FAITH

A Ten Week Study
in Hebrews Chapter 11

ONE: CREATION

Hebrews 11:

[1] Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. [2] For by it the people of old received their commendation. [3] By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible. (ESV)

Genesis 1:

[1] In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. [2] The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

[3] And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. [4] And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. [5] God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

[6] And God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." [7] And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so. [8] And God called the expanse Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

[9] And God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. [10] God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.

[11] And God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth." And it was so. [12] The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each

according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. [13] And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

[14] And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years, [15] and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth." And it was so. [16] And God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. [17] And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, [18] to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. [19] And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

[20] And God said, "Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens." [21] So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. [22] And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." [23] And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

[24] And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds—livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds." And it was so. [25] And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

[26] Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

[27] So God created man in his own image,
in the image of God he created him;
male and female he created them.

[28] And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." [29] And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. [30] And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. [31] And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. (ESV)

Genesis 2:1–3
[1] Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. [2] And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. [3] So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation. (ESV)

John 1:1–5
[1] In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. [2] He was in the beginning with God. [3] All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. [4] In him was life, and the life was the light of men. [5] The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. (ESV)

10 Questions: CREATION

1) "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." In your own words, what does that mean? Is that how you typically think of faith?

2) In what way did the people of old receive their commendation through faith? How was the faith of people in the Old Testament different from the faith of people in the New Testament, particularly after the resurrection of Jesus?

3) Why does it take faith to understand that God made our universe by His word from nothing? Do you find it difficult to believe that? Why or why not?

4) Do you think that both young Earth and old Earth views of creation are valid for Christians to hold? What are some of the scientific challenges to a young Earth view? What are some of the Biblical challenges to an old Earth view?

5) Is belief in macro evolution compatible with the Bible?

6) What do you find most interesting in the description of the days of creation? What questions do you have?

7) Why did God rest on the 7th day?

8) What instructions did God give to the man & woman that He created? Are those instructions still in effect for us today?

9) Jesus is described as the Word, life and light. What does it mean for Him to be each of those things? How dependent do you feel on Jesus in your daily life?

10) How do your beliefs about creation impact the other aspects of your life as a Christian? If you have questions that are unanswered about creation, how could you learn more about how other Christians would answer those questions?

TWO: ABEL & ENOCH

Hebrews 11:4-6

[4] By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks. [5] By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having pleased God. [6] And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. (ESV)

Genesis 4:1–16

[1] Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, "I have gotten a man with the help of the LORD." [2] And again, she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a worker of the ground. [3] In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground, [4] and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, [5] but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell. [6] The LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? [7] If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, and you must rule over it."

[8] Cain spoke to Abel his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him. [9] Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?" [10] And the LORD said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. [11] And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. [12] When you work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength. You shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth." [13] Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is greater than I can bear. [14] Behold, you have driven me today away from the ground, and from your face I shall be hidden. I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me." [15] Then the LORD said to him, "Not so! If anyone kills

Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." And the LORD put a mark on Cain, lest any who found him should attack him. [16] Then Cain went away from the presence of the LORD and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden. (ESV)

Genesis 4:25–26

[25] And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and called his name Seth, for she said, "God has appointed for me another offspring instead of Abel, for Cain killed him." [26] To Seth also a son was born, and he called his name Enosh. At that time people began to call upon the name of the LORD. (ESV)

Genesis 5:18–24

[18] When Jared had lived 162 years, he fathered Enoch. [19] Jared lived after he fathered Enoch 800 years and had other sons and daughters. [20] Thus all the days of Jared were 962 years, and he died.

[21] When Enoch had lived 65 years, he fathered Methuselah. [22] Enoch walked with God after he fathered Methuselah 300 years and had other sons and daughters. [23] Thus all the days of Enoch were 365 years. [24] Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him. (ESV)

10 Questions: ABEL & ENOCH

1) Why was it an act of faith for Abel to make an offering of the firstborn of his flock & their fatty portions to the Lord? Why do you think this was pleasing to God?

2) In what sense, because of his faith, is Abel still speaking?

3) Why didn't God have regard for Cain's offering? What was lacking?

4) What did the Lord say to Cain when he became angry? How could you apply that wisdom to your own life?

5) Maybe, like Cain, you struggle with anger. Or perhaps the sin that is crouching at your door is something different. What would it look like for you to rule over it? What role does the Holy Spirit have in making that possible?

6) Do you feel that the punishment that God gave to Cain was just? Why or why not? Where is God's love for Cain evident even in his punishment?

7) What does it mean when it says that Enoch walked with God? What does walking with God look like in your life? How could you increase or improve your walk with God?

8) Who else in scripture was taken by the Lord and did not experience death? Why do you think it is such a rare experience?

9) Why is it impossible to please God without faith?

10) Are you seeking to draw near to God? Do you believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek Him? What could you do to seek Him more intentionally this week? What role does Jesus play in helping us to draw near to God?

THREE: NOAH

Hebrews 11:7

[7] By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith. (ESV)

Genesis 6

[1] When man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them, [2] the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose. [3] Then the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years." [4] The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of man and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown.

[5] The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. [6] And the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. [7] So the LORD said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them." [8] But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.

[9] These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God. [10] And Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

[11] Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence. [12] And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. [13] And God said to Noah, "I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth. [14] Make yourself an ark of gopher wood. Make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and out with pitch. [15] This is how you are to

make it: the length of the ark 300 cubits, its breadth 50 cubits, and its height 30 cubits. [16] Make a roof for the ark, and finish it to a cubit above, and set the door of the ark in its side. Make it with lower, second, and third decks. [17] For behold, I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life under heaven. Everything that is on the earth shall die. [18] But I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you. [19] And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every sort into the ark to keep them alive with you. They shall be male and female. [20] Of the birds according to their kinds, and of the animals according to their kinds, of every creeping thing of the ground, according to its kind, two of every sort shall come in to you to keep them alive. [21] Also take with you every sort of food that is eaten, and store it up. It shall serve as food for you and for them." [22] Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him. (ESV)

Genesis 7
[1] Then the LORD said to Noah, "Go into the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that you are righteous before me in this generation. [2] Take with you seven pairs of all clean animals, the male and his mate, and a pair of the animals that are not clean, the male and his mate, [3] and seven pairs of the birds of the heavens also, male and female, to keep their offspring alive on the face of all the earth. [4] For in seven days I will send rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and every living thing that I have made I will blot out from the face of the ground." [5] And Noah did all that the LORD had commanded him.

[6] Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters came upon the earth. [7] And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him went into the ark to escape the waters of the flood. [8] Of clean animals, and of animals that are not clean, and of birds, and of everything that creeps on the ground, [9] two and two, male and female, went into the ark with Noah, as God had commanded Noah. [10] And after seven days the waters of the flood came upon the earth.

[11] In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened. [12] And rain fell upon the earth forty

days and forty nights. [13] On the very same day Noah and his sons, Shem and Ham and Japheth, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons with them entered the ark, [14] they and every beast, according to its kind, and all the livestock according to their kinds, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, according to its kind, and every bird, according to its kind, every winged creature. [15] They went into the ark with Noah, two and two of all flesh in which there was the breath of life. [16] And those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him. And the LORD shut him in.

[17] The flood continued forty days on the earth. The waters increased and bore up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. [18] The waters prevailed and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the face of the waters. [19] And the waters prevailed so mightily on the earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered. [20] The waters prevailed above the mountains, covering them fifteen cubits deep. [21] And all flesh died that moved on the earth, birds, livestock, beasts, all swarming creatures that swarm on the earth, and all mankind. [22] Everything on the dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life died. [23] He blotted out every living thing that was on the face of the ground, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens. They were blotted out from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those who were with him in the ark. [24] And the waters prevailed on the earth 150 days. (ESV)

Genesis 8
[1] But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the livestock that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters subsided. [2] The fountains of the deep and the windows of the heavens were closed, the rain from the heavens was restrained, [3] and the waters receded from the earth continually. At the end of 150 days the waters had abated, [4] and in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. [5] And the waters continued to abate until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen.

[6] At the end of forty days Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made
[7] and sent forth a raven. It went to and fro until the waters were dried up from the
earth. [8] Then he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters had subsided
from the face of the ground. [9] But the dove found no place to set her foot, and
she returned to him to the ark, for the waters were still on the face of the whole
earth. So he put out his hand and took her and brought her into the ark with him.
[10] He waited another seven days, and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark.
[11] And the dove came back to him in the evening, and behold, in her mouth was a
freshly plucked olive leaf. So Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the
earth. [12] Then he waited another seven days and sent forth the dove, and she did
not return to him anymore.

[13] In the six hundred and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month,
the waters were dried from off the earth. And Noah removed the covering of the
ark and looked, and behold, the face of the ground was dry. [14] In the second
month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth had dried out. [15] Then
God said to Noah, [16] "Go out from the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and
your sons' wives with you. [17] Bring out with you every living thing that is with you of
all flesh—birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the
earth—that they may swarm on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the
earth." [18] So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him.
[19] Every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves on the
earth, went out by families from the ark.

[20] Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and took some of every clean animal and
some of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. [21] And when the
LORD smelled the pleasing aroma, the LORD said in his heart, "I will never again
curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man's heart is evil from his
youth. Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done. [22]
While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter,
day and night, shall not cease."

Genesis 9

[1] And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply
and fill the earth. [2] The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast
of the earth and upon every bird of the heavens, upon everything that creeps on
the ground and all the fish of the sea. Into your hand they are delivered. [3] Every
moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I
give you everything. [4] But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. [5]
And for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning: from every beast I will require it and
from man. From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man.

[6] "Whoever sheds the blood of man,
by man shall his blood be shed,
for God made man in his own image.

[7] And you, be fruitful and multiply, increase greatly on the earth and multiply
in it."

[8] Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, [9] "Behold, I establish my
covenant with you and your offspring after you, [10] and with every living creature
that is with you, the birds, the livestock, and every beast of the earth with you, as
many as came out of the ark; it is for every beast of the earth. [11] I establish my
covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the
flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." [12] And God
said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every
living creature that is with you, for all future generations: [13] I have set my bow in
the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. [14]
When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, [15] I will
remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of
all flesh. And the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. [16]
When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant
between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth." [17] God said
to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and
all flesh that is on the earth."

[18] The sons of Noah who went forth from the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. (Ham was the father of Canaan.) [19] These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the people of the whole earth were dispersed.

[20] Noah began to be a man of the soil, and he planted a vineyard. [21] He drank of the wine and became drunk and lay uncovered in his tent. [22] And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brothers outside. [23] Then Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned backward, and they did not see their father's nakedness. [24] When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him, [25] he said,

"Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be to his brothers."

[26] He also said, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem;
and let Canaan be his servant.
[27] May God enlarge Japheth,
and let him dwell in the tents of Shem,
and let Canaan be his servant."

[28] After the flood Noah lived 350 years. [29] All the days of Noah were 950 years, and he died. (ESV)

1 Peter 3:18–22

[18] For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, [19] in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, [20] because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. [21] Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, [22] who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him. (ESV)

10 Questions: NOAH

1) Why would it have taken faith for Noah to build the ark?

2) In what way did Noah's obedience & faith towards God condemn the world? Can you think of a time when someone else's faith & obedience convicted you and led you to change your behavior or way of thinking?

3) What made Noah a righteous man? What makes you a righteous person?

4) What were some of the reasons that God determined to judge the world and to destroy all flesh at that time? Was it right and just for God to do that?

5) According to Genesis 6:22 & 7:5, how closely did Noah follow the instructions that the Lord had given him? How closely do you follow the instructions that you have received in the Bible on how you should live?

6) Who shut the door of the Ark? What things in your life are your responsibility? What are the things that only God can do?

7) What was the sign that God gave as a promise to never destroy all life on the earth with a flood again? Why do you think God gave us that sign?

8) Was sin carried into the post flood world by Noah and his family? How does this account point us to the need for Jesus and his sacrifice for our sins?

9) What evidence is there in the world today for the truth of this account? What parts of the story are hardest to understand or take the most faith to believe?

10) In what way does this account of salvation through the ark point to our ultimate salvation through Jesus?

FOUR: ABRAHAM & SARAH

Hebrews 11:8-12

[8] By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. [9] By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. [10] For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God. [11] By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised. [12] Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore. (ESV)

Romans 4

[1] What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh? [2] For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. [3] For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness." [4] Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. [5] And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness, [6] just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works:

> [7] "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven,
> and whose sins are covered;
> [8] blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin."

[9] Is this blessing then only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? For we say that faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness. [10] How then was it counted to him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised? It was not after, but before he was circumcised. [11] He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised, so that righteousness would be counted to them as well, [12] and to make him the

father of the circumcised who are not merely circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.

[13] For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith. [14] For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. [15] For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression.

[16] That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring—not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, [17] as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations"—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. [18] In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, "So shall your offspring be." [19] He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. [20] No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, [21] fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. [22] That is why his faith was "counted to him as righteousness." [23] But the words "it was counted to him" were not written for his sake alone, [24] but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, [25] who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification. (ESV)

Genesis 12:1–9

[1] Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. [2] And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. [3] I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

[4] So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. [5] And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people that they had acquired in Haran, and they set out to go to the land of Canaan. When they came to the land of Canaan, [6] Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. [7] Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built there an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him. [8] From there he moved to the hill country on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. And there he built an altar to the LORD and called upon the name of the LORD. [9] And Abram journeyed on, still going toward the Negeb. (ESV)

Genesis 15

[1] After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." [2] But Abram said, "O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" [3] And Abram said, "Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir." [4] And behold, the word of the LORD came to him: "This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir." [5] And he brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." [6] And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.

[7] And he said to him, "I am the LORD who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess." [8] But he said, "O Lord GOD, how am I to know that I shall possess it?" [9] He said to him, "Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." [10] And he brought him all these, cut them in half, and laid each half over against the other. But he did not cut the birds in half. [11] And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

[12] As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram. And behold, dreadful and great darkness fell upon him. [13] Then the LORD said to Abram, "Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. [14] But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. [15] As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. [16] And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."

[17] When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. [18] On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, [19] the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, [20] the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, [21] the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites and the Jebusites." (ESV)

Genesis 21:1–7

[1] The LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did to Sarah as he had promised. [2] And Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age at the time of which God had spoken to him. [3] Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore him, Isaac. [4] And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. [5] Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. [6] And Sarah said, "God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh over me." [7] And she said, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age." (ESV)

10 Questions: ABRAHAM & SARAH

1) Why did it require faith for Abraham to leave his home and go where the Lord sent him? Describe a time that your faith led you to a step of obedience. How did you know that it was what God wanted you to do?

2) Abraham went to the new land and lived in tents because he was "looking forward to the city that had foundations." What is that city?

3) "Abraham believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness." What does that mean? What makes you righteous before God?

4) How was Abraham the father of both the uncircumcised and the circumcised?

5) Despite his age and the lack of children, why do you think Abraham believed it when God said that his offspring would outnumber the stars? Do you currently feel like God is calling you to believe something that feels impossible?

6) What future events did the Lord foretell in Genesis 15? What was the reason for the delay in taking the promised land?

7) Why was it significant that Abraham was asleep when the covenant was made? Who was responsible to fulfill the covenant? How does that relate to our salvation through Jesus?

8) Why do you think God waited until Abraham was 100 to fulfill His promise to him and give Abraham a son? Does it feel like God has delayed to fulfill something that you have been seeking or praying about? Why might that be?

9) Abraham is the great patriarch of the nation of Israel and of all who come to God by faith. Why do you think God chose him?

10) What is a small step of faith that you could take this week in obedience to God? What do you believe is the next thing that He is calling you to do? What is preventing you from doing it?

FIVE: STRANGERS & EXILES

Hebrews 11:13-16

[13] These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. [14] For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. [15] If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. [16] But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city. (ESV)

Philippians 3:17–21

[17] Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. [18] For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. [19] Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. [20] But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, [21] who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself. (ESV)

1 Chronicles 29:14–18

[14] "But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able thus to offer willingly? For all things come from you, and of your own have we given you. [15] For we are strangers before you and sojourners, as all our fathers were. Our days on the earth are like a shadow, and there is no abiding. [16] O LORD our God, all this abundance that we have provided for building you a house for your holy name comes from your hand and is all your own. [17] I know, my God, that you test the heart and have pleasure in uprightness. In the uprightness of my heart I have freely offered all these things, and now I have seen your people, who are present here, offering freely and joyously to you. [18] O LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, our fathers, keep forever such purposes and thoughts in the hearts of your people, and direct their hearts toward you. (ESV)

1 Peter 2:9–12

[9] But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. [10] Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

[11] Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. [12] Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation. (ESV)

John 14:1–7

[1] "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. [2] In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? [3] And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. [4] And you know the way to where I am going." [5] Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" [6] Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. [7] If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him." (ESV)

Revelation 21:1–4

[1] Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. [2] And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. [3] And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. [4] He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." (ESV)

10 Questions: STRANGERS & EXILES

1) Do you think of yourself as a stranger and exile on earth? Why or why not? How does that impact your mindset and your motivation in life?

2) What do you expect from the city that God is preparing for us?

3) What does it mean for you to be a citizen of heaven? What other "citizenships" or allegiances compete with or hinder your allegiance to Jesus?

4) How should our knowledge of the impermanence of this life impact our generosity and our perspective on possessions? Why were the people of Israel able to give so generously and with such joy towards the building of the temple?

5) As sojourners and exiles, how should we deal with the passions of our flesh? Why?

6) What forms your identity? What is most foundational to who you are as a person? How does receiving the mercy of God transform the way that we think?

7) Do you find it comforting that Jesus has gone to prepare a place for us and that He will bring us to be there with Him? What do you expect that to be like?

8) When Jesus says that no one comes to the Father except through Him, what does that mean? Is it possible that there are multiple paths/religions that lead to God?

9) What do you find most exciting when you think about eternity with God? How confident are you that you will be with Jesus when you die?

10) In what areas of your life are you too much in love with the world? Has this study challenged or convicted you of a need to change your way of thinking or living? If you were to die tomorrow, what would you regret?

SIX: ABRAHAM, ISAAC & JACOB

Hebrews 11:17-21

[17] By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, [18] of whom it was said, "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named." [19] He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back. [20] By faith Isaac invoked future blessings on Jacob and Esau. [21] By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, bowing in worship over the head of his staff. (ESV)

Genesis 22:1–14

[1] After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." [2] He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." [3] So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac. And he cut the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. [4] On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place from afar. [5] Then Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you." [6] And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son. And he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So they went both of them together. [7] And Isaac said to his father Abraham, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." He said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" [8] Abraham said, "God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." So they went both of them together.

[9] When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built the altar there and laid the wood in order and bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. [10] Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son. [11] But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." [12] He said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God,

seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me." [13] And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. [14] So Abraham called the name of that place, "The LORD will provide"; as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided." (ESV)

Genesis 27:1–40

[1] When Isaac was old and his eyes were dim so that he could not see, he called Esau his older son and said to him, "My son"; and he answered, "Here I am." [2] He said, "Behold, I am old; I do not know the day of my death. [3] Now then, take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt game for me, [4] and prepare for me delicious food, such as I love, and bring it to me so that I may eat, that my soul may bless you before I die."

[5] Now Rebekah was listening when Isaac spoke to his son Esau. So when Esau went to the field to hunt for game and bring it, [6] Rebekah said to her son Jacob, "I heard your father speak to your brother Esau, [7] 'Bring me game and prepare for me delicious food, that I may eat it and bless you before the LORD before I die.' [8] Now therefore, my son, obey my voice as I command you. [9] Go to the flock and bring me two good young goats, so that I may prepare from them delicious food for your father, such as he loves. [10] And you shall bring it to your father to eat, so that he may bless you before he dies." [11] But Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, "Behold, my brother Esau is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man. [12] Perhaps my father will feel me, and I shall seem to be mocking him and bring a curse upon myself and not a blessing." [13] His mother said to him, "Let your curse be on me, my son; only obey my voice, and go, bring them to me."

[14] So he went and took them and brought them to his mother, and his mother prepared delicious food, such as his father loved. [15] Then Rebekah took the best garments of Esau her older son, which were with her in the house, and put them on Jacob her younger son. [16] And the skins of the young goats she put on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck. [17] And she put the delicious food and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob.

[18] So he went in to his father and said, "My father." And he said, "Here I am. Who are you, my son?" [19] Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau your firstborn. I have done as you told me; now sit up and eat of my game, that your soul may bless me." [20] But Isaac said to his son, "How is it that you have found it so quickly, my son?" He answered, "Because the LORD your God granted me success." [21] Then Isaac said to Jacob, "Please come near, that I may feel you, my son, to know whether you are really my son Esau or not." [22] So Jacob went near to Isaac his father, who felt him and said, "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau." [23] And he did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's hands. So he blessed him. [24] He said, "Are you really my son Esau?" He answered, "I am." [25] Then he said, "Bring it near to me, that I may eat of my son's game and bless you." So he brought it near to him, and he ate; and he brought him wine, and he drank.

[26] Then his father Isaac said to him, "Come near and kiss me, my son." [27] So he came near and kissed him. And Isaac smelled the smell of his garments and blessed him and said,

"See, the smell of my son
is as the smell of a field that the LORD has blessed!
[28] May God give you of the dew of heaven
and of the fatness of the earth
and plenty of grain and wine.
[29] Let peoples serve you,
and nations bow down to you.
Be lord over your brothers,
and may your mother's sons bow down to you.
Cursed be everyone who curses you,
and blessed be everyone who blesses you!"

[30] As soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, when Jacob had scarcely gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, Esau his brother came in from his

hunting. [31] He also prepared delicious food and brought it to his father. And he said to his father, "Let my father arise and eat of his son's game, that you may bless me." [32] His father Isaac said to him, "Who are you?" He answered, "I am your son, your firstborn, Esau." [33] Then Isaac trembled very violently and said, "Who was it then that hunted game and brought it to me, and I ate it all before you came, and I have blessed him? Yes, and he shall be blessed." [34] As soon as Esau heard the words of his father, he cried out with an exceedingly great and bitter cry and said to his father, "Bless me, even me also, O my father!" [35] But he said, "Your brother came deceitfully, and he has taken away your blessing." [36] Esau said, "Is he not rightly named Jacob? For he has cheated me these two times. He took away my birthright, and behold, now he has taken away my blessing." Then he said, "Have you not reserved a blessing for me?" [37] Isaac answered and said to Esau, "Behold, I have made him lord over you, and all his brothers I have given to him for servants, and with grain and wine I have sustained him. What then can I do for you, my son?" [38] Esau said to his father, "Have you but one blessing, my father? Bless me, even me also, O my father." And Esau lifted up his voice and wept.

[39] Then Isaac his father answered and said to him:

"Behold, away from the fatness of the earth shall your dwelling be,
and away from the dew of heaven on high.
[40] By your sword you shall live,
and you shall serve your brother;
but when you grow restless
you shall break his yoke from your neck." (ESV)

Genesis 48:8–22

[8] When Israel saw Joseph's sons, he said, "Who are these?" [9] Joseph said to his father, "They are my sons, whom God has given me here." And he said, "Bring them to me, please, that I may bless them." [10] Now the eyes of Israel were dim with age, so that he could not see. So Joseph brought them near him, and he kissed them and embraced them. [11] And Israel said to Joseph, "I never expected to see your face; and behold, God has let me see your offspring also." [12] Then Joseph removed them from his knees, and he bowed himself with his face to the earth. [13]

And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near him. [14] And Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on the head of Ephraim, who was the younger, and his left hand on the head of Manasseh, crossing his hands (for Manasseh was the firstborn). [15] And he blessed Joseph and said,

"The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked,
the God who has been my shepherd all my life long to this day,
[16] the angel who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the boys;
and in them let my name be carried on, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac;
and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth."

[17] When Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on the head of Ephraim, it displeased him, and he took his father's hand to move it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. [18] And Joseph said to his father, "Not this way, my father; since this one is the firstborn, put your right hand on his head." [19] But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know. He also shall become a people, and he also shall be great. Nevertheless, his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his offspring shall become a multitude of nations." [20] So he blessed them that day, saying,

"By you Israel will pronounce blessings, saying,
'God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh.'"

Thus he put Ephraim before Manasseh. [21] Then Israel said to Joseph, "Behold, I am about to die, but God will be with you and will bring you again to the land of your fathers. [22] Moreover, I have given to you rather than to your brothers one mountain slope that I took from the hand of the Amorites with my sword and with my bow." (ESV)

10 Questions: ABRAHAM, ISAAC & JACOB

1) Why did God ask Abraham to be willing to sacrifice his son Isaac?

2) According to Hebrews 11:19, what did Abraham believe that God would do to restore Isaac?

3) What are some of the aspects of this account that foreshadow or point to Jesus and the cross?

4) Has God ever asked you to sacrifice or give up something that you really desired? What was the result? Is God convicting you today about something that he wants you to release to Him?

5) Why do you think that Rachel encouraged Jacob to deceive his father Isaac?

6) What is interesting or significant in the two blessings that Isaac gives to Jacob and to Esau?

7) Why did declaring a blessing over his sons require faith on the part of Isaac?

8) Why do you think there is a Biblical pattern of God choosing the younger son over the older one? Can you list some other times in the Bible where this happened?

9) What does it mean for God to be your shepherd? What are some of the ways that your relationship with God resembles that of a sheep with it's shepherd?

10) Why do you think that Israel (aka Jacob) believed in faith that God would bring his offspring back into the land of their fathers? What promises of God are you relying on in faith today?

SEVEN: JOSEPH

Hebrews 11:22

[22] By faith Joseph, at the end of his life, made mention of the exodus of the Israelites and gave directions concerning his bones. (ESV)

Genesis 37:1–24

[1] Jacob lived in the land of his father's sojournings, in the land of Canaan.

[2] These are the generations of Jacob.

Joseph, being seventeen years old, was pasturing the flock with his brothers. He was a boy with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives. And Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father. [3] Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his sons, because he was the son of his old age. And he made him a robe of many colors. [4] But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peacefully to him.

[5] Now Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers they hated him even more. [6] He said to them, "Hear this dream that I have dreamed: [7] Behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and behold, my sheaf arose and stood upright. And behold, your sheaves gathered around it and bowed down to my sheaf." [8] His brothers said to him, "Are you indeed to reign over us? Or are you indeed to rule over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.

[9] Then he dreamed another dream and told it to his brothers and said, "Behold, I have dreamed another dream. Behold, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me." [10] But when he told it to his father and to his brothers, his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall I and your mother and your brothers indeed come to bow ourselves to the ground before you?" [11] And his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind.

[12] Now his brothers went to pasture their father's flock near Shechem. [13] And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers pasturing the flock at Shechem? Come, I will send you to them." And he said to him, "Here I am." [14] So he said to him, "Go now, see if it is well with your brothers and with the flock, and bring me word." So he sent him from the Valley of Hebron, and he came to Shechem. [15] And a man found him wandering in the fields. And the man asked him, "What are you seeking?" [16] "I am seeking my brothers," he said. "Tell me, please, where they are pasturing the flock." [17] And the man said, "They have gone away, for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.'" So Joseph went after his brothers and found them at Dothan.

[18] They saw him from afar, and before he came near to them they conspired against him to kill him. [19] They said to one another, "Here comes this dreamer. [20] Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits. Then we will say that a fierce animal has devoured him, and we will see what will become of his dreams." [21] But when Reuben heard it, he rescued him out of their hands, saying, "Let us not take his life." [22] And Reuben said to them, "Shed no blood; throw him into this pit here in the wilderness, but do not lay a hand on him"—that he might rescue him out of their hand to restore him to his father. [23] So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the robe of many colors that he wore. [24] And they took him and threw him into a pit. The pit was empty; there was no water in it. (ESV)

Genesis 41:46–52

[46] Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh and went through all the land of Egypt. [47] During the seven plentiful years the earth produced abundantly, [48] and he gathered up all the food of these seven years, which occurred in the land of Egypt, and put the food in the cities. He put in every city the food from the fields around it. [49] And Joseph stored up grain in great abundance, like the sand of the sea, until he ceased to measure it, for it could not be measured.

[50] Before the year of famine came, two sons were born to Joseph. Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera priest of On, bore them to him. [51] Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh. "For," he said, "God has made me forget all my hardship

and all my father's house." [52] The name of the second he called Ephraim, "For God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction." (ESV)

Genesis 50:15–26

[15] When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "It may be that Joseph will hate us and pay us back for all the evil that we did to him." [16] So they sent a message to Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this command before he died: [17] 'Say to Joseph, "Please forgive the transgression of your brothers and their sin, because they did evil to you."' And now, please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father." Joseph wept when they spoke to him. [18] His brothers also came and fell down before him and said, "Behold, we are your servants." [19] But Joseph said to them, "Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? [20] As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. [21] So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones." Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

[22] So Joseph remained in Egypt, he and his father's house. Joseph lived 110 years. [23] And Joseph saw Ephraim's children of the third generation. The children also of Machir the son of Manasseh were counted as Joseph's own. [24] And Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die, but God will visit you and bring you up out of this land to the land that he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." [25] Then Joseph made the sons of Israel swear, saying, "God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here." [26] So Joseph died, being 110 years old. They embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt. (ESV)

Exodus 13:17–19

[17] When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near. For God said, "Lest the people change their minds when they see war and return to Egypt." [18] But God led the people around by the way of the wilderness toward the Red Sea. And the people of Israel went up out of the land of Egypt equipped for battle. [19] Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for Joseph had made the sons of Israel solemnly swear, saying, "God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones with you from here." (ESV)

Joshua 24:31–32

[31] Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua and had known all the work that the LORD did for Israel.

[32] As for the bones of Joseph, which the people of Israel brought up from Egypt, they buried them at Shechem, in the piece of land that Jacob bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for a hundred pieces of money. It became an inheritance of the descendants of Joseph. (ESV)

10 Questions: JOSEPH

1) What do you know about the history of Jacob & his wives that would explain why Joseph was Jacob's favorite son, and why his brothers would hate him?

2) What impact does it have on a family when favoritism is shown to one child over another? Have you witnessed or experienced this? What was the result?

3) What do you think the dreams of Joseph meant? Did they ultimately come true? Do you think he should've handled how he shared those dreams differently?

4) Can you describe a time when you shared something that you should've kept private? If you know something, is it always wise to share it? Why or why not?

5) In Genesis 37, 39, 40 & 41 Joseph goes through much difficulty but ultimately is elevated to a very high position in Egypt. What do the names of his sons tell you about how he viewed those experiences & his relationship with God?

6) Genesis 50:15-21 is a beautiful picture of forgiveness & reconciliation. What was necessary on the parts of Joseph & his brothers to make it possible?

7) Joseph says "you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good" In your own words, what is he saying? Can you describe a time when you saw God take a bad thing or difficulty in your life and turn it to a blessing or something good?.

8) Why was Joseph's confident declaration that " God will visit you and bring you up out of this land to the land that he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob" seen as an act of faith? Why did he want them to take his bones with them?

9) Do you find it surprising that, after hundreds of years, the Israelites fulfilled Joseph's request and buried his bones in the promised land? What would've made that difficult to accomplish?

10) What hope & belief do you have about your future and the future of your family? How can you make sure that is carried forward even after you are gone?

EIGHT: MOSES

Hebrews 11:23-29

[23] By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was beautiful, and they were not afraid of the king's edict. [24] By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, [25] choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. [26] He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward. [27] By faith he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible. [28] By faith he kept the Passover and sprinkled the blood, so that the Destroyer of the firstborn might not touch them.

[29] By faith the people crossed the Red Sea as on dry land, but the Egyptians, when they attempted to do the same, were drowned. (ESV)

Exodus 1:22-2:15

[22] Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, "Every son that is born to the Hebrews you shall cast into the Nile, but you shall let every daughter live." (ESV)

[1] Now a man from the house of Levi went and took as his wife a Levite woman. [2] The woman conceived and bore a son, and when she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him three months. [3] When she could hide him no longer, she took for him a basket made of bulrushes and daubed it with bitumen and pitch. She put the child in it and placed it among the reeds by the river bank. [4] And his sister stood at a distance to know what would be done to him. [5] Now the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her young women walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her servant woman, and she took it. [6] When she opened it, she saw the child, and behold, the baby was crying. She took pity on him and said, "This is one of the Hebrews' children." [7] Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and call you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?" [8] And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Go." So the girl went and called the child's mother. [9] And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child away and nurse him for me, and I will give you your wages." So the

woman took the child and nursed him. [10] When the child grew older, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. She named him Moses, "Because," she said, "I drew him out of the water."

[11] One day, when Moses had grown up, he went out to his people and looked on their burdens, and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his people. [12] He looked this way and that, and seeing no one, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. [13] When he went out the next day, behold, two Hebrews were struggling together. And he said to the man in the wrong, "Why do you strike your companion?" [14] He answered, "Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?" Then Moses was afraid, and thought, "Surely the thing is known." [15] When Pharaoh heard of it, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from Pharaoh and stayed in the land of Midian. And he sat down by a well. (ESV)

Exodus 12:1–13
[1] The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, [2] "This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you. [3] Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household. [4] And if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his nearest neighbor shall take according to the number of persons; according to what each can eat you shall make your count for the lamb. [5] Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, [6] and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight.

[7] "Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. [8] They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted on the fire; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it. [9] Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted, its head with its legs and its inner parts. [10] And you shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. [11] In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It

is the LORD's Passover. [12] For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the LORD. [13] The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt. (ESV)

Exodus 14:10–31

[10] When Pharaoh drew near, the people of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they feared greatly. And the people of Israel cried out to the LORD. [11] They said to Moses, "Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt? [12] Is not this what we said to you in Egypt: 'Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness." [13] And Moses said to the people, "Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. [14] The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to be silent."

[15] The LORD said to Moses, "Why do you cry to me? Tell the people of Israel to go forward. [16] Lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the people of Israel may go through the sea on dry ground. [17] And I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they shall go in after them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, his chariots, and his horsemen. [18] And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gotten glory over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen."

[19] Then the angel of God who was going before the host of Israel moved and went behind them, and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them, [20] coming between the host of Egypt and the host of Israel. And there was the cloud and the darkness. And it lit up the night without one coming near the other all night.

[21] Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the LORD drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters

were divided. [22] And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. [23] The Egyptians pursued and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. [24] And in the morning watch the LORD in the pillar of fire and of cloud looked down on the Egyptian forces and threw the Egyptian forces into a panic, [25] clogging their chariot wheels so that they drove heavily. And the Egyptians said, "Let us flee from before Israel, for the LORD fights for them against the Egyptians."

[26] Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen." [27] So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its normal course when the morning appeared. And as the Egyptians fled into it, the LORD threw the Egyptians into the midst of the sea. [28] The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen; of all the host of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea, not one of them remained. [29] But the people of Israel walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

[30] Thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. [31] Israel saw the great power that the LORD used against the Egyptians, so the people feared the LORD, and they believed in the LORD and in his servant Moses. (ESV)

10 Questions: MOSES

1) How did faith allow the parents of Moses to disobey the command of Pharaoh? Why were they willing to risk punishment or death to keep their son alive?

2) Moses would have had a luxurious and materially comfortable life as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. Why did he choose instead to identify with & defend his people? Have you ever had to turn down something desirable for your faith?

3) "He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward." In your own words, what does this mean?

4) In what way is the Passover symbolic of the way that we receive salvation from death through Jesus? Who was protected from the angel of death?

5) What did the Israelites say when they saw Pharaoh pursuing them? Why do some people prefer the bondage of sin to the freedom of Christ?

6) The faith of the Israelites was imperfect, but it was enough for them to step into the Red Sea and cross to the other side. Are there times in your life when your faith felt imperfect? What allowed you to take that next step forward?

7) When the Israelites saw their enemy defeated, what was their response? Describe a time when the Lord won a victory in your life. What was the result?

8) How much of the life and story of Moses is attributed to his faith by the writer of Hebrews? How much of your life story could be attributed to faith?

9) The order of events is significant. God saves His people from slavery and then offers the law as a way to live in obedience to Him. How does this relate to the way that Jesus saves us from sin? What is the purpose of the law in the Bible?

10) No step of faith is without risk or difficulty. What fear or challenge is preventing you from taking the next step of faith that Jesus is calling you to take?

NINE: JOSHUA & RAHAB

Hebrews 11:30-31

[30] By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days. [31] By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies. (ESV)

Joshua 1:1–9

[1] After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, [2] "Moses my servant is dead. Now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the people of Israel. [3] Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you, just as I promised to Moses. [4] From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun shall be your territory. [5] No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you. [6] Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them. [7] Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. [8] This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. [9] Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go." (ESV)

Joshua 2

[1] And Joshua the son of Nun sent two men secretly from Shittim as spies, saying, "Go, view the land, especially Jericho." And they went and came into the house of a prostitute whose name was Rahab and lodged there. [2] And it was told to the king of Jericho, "Behold, men of Israel have come here tonight to search out the land." [3] Then the king of Jericho sent to Rahab, saying, "Bring out the men who have come to you, who entered your house, for they have come to search out all the land." [4]

But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them. And she said, "True, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from. [5] And when the gate was about to be closed at dark, the men went out. I do not know where the men went. Pursue them quickly, for you will overtake them." [6] But she had brought them up to the roof and hid them with the stalks of flax that she had laid in order on the roof. [7] So the men pursued after them on the way to the Jordan as far as the fords. And the gate was shut as soon as the pursuers had gone out.

[8] Before the men lay down, she came up to them on the roof [9] and said to the men, "I know that the LORD has given you the land, and that the fear of you has fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land melt away before you. [10] For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you devoted to destruction. [11] And as soon as we heard it, our hearts melted, and there was no spirit left in any man because of you, for the LORD your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath. [12] Now then, please swear to me by the LORD that, as I have dealt kindly with you, you also will deal kindly with my father's house, and give me a sure sign [13] that you will save alive my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and deliver our lives from death." [14] And the men said to her, "Our life for yours even to death! If you do not tell this business of ours, then when the LORD gives us the land we will deal kindly and faithfully with you."

[15] Then she let them down by a rope through the window, for her house was built into the city wall, so that she lived in the wall. [16] And she said to them, "Go into the hills, or the pursuers will encounter you, and hide there three days until the pursuers have returned. Then afterward you may go your way." [17] The men said to her, "We will be guiltless with respect to this oath of yours that you have made us swear. [18] Behold, when we come into the land, you shall tie this scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and you shall gather into your house your father and mother, your brothers, and all your father's household. [19] Then if anyone goes out of the doors of your house into the street, his blood shall be on his own head, and we shall be guiltless. But if a hand is laid on anyone who is with you in the house, his

blood shall be on our head. [20] But if you tell this business of ours, then we shall be guiltless with respect to your oath that you have made us swear." [21] And she said, "According to your words, so be it." Then she sent them away, and they departed. And she tied the scarlet cord in the window.

[22] They departed and went into the hills and remained there three days until the pursuers returned, and the pursuers searched all along the way and found nothing. [23] Then the two men returned. They came down from the hills and passed over and came to Joshua the son of Nun, and they told him all that had happened to them. [24] And they said to Joshua, "Truly the LORD has given all the land into our hands. And also, all the inhabitants of the land melt away because of us." (ESV)

Joshua 5:13–15

[13] When Joshua was by Jericho, he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing before him with his drawn sword in his hand. And Joshua went to him and said to him, "Are you for us, or for our adversaries?" [14] And he said, "No; but I am the commander of the army of the LORD. Now I have come." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped and said to him, "What does my lord say to his servant?" [15] And the commander of the LORD's army said to Joshua, "Take off your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so. (ESV)

Joshua 6:15–25

[15] On the seventh day they rose early, at the dawn of day, and marched around the city in the same manner seven times. It was only on that day that they marched around the city seven times. [16] And at the seventh time, when the priests had blown the trumpets, Joshua said to the people, "Shout, for the LORD has given you the city. [17] And the city and all that is within it shall be devoted to the LORD for destruction. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall live, because she hid the messengers whom we sent. [18] But you, keep yourselves from the things devoted to destruction, lest when you have devoted them you take any of the devoted things and make the camp of Israel a thing for destruction and bring trouble upon it. [19] But all silver and gold, and every vessel of bronze and iron, are holy to the LORD; they shall go into the treasury of the LORD." [20] So the

people shouted, and the trumpets were blown. As soon as the people heard the sound of the trumpet, the people shouted a great shout, and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they captured the city. [21] Then they devoted all in the city to destruction, both men and women, young and old, oxen, sheep, and donkeys, with the edge of the sword.

[22] But to the two men who had spied out the land, Joshua said, "Go into the prostitute's house and bring out from there the woman and all who belong to her, as you swore to her." [23] So the young men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab and her father and mother and brothers and all who belonged to her. And they brought all her relatives and put them outside the camp of Israel. [24] And they burned the city with fire, and everything in it. Only the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD. [25] But Rahab the prostitute and her father's household and all who belonged to her, Joshua saved alive. And she has lived in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho. (ESV)

Matthew 1:1–6

[1] The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

[2] Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, [3] and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, [4] and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, [5] and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, [6] and Jesse the father of David the king. (ESV)

10 Questions: JOSHUA & RAHAB

1) Why does God command Joshua to "be strong and courageous" multiple times?

2) When you think of being strong and courageous, how much of that is dependent on you and how much is dependent on God? Practically, what does this look like?

3) Beyond being called to be strong & courageous, Joshua was called to know the law and be obedient to it. How highly do you value obedience to God's word? What things are you doing to ensure that you know and obey God's will?

4) Why does Rahab say that she chose to deceive the guards and save the spies?

5) When Joshua asks the commander of the army of the Lord whose side he is on, what is his reply? Is it accurate to say that the Lord is on your side? Why?

6) What aspects of the battle plan for attacking Jericho would've required faith? Has God ever called you to do something that really didn't make sense, but ultimately proved to be exactly the right thing?

7) Did Rahab's identity as a prostitute make her ineligible for God's mercy? What sin in your life would make you ineligible for the grace of Jesus? Who is worthy of God's love?

8) Rahab married an Israelite and her great great grandson became King David. Ultimately Jesus would come through the line of David. Are you surprised that Rahab would be in the family tree of Jesus? Why or why not?

9) Joshua served under Moses for many years, but ultimately his faith had to become his own. Can you describe the time in your life when your relationship with Jesus became personal to you, and your faith became your own?

10) What feels impossible in your life today? How can you pray with faith about it?

TEN: JUDGES, KINGS & PROPHETS

Hebrews 11:32-40

[32] And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets—[33] who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, [34] quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. [35] Women received back their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. [36] Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. [37] They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated—[38] of whom the world was not worthy—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

[39] And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, [40] since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect. (ESV)

Judges 6

[1] The people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD gave them into the hand of Midian seven years. [2] And the hand of Midian overpowered Israel, and because of Midian the people of Israel made for themselves the dens that are in the mountains and the caves and the strongholds. [3] For whenever the Israelites planted crops, the Midianites and the Amalekites and the people of the East would come up against them. [4] They would encamp against them and devour the produce of the land, as far as Gaza, and leave no sustenance in Israel and no sheep or ox or donkey. [5] For they would come up with their livestock and their tents; they would come like locusts in number—both they and their camels could not be counted—so that they laid waste the land as they came in. [6] And Israel was brought very low because of Midian. And the people of Israel cried out for help to the LORD.

[7] When the people of Israel cried out to the LORD on account of the Midianites, [8] the LORD sent a prophet to the people of Israel. And he said to them, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: I led you up from Egypt and brought you out of the house of slavery. [9] And I delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of all who oppressed you, and drove them out before you and gave you their land. [10] And I said to you, 'I am the LORD your God; you shall not fear the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell.' But you have not obeyed my voice."

[11] Now the angel of the LORD came and sat under the terebinth at Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the winepress to hide it from the Midianites. [12] And the angel of the LORD appeared to him and said to him, "The LORD is with you, O mighty man of valor." [13] And Gideon said to him, "Please, my lord, if the LORD is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all his wonderful deeds that our fathers recounted to us, saying, 'Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt?' But now the LORD has forsaken us and given us into the hand of Midian." [14] And the LORD turned to him and said, "Go in this might of yours and save Israel from the hand of Midian; do not I send you?" [15] And he said to him, "Please, Lord, how can I save Israel? Behold, my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house." [16] And the LORD said to him, "But I will be with you, and you shall strike the Midianites as one man." [17] And he said to him, "If now I have found favor in your eyes, then show me a sign that it is you who speak with me. [18] Please do not depart from here until I come to you and bring out my present and set it before you." And he said, "I will stay till you return."

[19] So Gideon went into his house and prepared a young goat and unleavened cakes from an ephah of flour. The meat he put in a basket, and the broth he put in a pot, and brought them to him under the terebinth and presented them. [20] And the angel of God said to him, "Take the meat and the unleavened cakes, and put them on this rock, and pour the broth over them." And he did so. [21] Then the angel of the LORD reached out the tip of the staff that was in his hand and touched the meat and the unleavened cakes. And fire sprang up from the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened cakes. And the angel of the LORD vanished from his sight. [22] Then Gideon perceived that he was the angel of the LORD. And Gideon

said, "Alas, O Lord GOD! For now I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face." [23] But the LORD said to him, "Peace be to you. Do not fear; you shall not die." [24] Then Gideon built an altar there to the LORD and called it, The LORD Is Peace. To this day it still stands at Ophrah, which belongs to the Abiezrites.

[25] That night the LORD said to him, "Take your father's bull, and the second bull seven years old, and pull down the altar of Baal that your father has, and cut down the Asherah that is beside it [26] and build an altar to the LORD your God on the top of the stronghold here, with stones laid in due order. Then take the second bull and offer it as a burnt offering with the wood of the Asherah that you shall cut down." [27] So Gideon took ten men of his servants and did as the LORD had told him. But because he was too afraid of his family and the men of the town to do it by day, he did it by night.

[28] When the men of the town rose early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was broken down, and the Asherah beside it was cut down, and the second bull was offered on the altar that had been built. [29] And they said to one another, "Who has done this thing?" And after they had searched and inquired, they said, "Gideon the son of Joash has done this thing." [30] Then the men of the town said to Joash, "Bring out your son, that he may die, for he has broken down the altar of Baal and cut down the Asherah beside it." [31] But Joash said to all who stood against him, "Will you contend for Baal? Or will you save him? Whoever contends for him shall be put to death by morning. If he is a god, let him contend for himself, because his altar has been broken down." [32] Therefore on that day Gideon was called Jerubbaal, that is to say, "Let Baal contend against him," because he broke down his altar.

[33] Now all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the people of the East came together, and they crossed the Jordan and encamped in the Valley of Jezreel. [34] But the Spirit of the LORD clothed Gideon, and he sounded the trumpet, and the Abiezrites were called out to follow him. [35] And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh, and they too were called out to follow him. And he sent messengers to Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali, and they went up to meet them.

[36] Then Gideon said to God, "If you will save Israel by my hand, as you have said, [37] behold, I am laying a fleece of wool on the threshing floor. If there is dew on the fleece alone, and it is dry on all the ground, then I shall know that you will save Israel by my hand, as you have said." [38] And it was so. When he rose early next morning and squeezed the fleece, he wrung enough dew from the fleece to fill a bowl with water. [39] Then Gideon said to God, "Let not your anger burn against me; let me speak just once more. Please let me test just once more with the fleece. Please let it be dry on the fleece only, and on all the ground let there be dew." [40] And God did so that night; and it was dry on the fleece only, and on all the ground there was dew. (ESV)

Judges 7

[1] Then Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) and all the people who were with him rose early and encamped beside the spring of Harod. And the camp of Midian was north of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley.

[2] The LORD said to Gideon, "The people with you are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hand, lest Israel boast over me, saying, 'My own hand has saved me.' [3] Now therefore proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, 'Whoever is fearful and trembling, let him return home and hurry away from Mount Gilead.'" Then 22,000 of the people returned, and 10,000 remained.

[4] And the LORD said to Gideon, "The people are still too many. Take them down to the water, and I will test them for you there, and anyone of whom I say to you, 'This one shall go with you,' shall go with you, and anyone of whom I say to you, 'This one shall not go with you,' shall not go." [5] So he brought the people down to the water. And the LORD said to Gideon, "Every one who laps the water with his tongue, as a dog laps, you shall set by himself. Likewise, every one who kneels down to drink." [6] And the number of those who lapped, putting their hands to their mouths, was 300 men, but all the rest of the people knelt down to drink water. [7] And the LORD said to Gideon, "With the 300 men who lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hand, and let all the others go every man to his home." [8] So the people took provisions in their hands, and their trumpets. And he sent all

the rest of Israel every man to his tent, but retained the 300 men. And the camp of Midian was below him in the valley.

[9] That same night the LORD said to him, "Arise, go down against the camp, for I have given it into your hand. [10] But if you are afraid to go down, go down to the camp with Purah your servant. [11] And you shall hear what they say, and afterward your hands shall be strengthened to go down against the camp." Then he went down with Purah his servant to the outposts of the armed men who were in the camp. [12] And the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the people of the East lay along the valley like locusts in abundance, and their camels were without number, as the sand that is on the seashore in abundance. [13] When Gideon came, behold, a man was telling a dream to his comrade. And he said, "Behold, I dreamed a dream, and behold, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian and came to the tent and struck it so that it fell and turned it upside down, so that the tent lay flat." [14] And his comrade answered, "This is no other than the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel; God has given into his hand Midian and all the camp."

[15] As soon as Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, he worshiped. And he returned to the camp of Israel and said, "Arise, for the LORD has given the host of Midian into your hand." [16] And he divided the 300 men into three companies and put trumpets into the hands of all of them and empty jars, with torches inside the jars. [17] And he said to them, "Look at me, and do likewise. When I come to the outskirts of the camp, do as I do. [18] When I blow the trumpet, I and all who are with me, then blow the trumpets also on every side of all the camp and shout, 'For the LORD and for Gideon.'"

[19] So Gideon and the hundred men who were with him came to the outskirts of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, when they had just set the watch. And they blew the trumpets and smashed the jars that were in their hands. [20] Then the three companies blew the trumpets and broke the jars. They held in their left hands the torches, and in their right hands the trumpets to blow. And they cried out, "A sword for the LORD and for Gideon!" [21] Every man stood in his place around the camp, and all the army ran. They cried out and fled. [22] When they

blew the 300 trumpets, the LORD set every man's sword against his comrade and against all the army. And the army fled as far as Beth-shittah toward Zererah, as far as the border of Abel-meholah, by Tabbath. [23] And the men of Israel were called out from Naphtali and from Asher and from all Manasseh, and they pursued after Midian.

[24] Gideon sent messengers throughout all the hill country of Ephraim, saying, "Come down against the Midianites and capture the waters against them, as far as Beth-barah, and also the Jordan." So all the men of Ephraim were called out, and they captured the waters as far as Beth-barah, and also the Jordan. [25] And they captured the two princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb. They killed Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and Zeeb they killed at the winepress of Zeeb. Then they pursued Midian, and they brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon across the Jordan. (ESV)

10 Questions: JUDGES, KINGS & PROPHETS

1) In this study we'll focus on the story of Gideon. What other people in this final list stand out to you? Where was faith evident in their lives?

2) The book of judges has a recurring theme: "Everyone did what was right in his own eyes." Why does that philosophy cause society to break down & immorality to run rampant? What is preventing our society from becoming like that?

3) What caused the people to cry out to God for help? Can you describe a time when a difficulty or fear led you to seek God more seriously?

4) Was it accurate for the angel to call Gideon a mighty man of valour? Do you feel confident in your strength & ability to do what God wants you to do?

5) Why did Gideon tear down the altar at night time? Can you relate to his blend of obedience & timidness? Why was God still willing to use him despite his fears?

6) Why do you think that God was willing to perform the signs of the fleece for him?

7) Why did God shrink Gideon's army down from 32,000 to 300? How many soldiers did God need to defeat the enemy army?

8) What do you view as your greatest weaknesses? Is it possible that God wants to show Himself to be strong through those weaknesses?

9) On multiple occasions, God was patient with Gideon and gave him signs to reassure him. How do you think that impacted his faith? How do these accounts of people of faith impact you in your relationship with God?

10) Why is faith the common thread that unites all of Hebrews 11 together? How does faith relate to our motivation, our mindset, and our mission? How did faith lead to action in each of these accounts? What action is your faith leading you to take?