v. 27:41; 28:10-22)?
6. What is the significance of stones in these chapters?
7. Why does God give Jacob a vision of the ladder in verses 28:10-22?
8. What would we be missing if this story were not in Scripture?

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## Reflection Questions

1. Before this story in Genesis 25:19-34, Esau sold his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of stew because he “despised it” (v. 34). In other words, Esau was far more concerned with temporary pleasure and immediate satisfaction than the long-term blessing God promised.
  - a. In our world today, what are some modern ‘meals’ (temptations, distractions, or conveniences) that someone might trade for long-term blessings God wants for us?
  - b. Where have you experienced the pull of these ‘trade-offs’ and how might you guard against trading something eternal for something temporary?

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2. Jacob did not need to deceive Isaac to receive God’s covenant promises; Esau had already sold his birthright (v.25:29-34) and God’s plan would have continued without the involvement of sin. However, Jacob still acted deceitfully to ensure that he obtained God’s blessing.
  - a. In your life, where have you felt the need to “take matters into your own hands,” instead of trusting God with the outcome?

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3. Naturally, Jacob was afraid of his brother, as his deception led to an extreme fracture in their relationship and left Esau with the longing to kill his brother (v. 27:41). As Jacob fled in fear, a dream reassured him of God's promise and unwavering presence (vv. 14-15).
  - a. What does this story teach about the consequences of sin for relationships?
  - b. Have you ever been extremely afraid or anxious and then been reminded of God's presence?
  - c. When fear overtakes us, how can we return to God and remember He is faithful?

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4. In Jacob's dream, he sees a ladder connecting heaven and earth with angels ascending and descending. Please read John 1:43–51.
- a. How does Jesus interpret Jacob's dream and the connection between the ladder and the Abrahamic covenant (v. 28:13–17)?
  - b. How was Jacob meant to be encouraged by this vision as he stepped into God's covenantal blessing?
  - c. How does Jesus' interpretation of the ladder offer encouragement and hope to His followers today under the New Covenant?
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# Week Twelve

## *Jacob Wrestles with God / Genesis 32:22-32*

### Context Questions

1. What events immediately precede the passage we're studying today?
2. How does the cultural context impact how this text is understood?

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### Textual Questions

*Before using the questions, have the group simply observe the text. Listen to what they discover as the Holy Spirit leads them. You may naturally cover some of the questions provided below in that discussion.*

1. Why is Jacob so afraid of meeting his brother, Esau? What has happened between them leading up to this encounter?
2. In verse 24, Jacob wrestles with "a man" until daybreak. What clues does the text give about the identity of this figure, and how do these clues develop as the passage progresses (v. 27-30)?
3. In verses 27-28, Jacob's name is changed to Israel. What is the reason for this change and what might the new name signify about his relationship with God and his people?
4. How does Jacob prepare to meet his brother, Esau?
5. What would we be missing if this story were not included in Scripture?

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## Reflection Questions

1. As Jacob approached his reunion, he was overtaken by fear and devised a plan to appease his brother. Instead of trusting in God's promise to bless and protect him, Jacob leaned on his own strategies to "hedge his bets" and control the outcome.
  - a. Share a time in your life when you faced uncertainty or conflict and felt the urge to take control rather than trust God.
  - b. What did you learn from that experience and how has it impacted you since?

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2. In this story, Jacob wrestles with a mysterious man whom he later recognizes as God Himself (v. 30).
  - a. What does this interaction reveal about God's character and His relationship with His people?
  - b. Have you ever experienced a time when you felt you were "wrestling with God"?
  - c. What was that struggle like and how did it shape your relationship with Him?
  - d. How does it encourage you to know that God, in His boundless grace, chooses to stoop into our struggles and engage with us personally, even when He doesn't have to?

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3. Jacob's encounter with God was meant to lead to reconciliation. Just as God's mercy was shown to Jacob, Jacob was called to pursue peace with his brother. Similarly, our reconciliation with God through the Gospel calls us to seek peace in our challenging relationships.
  - a. Reflect on a time when God's forgiveness in your life moved you to restore a strained relationship with someone else. How did that experience reflect God's work in you?

- b. Are there any relationships in your life right now that feel broken or hostile, where God might be inviting you to extend grace and pursue peace?

*\*Note: Reconciliation is ultimately God's work, but as followers of Christ, we are called to extend grace and pursue peace in ALL our relationships, as far as it depends on us (Rom. 12:18). Even when reconciliation isn't fully realized due to the choices of others, our role is to extend forgiveness and make intentional efforts toward peace, because of the mercy and reconciliation God has shown us.*

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- 4. By the end of this story, Jacob comes out of his wrestling match with a blessing and a limp.
  - a. Why do you think God left Jacob blessed, yet permanently wounded?
  - b. Have you ever experienced a season where God's work in your life came with a scare?
  - c. How do these reminders call us to remember God and His relationship with us?

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# Week Thirteen

## *Joseph's Sorrows / Genesis 37:12-41*

### Context Questions

1. What events immediately precede the passage we're studying today?
2. How does the cultural context impact how this text is understood?

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### Textual Questions

*Before using the questions, have the group simply observe the text. Listen to what they discover as the Holy Spirit leads them. You may naturally cover some of the questions provided below in that discussion.*

1. Why do Joseph's brothers hate him?
2. In this story, Joseph is not entirely innocent. How do his actions contribute to the fractured relationship between him and his brothers?
3. How does Jacob's favoritism for Joseph contribute to the fractured relationships between the brothers? Where else in Genesis have you seen favoritism lead to familial conflict?
4. What do we know historically about the Ishmaelites (v.25)?
5. What motivated Reuben and why was he distraught when he realized Joseph was missing from the pit (v.29-30)?
6. Verse 36 notes Joseph's sale to Potiphar. How does this low point in the text set the stage for God's purpose in Joseph's life?
7. Throughout Genesis so far, how has the theme of broken relationships between brothers shown up? Why is this a recurring motif and what does it signify?
8. What would we be missing if this story were not included in Scripture?

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## Reflection Questions

1. The brothers hated Joseph because they were jealous of their father's favoritism and love for him (vv. 3-4, 11).
  - a. How does jealousy show up in your life and why is it so destructive?
  - b. How do you identify and confront jealousy when you feel it swelling up?

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2. In Genesis 37:12-36, Jacob's favoritism toward Joseph (v. 3) is a leading cause of the wickedness in this chapter.
  - a. Have you ever felt the pain of favoritism or partiality in your life?
  - b. What does this text reveal about the harm of partiality? How does it bring significance to the fact that God is impartial (Deut 10:17; Acts 10:34-35; Rom 2:11)?

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3. After the brothers strip Joseph of his colorful coat, throw him into a pit without water, and leave him for dead, they show no remorse and casually "sat down to eat" (v. 25).
  - a. Reflect on what this detail reveals about their hearts and their indifference toward their sin.
  - b. Where in your life have you caught yourself showing indifference to your sin?
  - c. How did the Lord call you out of that indifference and toward repentance?

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4. Though God is not mentioned in this chapter, Joseph's sale to Egypt (v. 36) marks the beginning of God's redemptive plan for the whole nation of Israel.

- a. Reflect on a moment when God worked through a painful situation in your life, even when His presence wasn't immediately apparent.
- b. How does this text encourage you to trust His unseen purposes in your struggles?

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# Week Fourteen

## *Joseph Forgives His Brothers | Genesis 42-50*

### Context Questions

1. What events immediately precede the passage we're studying today?
2. How does the cultural context impact how this text is understood?

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### Textual Questions

*Before using the questions, have the group simply observe the text. Listen to what they discover as the Holy Spirit leads them. You may naturally cover some of the questions provided below in that discussion.*

1. What circumstances have led to Joseph's brothers coming to Egypt?
2. What parallels do you notice about how Jacob treats Benjamin (v.42:4) and how Jacob treated Joseph (v. 37:3)? What does this reveal about the family dynamics in Jacob's household? (Also see Gen 44:24-34).
3. In Genesis 44, what do you notice about the brothers' protection of Benjamin compared to how they treated Joseph in Genesis 37?
4. Why does Joseph react the way he does in Gen 45:1-15? How do the brothers react?
5. How do the brothers react to Joseph's mercy? Do you think they trust him by the end of Genesis 50?
6. What does Genesis 50:20-21 reveal about God's plan to work through humanity's mess?
7. What would we be missing if this story were not in Scripture?

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## Reflection Questions

1. During his time in Potiphar's house, Joseph faced intense temptation but chose to flee rather than compromise his integrity (Gen. 39:7–12).
  - a. What does Joseph's example teach us about resisting temptation and how can we practically "flee" from sin today?
  - b. Have you ever walked away from a situation or temptation only to face unexpected consequences, similar to how Joseph's flight led him to prison?

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2. Joseph's tests mirror the sins his brothers once committed against him - jealousy toward the favored brother (Gen. 43:34), greed (Gen. 42:26–28), and loyalty to family (Gen. 44:2). Through these moments, Joseph discerns if their hearts have truly changed.
  - a. In what ways might God use circumstances in our lives to expose whether genuine repentance has taken place?
  - b. Can you think of a time when God tested you in an area where you used to fall short? How did you respond differently?

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3. Throughout this story, Joseph forgives his brothers even though they never ask for it. Even after their father's death, they still fear Joseph might take revenge. However he reassures them again of his forgiveness (Gen. 50:15–21). Remarkably, Joseph offers mercy freely, without their gratitude, repentance, or reciprocation.
  - a. Have you ever had to extend forgiveness to someone who neither deserved it nor acknowledged it?
  - b. Is there someone you're holding this kind of forgiveness back from?
  - c. What does Joseph's response reveal about the nature of genuine forgiveness?
  - d. How does his example point us toward the kind of forgiveness God offers us in Christ?

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4. Joseph waited nearly 22 years before he finally saw how God was using his suffering for good! As Christians, we often experience pain and suffering without any clear purpose or reason why.

- a. Have you ever gone through a time of suffering that seemed to have no clear purpose?
  - b. Have you ever had a moment when, like Joseph, you began to see how God was working through your pain?
  - c. Whether you've seen God's purposes or not, how does Joseph's story encourage you to trust Him in the waiting?
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5. Look back over the whole story of Genesis from creation and fall, through the lives of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. What lessons or truths about God, humanity, or His promises have stood out to you the most?

- a. How has this time in Genesis shaped the way you understand God's character, His faithfulness, and your own life in light of His story?
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