

## ***The Bible: Big Picture***

### **The Message**

From question 1 of your homework for last time, we were hoping that you would discover that the basic message of the Bible—both Old and New Testaments—is Love and Honor God and treat each other well—Jesus put it, “Love your neighbor as yourself.” In other words, build a good relationship with God and with each other.

### **The Story**

What is the overall story that is told to communicate that message? (Hint—remember that last week we mentioned that one way of looking at how the Bible is organized talks about Part I being the first 11 books of Genesis; Part II being the rest of the Old Testament and nearly all of the New Testament; and Part III being the Book of Revelations. So, another way of asking the question is, “What is ‘Part II’ of the Bible about?”)

Over and over again, we can see that when the Hebrew people are following God’s laws, things work out pretty well for them. When they turn their backs on God or when they start fighting amongst themselves, things don’t work out too well for them. “Instructive stories” have been written all through history—not just in the Bible. Can you think of some books or movies you’ve seen in which “the good guys win”? Do they have to struggle to figure out what they need to in order to have “success”?

How old is the oldest book you found in your house? (Homework for today...) Turn to page 1394 of your Bible. How old are parts of the Bible? How old is the story contained in the book of Exodus? Approximately, when did King David live?

Why do you think there are so many parts of the Bible that list who was related to whom and how many years so-and-so lived?

Turn back to page xiv. Read the sentence under each heading on pp. xiv – xvi. Scan some of the summaries. What patterns do you see? Why is the Book of Acts grouped with the four Gospels?

### **The People**

Who were the five people we asked you to look up for today’s class? All of them appear in the book of Genesis:

- Noah
- Abraham (aka “Abram”)
- Isaac
- Jacob
- Joseph

Isaac was \_\_\_\_\_’s son and the father of Esau and \_\_\_\_\_. Joseph was \_\_\_\_\_’s “favorite” son.

Are any of these people “blameless” or “perfect”?

What agreements did God make with Noah? (Genesis 8:20-9:17, pp. 13-14; also the 1<sup>st</sup> 2 paragraphs under the heading “Adjusting to Sad Realities” on p. 12)

What agreements did God make with Abram? (Genesis 15, pp. 19-21; also the box on p. 20—“The Plan”) Perhaps the most famous story is about God’s biggest test of Abraham’s faith—Genesis 22 (pp. 28-29). How does God reward Abraham for his faith? (Genesis 22: 15-18, p. 29)

How did Jacob cheat Esau? (Genesis 27, pp. 35-37; also the box on pp. 36-37, “Jacob Gets the Blessing” and the one on p. 46 about Esau)

From Wikipedia:

“The Patriarchs (also known as the *Avot* in Hebrew) according to the Judeo-Christian Old Testament, are Abraham, his son Isaac and his grandson Jacob. Collectively, they are referred to as the three patriarchs (*shloshet ha-avot*) of Judaism, and the period in which they lived is known as the patriarchal period.

“Their primary wives – Sarah (wife of Abraham), Rebekah (wife of Isaac), and Leah and Rachel (the wives of Jacob) – are known as the Matriarchs. Thus, classical Judaism considers itself to have three patriarchs and four matriarchs.”

We could spend a month on all the stories about Noah, the Patriarchs, their relatives and descendants, and their trials and tribulations. But the bottom line is this:

We are not perfect. Whether you call it Adam’s “original sin” or Egoism, we can all be selfish, doubting, greedy, and devious. God knows this—but he offers his love and his creation to us if we

- Have faith in God;
- Admit wrong-doing and reconcile (make-up!) with those we’ve harmed;
- Make an honest effort to love one another. In the Old Testament, “love one another” applies within the 12 tribes of Israel. In the New Testament, Jesus expands that.

Keep this in mind for discussion later on:

- Old Testament = God’s old covenant (binding agreement)
- New Testament = God’s new covenant.

### Web Site

Coming to a web browser near you.....

On or about October 5, our class web site will be updated with this year’s information. The site is <http://www.mandorichard.net/Confirm>

## **Homework Due 10/12/08**

Coming up next is the story of Moses and the law. That story starts in Egypt. How did the Jewish people end up in Egypt?

Over the next two weeks, read Genesis 37-50, pp. 49-66, and the boxes containing commentary on those pages. These chapters tell the story of Joseph. If you read a chapter a day, you'll have it all done before our next class!

Take some notes to help you remember the story. Here are 4 questions to help you.

What mean-spirited things do Joseph and his brothers do to each other?

What good things does Joseph do?

According to Genesis 50:19-21, what was one of the purposes of this story?

What do you think Joseph learned? His brothers? The Egyptians?