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Let's resume our study now in Genesis chapter 45 and 46. I mentioned at the close of our previous lesson that there is a mention made of something here that we want to explore, and it's at the beginning of chapter 46. Let me say by way of introduction that we have seen a number of cases that confirm our suspicion that there is not a wasted word in Scripture.

Anytime something is mentioned there is usually a good, in fact not usually, there is always a good reason for it. We can usually figure out what it is. One of the things that I find particularly fascinating is the mention of locations or place names where things occur.

If you think back, during the time that the brothers have been going back and forth between Jacob and Joseph, it doesn't really specify where Jacob is living. It says they go back to him in the land of Canaan. Because I was tracking down something else, I thought, well, where exactly is Jacob when the brothers are going and coming? And I kept going back and going back looking for a reference to say where he is.

And it just kept saying, well, he's in the land of Canaan. He's in the land of Canaan. And it didn't exactly say where, and I had to go back a ways to find the last mention of what his location is.

But these locations are always important. There is a reason why things take place at a particular spot. And that place will have a name, and many times we will find other things associated with it.

Just to give you an example, and this is a little bit off our subject, but you remember the events that took place at Shechem. What is Shechem famous for? After Jacob comes back down from Haran and comes down across through the Gilead and comes on down, he settles near Shechem. He makes friends with the Shechemites, and pretty soon you have the Dinah incident take place.

And there is a decision that has to be made there. In fact, one of the decisions has already been made. Sometimes not making a decision is a decision in and of itself.

And Jacob's failure as a father where Dinah is concerned comes back to haunt him in a big way there. But you have the decision that the brothers make to deceive, to take things into their own hands, to dispense justice. And they literally pillage and murder and plunder the town of Shechem.

So Shechem comes to resonate in our minds with that great injustice. Where are the brothers when they sell Joseph into slavery? They start out there feeding the flocks near Shechem. And when Joseph gets up there, he is wandering around.

He can't find his brothers. And he meets this mysterious stranger who says, Well, your brothers, I heard them say they were going to Dothan. And Dothan is even further away than Shechem.

But Shechem is mentioned. Why even mention Shechem? Why not just say Joseph wandered around until he found his brothers? Why talk about this intermediate stop at Shechem? There is a reason for these things. And Shechem in particular is interesting to me.

If you turn over to John chapter 4, of course, in the New Testament and in the Gospels, you have the career of the Lord Jesus Christ recorded. John chapter 4 is unique in the Gospels. This material is not given in the synoptics.

When the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, though Jesus himself did not baptize, but his disciples did, he left Judea and departed again to Galilee. But he needed to go through Samaria. He didn't have to go, but it says he... I mean, there are many ways of avoiding Samaria.

The regular routes between Galilee and Judea didn't go through Samaria. But Jesus needed to go through Samaria. It doesn't say why.

So he came to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now, we don't have a record of this in what we've seen in Genesis thus far. But in this area of Samaria, you remember that this is Jacob's well.

We call it the woman at Jacob's well there, the Samaritan woman, that Jesus has this conversation with. And he asks her to give him a drink and so on. Well, if you do a little bit of research, in fact, if you just look at your Old Testament and New Testament maps of the Holy Land in the back of your Bible, you will discover that Sychar is none other than Shechem.

Sychar is Shechem. So the plot of ground that Jacob gives to Joseph is this familiar territory where Joseph lived as a boy when they were living near the town of Shechem before the Dinah incident. It's the place to which he returned and saw the messenger that told him his brothers had gone to Dothan, the last place that he saw as a free man in the land of Canaan.

Because once he's enslaved, Joseph never in this life returns to Canaan. His bones do, but the last place that he traveled about as a free man was Shechem. When he gets to Dothan, he's enslaved.

He's taken down south and he never sees the land of his birthright again. And when you think about the truths that Jesus communicates about the well, the woman says down in verse 11 and 12, Sir, you have nothing to draw with. The well is deep.

Where are you going to get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob who gave us this well and drank from it himself as well as his sons and his livestock? Jesus goes on to talk about the living water that becomes a fountain of water springing up to everlasting life and so forth. But this takes place at Sychar, which is ancient Shechem. What's even more interesting about this particular spot, again, if you look on your map in the back of your Bible, you will discover that Shechem sits in a valley between two mountains.

And what are those two mountains? Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim, the mountains that God through Moses instructed Joshua to read all of the words of the law from. I believe, if my memory serves, this is recorded over in Deuteronomy 24 or maybe it's 27. Yes, Deuteronomy chapter 27.

Moses commands all the people saying, Keep all the commandments which I command you today. It shall be on the day when you cross over the Jordan to the land which the Lord your God is giving you, you shall set up for yourselves large stones and whitewash them with lime. You shall write on them all the words of this law when you have crossed over.

This is like a public monument. Some of you may have seen the wall. It's the Vietnam Memorial.

It's got the names of all of the some 50,000 individuals who perished during the Vietnam conflict in Washington, D.C. They have other memorials. The New Jersey Devils just won the Stanley Cup last night, much to our chagrin, although our Dallas team has nothing to hang their heads over. They played exceedingly well and took them into triple overtime last game and double overtime this time.

But what happens when you win the Stanley Cup? Your name gets inscribed on it. After the first 10 or 12 years, every team that has won the Stanley Cup, all the team members' names are inscribed on the cup. So you can see they've added rings down through the years and the cup gets bigger and bigger so they have enough room to add all these names.

Well, you think about all of the law that God has given to Moses. Well, he has it written down on scrolls and Moses tells them when they go over to the land, they're going to whitewash these great big flat stones, make a writing surface, and then memorialize these words on the stones. They're going to write it all down on the large stones whitewashed with lime.

Write on them all the words of this law when you have crossed over so you may enter the land which your Lord, your God, is giving you, a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the Lord God of your fathers promised you. It shall be when you've crossed over the Jordan that on Mount Ebal you shall set up these stones, which I command you

today, and you shall whitewash them with lime. There you shall build an altar to the Lord, your God, an altar of stones.

You shall not use an iron tool on them. And it goes on to talk about the offerings that will be offered and the purpose is given down in verse 10. Therefore, you shall obey the voice of the Lord, your God, and observe his commandments and his statutes, which I command you today.

So you go on down through the rest of that chapter and you find Moses talking about the fact that the six of the tribes will stand on Mount Ebal down in verse 13 of Deuteronomy 27. Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali will stand on Mount Ebal. That's the mountain of cursing.

Six tribes will stand on Mount Gerizim, which is the mountain of blessings. Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin. There's a lot you can do with that.

Someday if we do Deuteronomy, we'll cover it in detail. But you'll notice that the six tribes on the mountain of blessing are all Leah and Rachel tribes. The ones on the mountain of cursing include Reuben, who is the firstborn son of Leah, but defiled his father's bed and completely wiped out his chances of inheritance.

And then you have Gad, Asher, Zebulun, who is another Leah son, Dan, and Naphtali. So Gad, Asher, Dan, and Naphtali, you have all your concubine tribes plus Reuben. To be honest with you, I don't know why Zebulun is on this mountain.

I'd have to do some research and figure out if he or his descendants malfunctioned in some way. But you have all the malfunctioning or the ones that are associated with the concubines on the mountain of cursing. Obviously Simeon and Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin are all sons of the wives.

But then the Levites are going to pronounce all of the curses. And you have about 12 verses full of curses here, beginning at verse 14 and extending through 26. Cursed is the one who makes an idol.

Cursed is the one who treats his father and mother with contempt. Cursed is the one who makes the blind to wander off the road, and so forth. Well, if you turn over a few pages to Joshua 8, this was a command that was given by Moses to Joshua and the people here in Deuteronomy.

And after Moses' death, when they cross over into the land, you find this fulfilled. After Jericho, after Ai, in chapter 8, beginning at verse 30, it says, Joshua built an altar to the Lord God of Israel on Mount Ebal, just as Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, an altar of whole stones over which no man has wielded an iron tool. Remember the stone not made with hands that smashes the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream that Daniel interprets, over in

Daniel 7, 8, and 9, along in there.

It says there's a stone not made with hands that comes and smashes all of that. And then a great kingdom is set up afterward. Well, these stones not made with hands, not touched with an iron tool, speak of that.

It's the altar. They offered on burnt offerings to the Lord, sacrificed peace offerings. There in the presence of the children of Israel, he wrote on the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he had written.

All Israel with their elders and officers and judges stood. Notice the verb there in verse 33. They stood on either side of the ark before the priests, the Levites who bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord, the stranger as well as he who was born among them.

Half of them were in front of Mount Gerizim, half of them in front of Mount Ebal, as Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded before that they should bless the people of Israel. Afterward, he read all the words of the law, the blessings and the cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law. There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded, which Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel, with the women, the little ones and the strangers who were living among them.

All of this took place in the valley between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim, the area of Shechem, the area of Sychar. And when Jesus is speaking to the woman in John chapter four, and she says, our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship. Jesus said to her, woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem worship the father.

You worship what you do not know. We know what we worship for salvation is of the Jews, but the hour is coming and now is when the true worshipers will worship the father in spirit and in truth, for the father is seeking such to worship him. God is spirit and those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.

You have the Holy Spirit and you have the word of God, and that's our great heritage. And when you go to Romans and Galatians and you look at Paul's explanation of the role of the law in the forward progress of the unfolding of God's plan and God's purpose, by the law comes the knowledge of sin. That's why they read the curses and talk about the curses as well as the blessings in between these two mountains.

And they have people standing on the mountain of cursing. You're blessed if you obey. You're cursed if you don't.

But we now have a higher and greater mode of life. Anyway, this is a significant place. We've seen the significance of Hebron or the Oaks of Mamre in Abraham's life and all of the things that take place in Hebron, David in Hebron, and the things associated with

that place.

But you'll notice now back in Genesis chapter 46 that after receiving this wonderful news, Jacob, on his way to Egypt, stops. It says he took his journey with all that he had and came to Beersheba. Well, what do we know about Beersheba? Well, our first notice about Beersheba is back in Genesis chapter 21.

If you'll keep your finger here in Genesis 46 and turn back to chapter 21, this is the driving out of Hagar and Ishmael. And in Genesis 21, verse 12, it says, Do not let it be displeasing in your sight because of the lad or because of your bondwoman. Sarah has said, She's got to go.

That's fine. She's got to go. I will make a nation of the son of the bondwoman because he is your seed.

So Abraham, in verse 14 of Genesis 21, Abraham rose early in the morning and took bread and a skin of water, putting it on her shoulder. He gave it and the boy to Hagar and sent her away. Then she departed and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba.

Well, we're going to discover that at this particular time, it doesn't have the name Beersheba. This is a later name to identify this place, but nobody knows what the old name was. So it goes ahead and calls it the wilderness of Beersheba.

You remember that the water and the skin gets used up. She places the boy under one of the shrubs. So she sits down across from him and weaves and she thinks he's going to die.

God heard the voice of the lad. The angel of God calls to Hagar out of heaven. He says, what ails you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is.

Arise, lift up the lad and hold him with your hand for I will make him a great nation. Then God opened her eyes. And what did she see in verse 19? She saw a well of water.

She saw a well of water. Her water had run out, the skin that Abraham had given her, but she found this well of water. Where did this well come from? It's not a supernatural well.

We're going to discover later that this is a well that Abraham's men had dug. But it was on the edge of the area where he grazed his flocks and over time they didn't get back this way much and others had taken over this well. And Hagar, as she flees toward Egypt, stumbles across this well, but she can't see it until she responds to God's call.

Then she sees it. You remember our Scripture reading this morning and our memory verse where the man who trusted man and makes flesh his strength, when he does that thing, he's like the shrub of the desert and he does not see good when it comes. She's right near a well, but she can't see it until God points it out to her and God talks to her in

grace.

So she opened her eyes and saw the well of water. She went and filled the skin with water and gave the lad a drink. And this is the means of preserving the lad to make of him a great nation.

He drinks from the well that she names Bir Lahai Roy. Bir meaning well. Lahai Roy means the God who sees me.

So this is the well of the God who sees me. This is in the wilderness of Beersheba. Well, if you continue, right in that same passage, verse 22, it came to pass at that time that Abimelech and Phechol, the commander of his army, spoke to Abraham.

Who is Abimelech? He's the king of Gerar, right? Or Gerar. They don't have a soft G in Hebrew, so everything is G. Abimelech is the king of Gerar. Phechol is his army commander.

They speak to Abraham, say, God is with you in all that you do, so swear to me that you will not deal falsely with me, my offspring, my posterity. According to the kindness that I've done to you, you will do to me and the land in which you have dwelt. Abraham said, I will swear.

So Abraham rebuked Abimelech in verse 25. Why? Because of a well of water which Abimelech's servants had seized. Abimelech said, I don't know who's done this thing.

You did not tell me, nor had I heard of it until today. So Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave them to Abimelech, and the two of them made a covenant. Abimelech said, seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves.

Abimelech asked Abraham, what's the meaning of these seven ewe lambs, which you have set by themselves? He said, you will take these seven ewe lambs from my hand that they may be my witness that I have dug this well. Therefore he called that place Beersheba, the well of seven. And Sheba is a word play because Sheba also is connected to the verb for swearing.

I will swear or take an oath. They take an oath and they seal it with seven ewe lambs. Why seven? Part of it is the word play between Sheba.

You know, Shabbat is the Sabbath day, the seventh day, and it comes from the Hebrew number seven, Sheba. But Sheba is also the word, for example, my daughter's name, Elizabeth, comes from Eli Shabbat. My God has promised.

El, God. Eli, my God. Shabbat has promised.

My God has promised. So they swore an oath there and sealed it with the seven ewe lambs, a little word play going on, and they call it Beersheba. So it is the well of seven.

It is the well of the oath. And they made a covenant at Beersheba. Abimelech rose with Phicol, the commander of the army.

They returned to the land of the Philistines. Then Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and there called on the name of the Lord, the everlasting God. Abraham stayed in the land of the Philistines many days.

Abraham dwelt in this region of Beersheba. If you look on your map, you can see why there was a phrase that was used throughout the days of Israel that something would happen from Dan to Beersheba. Because Dan is near the northern border of the land of promise.

Beersheba is one of the last inhabited regions before you hit the great desert. That's the wilderness of Sin or the Erebah, the big desert. And to have a well there is a big deal because that's going to be like when you cross our desert out in Arizona and Nevada and so forth.

You see these signs where it says last gasoline for 120 miles and that sort of thing. Well, Beersheba was one of the last places you could get water before you made the big trek across the desert heading down toward Egypt. So this is Beersheba.

Abraham dug the well. The well of Beersheba is the well of Beerlehi Roy. So you go down to the next mention of Beersheba is in Genesis 22 after Abraham goes to Mount Moriah and takes Isaac up.

And you have the very famous episode of the near sacrifice of Isaac up on the top of Mount Moriah. Then when Abraham sees the ram caught by its horns and he offers that instead of his son, he calls the name of the place the Lord will provide. As it is said to this day, this is verse 14 of chapter 22, Abraham called the name of that place the top of Mount Moriah, the Lord will provide.

As it is said to this day, in the mount of the Lord it shall be provided. Then the angel of the Lord calls to Abraham a second time by myself I have sworn because you've done this thing and have not withheld your son. Blessing I will bless you.

Multiplying I will multiply. Your descendants as stars of heaven and the sand which is on the seashore. And your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies.

Your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed because you have obeyed my voice. When Abraham hears these words, where does he go? Abraham returned to his young men.

They rose and went together to Beersheba. And Abraham dwelt at Beersheba. This is where he got the word from the Lord to offer his son, his only son.

And this is the place to which he returns with this fresh declaration of the promise of God. You turn a few pages forward to chapter 24 of Genesis and get all the way down toward the end of the chapter in verse 61 after Rebekah is identified and brought back down to the land by Abraham's servant. In verse 61, Rebekah and her maids arose.

They rode on the camels and followed the man. The servants took Rebekah and departed. Now Isaac came from the way of Beer-le-hi-roi, for he dwelt in the south.

He's dwelling down in Beersheba by the well, the same well that his father Abraham dug and lived near for all that time. So he's coming from there when he meets his bride. And he knows that way pretty well because she's coming down the same.

You have to go along that same trail to go to Mount Moriah. And she's coming down from the north from where Laban is living. And he's coming up along the very same path that he followed with his father when they were heading up toward Mount Moriah.

And that's where he meets Rebekah. So again, he is dwelling in that same place. A chapter forward in chapter 25, verse 11, after the death of Abraham and Isaac and Ishmael bury him in the field which he purchased from the sons of Heth, the cave of Machpelah.

Abraham and Sarah, his wife, were buried there. It came to pass after the death of Abraham, God blessed his son Isaac, and Isaac dwelt at Beersheba. Way down in the south.

So this is well-known territory to Abraham and to Isaac. Then when you go to chapter 26, verse 23, we find that in his prosperity, Isaac can't dwell so close to Abimelech and the people of Gerar. His flocks and herds are too many and they keep fighting over wells.

His servants in verse 19 dig a well in the valley and find water, but the herdsmen quarrel, so he calls it Ezek. And then in verse 21, they dug another well, quarreled over that one, so he called it Sitna. He moved from there in verse 22 and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it, so he called its name Rehoboth.

Because he said, for now the Lord has made room for us and we shall be fruitful in the land. Then he went up from there to Beersheba. You can see that his progress is pretty much due east.

He's heading east from Gerar and he keeps fighting over wells, fighting over wells. He digs one at Rehoboth. That one's not quarreled over, so that's going to be his boundary with the Philistines at Gerar.

But he's not going to stay there. He's going to keep on going and get into the center of his territory. That's going to be his outpost.

That's his outlying well. And he goes back and lives at Beersheba. What happens at Beersheba for Isaac? The Lord appeared to him in that same night and said, I am the God of your father Abraham.

Do not fear for I am with you. I will bless you and multiply your descendants for My servant Abraham's sake. So he built an altar there.

Abraham built an altar there also, didn't he? And called the name of the Lord and he pitched his tent there and there Isaac's servants dug a well. This is re-digging a well. You know, if you leave these wells to themselves, they collapse and fill in.

Or people come fill them in because they don't want people squatting on what they consider to be their territory. And you remember that many of the wells that Abraham had dug had been filled in by the people of Gerar and others in the area. And so this well is the same well, the well of Beerlehiroi, the well of Beersheba.

And when Isaac gets back there, his servants dig it back out again. He repeats the actions of his father in digging this well at Beersheba and receiving the confirmation of the covenant promises there. And then you have a re-enactment.

It's as though Isaac is reliving his father's days because in verse 26, Abimelech comes down with Fechol and Isaac makes a covenant with him in the last part of that chapter 26. And in verse 31, they arose early in the morning and swore an oath with one another. Isaac sent them away and they departed from him in peace.

It came to pass that same day that Isaac's servants came and told him about the well which they had dug. And they said to him, We have found water. They're digging out Father Abraham's old well.

They finally got down and they found water there. So he called it Sheba, Beersheba. Therefore, the name of the city is Beersheba to this day.

So this is a significant place. That's where they're dwelling when Isaac's two sons, Jacob and Esau, do their quarreling and come to their conflict. And when you get down to chapter 28 where Isaac blesses Jacob for real after the blessing that he got by impersonating his brother, that he has to be sent away because Esau is going to kill him.

You remember that. So in verse 10, Jacob went out from Beersheba and went toward Haran. All of this lentil stew and strapping on the skins of the goats and so forth to impersonate his brothers, this all took place at Beersheba.

And he departs from there going toward Haran. He comes to a certain place and stays there all night because the sun had set. And that's Bethel.

The amazing thing is when you look at where Bethel is in the land, it's not even close to

the northern border of Israel. It's not all that far from Jerusalem. But that's where he spends his first night.

And of course, Bethel has a history of its own that you can trace out as well. We're talking about Beersheba, and that's where Jacob departs from. Jacob is dwelling in tranquility and so forth.

And when he has to leave because of the episode with his brother, the last place that he dwells in freedom and security there is Beersheba. And then he goes north and indentures himself to Laban. And it will be a long time before he returns down to this same region.

But he eventually does. He comes back down and dwells in the land. He dwells near Shechem and he moves further south.

And now on his way to Egypt, and once again, you remember that Beersheba is at the southern border of the Promised Land, he makes sure that he stops at Beersheba and does the same thing that Abraham did, the same thing that Isaac did. He stops there and offers sacrifices to the Lord. And that's what we find in chapter 46 and verse 1 of Genesis.

So this is highly significant because the last time Jacob left the land, he departed from Beersheba and went north to Haran and lived up there for some 40 years as we've discovered. Now he's once again leaving the land and it's the same point of departure, Beersheba. So it is not without significance that it tells us in detail that he took his journey with all that he had and came to Beersheba and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac.

And just as God confirmed the promises to Abraham as he was on his way back from Mount Moriah to Beersheba, just as God confirmed the promises to Isaac when he was living and worshipping at Beersheba, so God appears to Jacob at Beersheba and speaks to him in the visions of the night and says, Jacob, Jacob, and he says, Here I am. God says, I am God, the God of your father. Do not fear to go down to Egypt for I will make of you a great nation there.

This is an interesting statement because we don't have time to investigate it in detail, but you will remember that when there was a famine in the land in Isaac's generation, God appears to Isaac and says, Do not go down to Egypt. Stay in the land and I will bless you and sustain you. And that's when he hooks up with Abimelech.

This is in chapter 26 in verse 2. There was a famine in the land. Besides the first famine that was in the days of Abraham, Isaac went to Abimelech, king of the Philistines in Gerar. The Lord appeared to him and said, Do not go down to Egypt.

Live in the land of which I shall tell you. Dwell in this land and I will be with you and bless

you. For to you and your descendants I give all these lands and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father.

I will make your descendants multiply as the stars. I will give your descendants all these lands and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed. Because, they always like to say that this is an unconditional covenant, but God says the reason I'm going to do all these things is because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.

Four different areas of obedience on the part of Abraham make it possible for God to fulfill and perpetuate this covenant promise. But in this case, God says, Do not go down to Egypt. Dwell in the land.

Here, God says, Do not fear to go down to Egypt, for I will make of you a great nation there. To me, this is a reminder that we have to know where we are in God's plan. You can't just make a hard and fast rule, it's always evil to go to Egypt, or it's always the time when famine comes to go down to Egypt.

As you find that great passage of contrasts in Ecclesiastes, there is a time to sow, and there is a time to reap. There is a time to mourn and a time to laugh. All of those different contrasting areas of life.

There is a time to remain in the land, and there is a time to depart from the land and trust in the provision of God. Jacob had to trust God when he left the land going north. Now he's got to trust God once again heading south.

But we like rules. We like simple things. We want something that we can grab onto and just use with a knee-jerk response and not have to think and not have to analyze and not have to apply.

And we need to be cautious. Certainly, there are things that are always morally wrong. There are certain things that are always sinful.

And there's never going to be a right time to commit a sin. But this is not a moral decision about whether to go to Egypt, is it? It's a logistical decision. And we might have a place of provision.

It might be employment or it might be where we live. It might be when you get to be in your mid to late teens and finish school and you start wondering, well, should I continue to live with the folks and go to junior college or should I break out on my own and go get a part-time job and live in a dorm or live in an apartment and go to college? It's not a moral decision about remaining with your parents or getting out on your own. It's not a moral decision about changing locations from one town to another.

Sometimes it is time to stay and remain where you are. Other times it is time to leave

and go someplace else. We find this in lots of different areas of life.

We have relationships. We have contact with people and we say, well, I wonder if this is a time to break fellowship with this person. Sometimes it is time to stay with it and maintain a relationship.

Other times it is time to cut it off. There is no hard and fast rule in some of these areas. And whether or not to stay in the land or to leave the land, even though God has promised it to them, sometimes it is a right thing for the patriarchs to leave the land.

Isaac never leaves it. He is born, lives and dies in the land of promise and never leaves it. Abraham came from outside the land and never went into it.

Abraham goes down to Egypt and returns. Jacob goes north to Haran and goes south to Egypt during his lifetime and dies outside the land. So there is not a rule that can be applied without thought.

It is time to listen to the voice of the Lord, a time to reflect on His promises and on the fulfillment of His promises. And we have to know where we are in God's plan. And we say, well, but there isn't any verse in Scripture that says I should go or I should stay in a job or in a town or at a school or in a relationship, whatever it might be.

But there are principles and there are truths that tell us where we should be. We know what our priorities should be. We know that we cannot remain in a situation that continually causes us to sin.

If our eye or our hand or our foot offends us, we have to cut it off. And there is a time to resist the devil and he will flee from us. And there is a time when we should flee youthful lusts.

Well, how do we know which is which? Well, time will tell. If you try to stand and resist the devil and you keep getting shot down every single time and it becomes a besetting sin, if it offends and causes us to stumble on a regular basis, then we need to stop standing and start fleeing. We need to get away to make sure that the sin stops.

If we cannot be in someone's company, I don't mean company in terms of an organization, I mean in their presence or in fellowship with them without getting drawn into sin, then we've got to minimize or cut off altogether that fellowship. We can't be drawn into someone else's cesspool. There are other times when in our presence we can tell that there is some benefit, that there are questions being asked and there seems to be a little flicker of interest in the things of God.

There seems to be some progress. And our fellowship can be a blessing and a benefit. And God can work in us and through us to be a blessing and be a benefit and be an encouragement to someone else.

Well, that's not the time to flee and say, well, you know, a lot of times our conversation turns sour and I wind up having sinful thoughts. God the Holy Spirit will give us that discernment. In the days of the ancient patriarchs, God would speak out loud and tell them, stick it out here in the land.

Other times He would say, go down to Egypt. We have that same voice within us that will tell us if we're listening and if we're looking and if we're willing to be obedient, God will tell us through the principles and the doctrines of His Word when we are in the right place and should stay or when we're in the wrong place and we need to flee. Look at the results in daily life.

If it is the means of committing a besetting sin, if it creates a pattern of sin or evil, that's something we have to separate from. If there is, on the other hand, some progress being made either by ourselves or by others, well, then that's no time to give up and quit. So, just a little free, no charge addition there.

When God tells Jacob, He gives him confirmation. He gives him encouragement. The chariots are a confirmation.

He sees the chariots and he believes. He sees the wagons, the carts that are going to carry him to Egypt. And then God encourages him and confirms that it's okay to go.

God has brought in this provision to carry his old bones down to Egypt. And God says, it's all right. It's not going to abrogate the promises or keep them from being fulfilled.

I will fulfill the promises for you outside the land. And sometimes we can't see the logic in God's plan. We think, well, how can God fulfill His promises to me with this happening? But there is nothing too hard for the Lord.

So God says in verse 4, I will go down with you to Egypt and I will also surely bring you up again. And Joseph will put his hand on your eyes. So Jacob arose from Beersheba.

And this is the last reference to Beersheba in the book of Genesis. He arose from Beersheba and the sons of Israel carried their father Jacob, their little ones, and their wives in the carts which Pharaoh had sent to carry him. They took their livestock and their goods which they had acquired in the land of Canaan and they went to Egypt, Jacob and all his descendants with him, his sons, his sons' sons, his daughters and his sons' daughters, and all his descendants he brought with him to Egypt.

They didn't leave anybody behind. He didn't brook any dissension. Nobody's saying, oh, but all my friends are here, Dad.

You know, you get this sometimes when families want to move and they go through all this agony and let's have a family council and so forth. When Jacob decided to go, everybody went. The whole family.

They didn't leave anybody behind. And then it goes on beginning in verse 8 to give us the names of the sons and grandsons and which wife or handmaid they are descended from all the way through to verse 26. All the persons who came with Jacob to Egypt who came from his body besides Jacob's sons' wives were 66 persons in all.

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 70. Well, we'll take a look.

Once again, there is no idle fact given to us in the Scripture and these numbers have a significance. We've already noted that the number 5 seems to crop up in this passage a little bit. So we'll try to address the significance of the numbers that enter Egypt and why the number 5 keeps cropping up next time.

But in closing, if you think about the fact that Jacob spent some of the best years of his life, 40 years up with Laban, trying to gain enough independence and self-sustaining ability to go down and live in the land, now here at the close of his life, some people could view and say, well, Jacob, you've failed. It's all famine. Your resources are dried up and you can't even sustain yourself in the land and you're going to have to leave once again.

The wisdom and the counsel of men doesn't always count. It's the Word of God and the plan of God. And if God says, this is the time to move, this is the place to move, that's our first priority.

And it may make no sense. Here, of course, it seems to make a lot of sense. From a human point of view, the provision, the grain, and stuff to get through the famine is all down in the land.

But God tells Jacob as he's leaving, you're never coming back. Joseph is going to lay his hand on your eyes. You're going to die outside the land.

And you have a reference to that over in Hebrews 11. All these died not having received the promise. All these died in faith.

And it's a decision of faith on Jacob's part to go outside the land to know that he's not going to see the ultimate fulfillment of these things. But in Hebrews 11, all these obtained a good testimony through faith and did not receive the promise. God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

We have the chance to live in that same faith and to be reflections of God's glory in the same way. To not look at life with human eyes, but to look at it through the eyes of those who by faith and patience inherit the promises. It takes courage.

It takes perception. It takes prayer. It takes sensitivity to the ministry of God, the Holy Spirit, and the Word of God that He uses to speak to us just as clearly as God did to the

patriarchs.

And that should be our hope and our prayer each and every day. Let's close here in prayer. Father, we thank You for the truth of Your Word.

We thank You for Your sustaining grace. We thank You for the encouragement and the confirmation that You give us through the Scriptures that we can live in a way that's pleasing in Your sight, glorifying to our Savior and that produces eternal fruit. We pray that the things we've learned this morning will contribute to that goal.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.