

# **Bible Comparison**

## **For the Book of Genesis**

## **Gen 1 / Isa 20**

**Main theme: Disgraced to put hope in man. Blessed is he who trusts in the Almighty God.**

**- Rely on man / rely on God (Disgraced / blessed)**

Golden verses: Gen1:1-4, Isa 20:2

“You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power for you created all things and by your will they were created and have their being.” (Rev 4:11). This chapter revealed to us the origin of all things in heaven and on earth. It testified that God is the only Creator, for He spoke, and it came to be; He commanded, and it stood firm. By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of His mouth. The earth is full of His unfailing love and creatures. (Ps 33:5-9, 104:24) When everything in heaven and on earth was made ready, then God made man. This displayed the everlasting will of God is to prepare a habitable place for mankind and delight to be with the sons of men. (Pr 8:31, Isa 45:18) How great is the love of God! The main theme of these two chapters is relying on man and relying on God. On one side we not only saw God created everything, he also created man in His own image. Therefore He expected the man that He created trusts in Him, look up to Him and be blessed because of His promise. On the other side we saw that the Israelites disregarded the creation and the love of salvation. They did not put hope in the Almighty Creator but they looked to and sought refuge with man and the result was utter shame.

**A. Blessed is he who understands the love of God and listens to His command to manifest God’s glory.**

The love of creation (Gen 1:1-19) / The love of redemption (Isa 20:1-4)

1. **【God’s great love of creation】** 1-5 Adam, the son of God (Luke 3:38) was created in the image and likeness of God. To let the man that He had created to live on the earth and to enjoy His abundance, God used His Almighty, wisdom and great love to create heaven and earth. The Spirit of God hovered over the waters. And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light and he separated the light from the darkness. This also demonstrates the condition of our spirit before we were blessed. We need God’s Spirit to hover over us to awaken our hearts to see the light again. From the first day to the sixth day, every creation of God exhibits God’s unparalleled love to mankind. Therefore we ought to bow down before our Lord to worship and praise His great love (Ps 95:6)!
- ※ **【God’s great love of redemption】** 1-4 Israel was God’s son who ought to understand God is the Creator and the Lord who has redeemed them so they might fear God and proclaim His name among the nations. But they basically would not comprehend God’s great love of redemption and did

not boast in the Almighty God. Instead they relied on Cush, boasted in Egypt and trusted in the power of the earth and fell into the great darkness of the deep! Their lives were separated from God and discontinued with God in communication. By the work of the Spirit God revived the earth to re-see the light which displayed God's great love of creation. By the work of His servant Isaiah to awaken His people to abandon the darkness to come to light, to awaken to reality and do good which reveals God's great love of redemption.

2. **【Create by the Word】** 1-19 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made." (Jn 1:1-3) In the sequence of God's creation, there is the work of God's word and the creation from his hand every day. Similarly, our lives are by the Word of God that was created in the likeness of his son, an instrument fit for its work and in true righteousness and holiness. (Eph 4:24). For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus.
  - ※ **【Preach the word and give warning】** 1-4 On the one hand the prophet passed the word of God; on the other hand he denied himself to sacrifice, willing to be shamed. He has gone stripped and barefoot for three years as a sign against Egypt and Cush to be captivated by Assyria. This is to warn Israel so as to discipline them to return to the Lord Savior and not to seek the help of man. On one side is the work of God's word; on the other is the sign of the prophet to communicate the word and will of God.
3. **【Fellowship with God】** 1-19 God made everything was to prepare a habitable place for mankind. On the first day He separated the light from the darkness. The second day He separated water from water and created the expanse. Therefore we should have fellowship with God in the light and always have close communication with Him (1 Jn 1:6-7), to understand deeply of the mind of God's creation and to let His will be done through us (Mt 6:10, Rom 8:32).
  - ※ **【Fellowship with the world】** 1-2 Not only does our God create all things, He rules over all; the king's heart is directed by God's will. God ordered the king of Assyria to attack Ashdod and advised the prophet to give a sign. These had directly or indirectly warned Israel to take discipline and return, to separate the light with the darkness and do not have fellowship with the world. And to revive the communication in the light of God so He may dwell in them forever to arrive at God's purpose in His creation of all things.
4. **【All things listen to God's command】** 1-19 "The Lord does whatever pleases Him, in the heavens and on the earth, in the seas and all their

depths.” (Ps 135:6). All things created serve God and obey to His command.

Up till now all things are being kept by the same word. (Heb 1:3)

- ※ **【God’s people disobey His command】** 1-4 Only the people whom God redeemed did not follow the will of God. They did not listen to the commands of God. Nor were they willing to humble themselves to submit under the mighty hands of God. They did not trust in Him wholeheartedly and they relied on Cush and Egypt which broke the heart of the Lord.
- 5. **【Bear fruit to glorify God】** 6-13 The sequence of God’s creation also represented the course of our live. From the first day to the third we experienced from darkness to brightness, through the fellowship with God, to breathe the spiritual air, to take root in life. It was like the process of the plant growing from the seeds on the land and the trees that bore fruit. Similarly our lives grow by the word of God, bearing fruit in clusters, glorifying our Father Lord. (Jn 15:8, 1Pe 1:23)
- ※ **【Take possession of the land vainly】** 1-4 Israel wholeheartedly put hope in Cush and Egypt, chasing after the enjoyment of this life. Their hearts were filled with thorns. The word of God was choked by the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth making them unfruitful (Mk 4:18-19) possessing the land vainly and taking God’s grace vainly.
- 6. **【All are according to their kinds】** 6-13 God created all kinds of living creatures each according to their kinds. Each of them has different life and they shall not surmount one another. Nor can they mix with one another. This is the wisdom of the Creator and His Almighty!
- ※ **【Not willing to set apart to be holy】** 3-4 All living creatures are according to their kinds and they differ from one another. Israel being a special chosen elect of God was not willing to separate himself from the secular world. Instead they relied on the world and mix with them, wallow in the mire with the worldly people, violating the holy will of God set on them.
- 7. **【The bright light shines】** 14-19 On the fourth day God said let there be light in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth to bring warmth and brightness. Christ, the word who became flesh is the radiance of God’s glory revealing the exact representation of His being (Heb 1:3) so we may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault, in which He shines like stars in the universe as He holds out the word of life. (Php 2:15-16)
- ※ **【Deny oneself to shine】** 3-4 The Israelites went to seek refuge from the world. They behaved and acted in darkness. God raised the prophet Isaiah to deny himself to shine and be watchful for all his people. The prophet continually warned the people who were in the dark. He showed them the road of brightness which was to obey and rely solely in God. The glory

which Egypt and Cush boasted of will be lost by the twinkling of an eye. So let us go near to the true light of God and walk with Him in His light.

**B. To rely on man will become frightened and shameful while to trust in God will be blessed and honored.**

To rely on man (Gen 1:20-31) / To rely on God (Isa 20:5-6)

1. **【Trust in God and be abundant】** 20-25 On the fifth and sixth day God created all living creatures of the seas and in the sky as well as the animals, livestock and insects according to their kinds. These all look to God to give them their food at the proper time. (Ps 104:27) Though they do not sow or reap, they fly in the sky and swim in the sea to enjoy freely the abundance of God, producing in great numbers and filling the earth. “How many are your works, O Lord! In wisdom you make them all; the earth is full of your creatures.” (Ps 104:24)
- ✂ **【Rely on man and get nothing】** 5 “Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on flesh for his strength and whose heart turns away from the Lord!” (Jer 17:5) Israel was not satisfied of God’s unfailing love and abundance. But he relied on Cush and boasted of Egypt, coveted on the secular and enjoyment of this life. Through Assyria God captivated Egypt and Cush, reveling to the Israelites that they would be just as frightened and shameful so they might take warning and would not rely on man.
2. **【Full of God’s image】** 26-27 When all things in heaven and on earth were created, God created man at last and everything was for man. God made man in His own image filled with honor. God blessed the male and female and let them enjoy everything so they may proclaim His praise and reveal His glory.
- ✂ **【Lose God’s image】** 6 The Israelites abandoned God and put hope in man. How foolish and ignorant! They lost the image of God and the honor of God’s prince. After their failure, they came to know that what they had looked up to was merely this.
3. **【The power to subdue】** 26-28 God blessed the men He created and made them to subdue the earth and to rule all living creatures of the sea, the earth and in the air. This exhibits the plan and the will of the Creator towards man, giving them power and wisdom! But our forefather sinned and this power was lost in the time of Adam. In Christ this is regained (Heb 2:5-9) so man shall return to God and trust in Him to be blessed.
- ✂ **【Lost everything】** 5 Another meaning for “Israel” is to subdue together with God. However they curry favor with the enemy and seek their help and lost the power and honor of the prince of God. Only by redeeming through God and return completely to God and trust in Him can we really revive

everything. (Mic 5:7-8)

4. **【Blessed by God】**28-31 God blessed the man He created and wanted them to be fruitful and increase in number; to fill the earth to accomplish this great commission. This is also the commission given to the churches of today. (Mt 24:14, Ac 1:8) God gave all the plants and fruit of the land to them to enjoy. God saw all things that he made were good. But after God had made man, He saw all that he had made was very good and was satisfied.
- ✖ **【Punished by God】** 5 Israel should have inherited the promised blessing which God gave Abraham. But they have forsaken God's grace, violated His covenant and blindly went after worldly enjoyment and were punished again resulting a desolate condition! The purpose of the warning of the prophet is to advise them to turn back and be blessed to inherit the promise of their forefather. We Gentiles therefore should be humble to take discipline and accomplish the gospel mission and inherit the blessing that God promised to Abraham.

**Ps 1 / Rev 10:1 Main theme: Do not follow the wicked but the path of love so you may have might and bear choice fruit. – path of love / great power**

On one side was a mighty angel showing God's power and glory coming down from heaven; on the other was a man who delights in the law of the Lord, mediates day and night, takes root in the Lord, keeps far away from sins and bears fruit abundantly. Both of them glorify God greatly.

- (1) **【Do not follow wickedness but delight in God's word】** 1-3 Be sure to imitate the Lord and the descendants of Jonadab who despite all sorts of trials still held firm to God's word and did not swerve. These people had great authority, produced fruit in proper time, and were led by the Holy Spirit to walk the righteous path to accomplish God's will. This is because their strength came from the heavenly God just like Stephen who obeyed God's will courageously and his face shone like angels.
- (2) **【The wicked will be blown away and perish】** 4-6 The wicked has a vain outlook like the Pharisees whose mouths are full of Scriptures but inside are filled with evil. They hear the Lord's word but do not put to practice like the foundation set on the sand. They will fall when the wind blows and the rain pours. On the Day of Judgment they can hardly escape the severe punishment and bring themselves to destruction.

**Central points of the wheels: Trust in God and obey His word, set apart to be holy and glorify God**

O Father God! I thank you for your creation and the great love of redemption! May you let me set apart to be holy, trust you wholeheartedly, desire for your

Word, take root and bear fruit to manifest your glorious image!

## **Gen 2 / Isa 21**

**Main theme: Be watchful day and night, listen carefully and proclaim widely, be faithful in your commission and rest**

- **Obey His commands / Pray watchfully (Garden of Eden / the Upper Room)**

Golden versess: Gen 2:7, Isa 21:7

A discussion on obeying His commands and praying watchfully - On one side it discussed on the creation of Adam and Eve and they enjoyed the abundance and fellowship with God in the Garden of Eden; on the other was the prophet Isaiah was entrusted to stand on the Upper Room to announce an oracle. We ought to have an abundant life in the garden and have close fellowship with God, stand on the upper room to see thoroughly, pray thoroughly and listen carefully to proclaim widely so His children may escape completely from the sinful Babylon, to set apart for the Lord, unite with God to be the new bride of the Lamb.

### **A. To obey command and pray watchfully to be completely abundant**

Be watchful (Gen 2:1-17) / Understand thoroughly (Isa 21:1-12)

1. **【Listen and rest】** 1-3 All things in heaven and on earth were made ready and God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. The universe was filled with His love! God completed His work of creation and rested. He blessed the seventh day and made it holy so man may enjoy the love of God and rest together with God.
- ※ **【Work together with God】** 1-2 God had finished His work on the prophet Isaiah and made him a spokesman of the will of God. He united with God and was totally submissive. Thus he entered a new world full and worked together with God. We too ought to work together with God and rest with Him.
2. **【Enjoy the rest】** 1-3 We are God's workmanship, created in Christ. (Eph 2:10) The spiritual meaning of the Sabbath day is to put down our weary and burden to let God be the King to enjoy God's rest. Therefore ensure to exalt God as holy, take His yoke, and learn from Him so we may let God complete the edification of our soul at an early date, thereby entering into the true rest in Christ. (Mt 11:28-30, Heb 4:11)
- ※ **【End all the groaning】** 1-2 The prophet spoke of the oracle concerning the Desert by the Sea (means the great plain of Babylon). Babylon betrayed and was looted, filled with monstrous crime and brought hardship to all nations. God's children did not exalt God as holy and were not willing to rest and obey. They were also wailing and mourning under the sinful power of

Babylon without rest. God promised that the army of Media would be like whirlwinds sweeping through the southland, bringing to an end all the groaning. Therefore we who are weary and burdened shall come before the Lord for only He can set us free to enjoy his rest, (Gal 5:1) all worries and groaning will evade.

3. **【A living being】** 4-7 After God had finished creating all the things in heaven and on earth, He formed the man in His image from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. Man was formed from the earth, how lowly! But God gave man glory, righteousness and a holy image. (Eph 4:24) Therefore we ought to bring out the image of Christ and lead many sinners to escape death and enter life and gain an everlasting life.
- ✖ **【A sinful dead man】** 3-5 The army of Media was pressing near but the leaders of Babylon were still setting their tables, leading a befuddled life, and sinning in their enjoyment. They did not understand that man is only dust and would perish in an instant. How can we live in the flesh and be alive yet is a dead Christian? Therefore let us come back to our senses and bring out the life of Christ. (1 Cor 15:34)
4. **【No request apart from the Lord】** 8-14 In the Garden of Eden there are all sorts of sweet fruits, four rivers flowing day and night and precious gold, pearls and onyx, the future New Jerusalem. All the fullness is in Christ and apart from the Lord there is nothing we should desire for. (Col 2:9-10)
- ✖ **【To break the idol】** 6-9 The prophet saw that the army of Media was infringing upon Babylon in his vision and the situation was critical. Babylon would fall, Babylon has fallen! All the carved idols lied shattered. The idols of Babylon were worthless and did not give any benefit. They could save them to escape from the fate of national subjugation. This teaches us to desire for nothing apart from the Lord, or greed for anything but completely hurl down the idol to pieces. Then we may enjoy the all the abundance in the garden.
5. **【Life in the garden】** 8-14 The most precious thing in the garden is to enjoy the togetherness of God, the constant fellowship with Him, the closeness with God and sharing of happiness between God and man. This cannot be found in man's world and is beyond description. How sweet is the fellowship and happiness in the spirit!
- ✖ **【Discern in the Upper Room】** 6-9 The prophet Isaiah stood on the Upper Room day and night just like having close communication with God in the garden. He listened carefully and discerned in the spirit. He roared like a lion full of jealousy of God to attack the evil of Babylon. The prophet had a life of the garden, therefore he was able to discern in the Upper Room and



continuously received the oracle from God, flowing out the living water from his life.

6. **【Work and take care】** 15 On the one hand God expects man to work diligently and on the other to take care watchfully to guard against the attack from the enemy. Further we must be fervent to guard our heart always to be in God's love as a garden locked up so we may always be on the alert and be faithful in his commission.
- ✕ **【Faithful and watchful】** 10 The prophet Isaiah understood the mind of God all his life, full of burden and was always alert for Israel. He toiled and fulfilled his duty, worked to fix and care. He continuously searched before God and told his people all that he heard from God to warn them to escape from the most evil Babylon so they might revive the lives in the garden with God.
7. **【The path of life】** 16-17 God commanded that it is free to eat from any tree in the garden. But we must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. When we eat of it we will surely die. What God concerned was the attitude of man towards God's command and we ought to obey unconditionally. The tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil represented the two choices or two paths of life and death. God wishes man to choose the path of life, just as what Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (Jn 14:6)
- ✕ **【The path of death】** 11-12 The prophet has another oracle concerning Dumah (Edom). Those who lived in Seir are the off-springs of Esau. They abandoned God's command, cared for the flesh, went after superficial things, did not search for the origin and did not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God. (1 Cor 2:14) They were not able to see anything. When disasters came, they cried to the watchman in their despair, "What is left of the night? What is left of the night?" They did not pay the price to seek and therefore did not have any clear answer. Just like Esau, those who do not select the path of life but toil in wickedness will run a path of death.

## **B. Flee to the Lord and unite with Him to avoid death**

Life (Gen 2:18-25) / Unite (Isa 21:13-17)

1. **【Unite with the Lord】** 18-25 God caused Adam to fall into a deep sleep. He took one of his ribs and made a woman to be his helper for life helping him together to fulfill the commission of subduing the land. Woman is the bone of the bones and flesh of the flesh of man. Adam had a helper and was satisfied. This represents the second Adam – Jesus was pierced by his side and blood and water were poured out on the cross and created the church.

(Jn 19:34) The church ought to unite with Christ, to be one with Him in the Spirit (1 Cor 6:17); remove all sinful filth, nail down the old self, press forward to advance and become the church waiting to be caught up.

✠ **【Unite with the world】**13-17 Isaiah also had an oracle concerning Arabia – the disaster of war would soon come to the caravans of Dedanites. They fearfully and embarrassingly escaped to the thickets. Though there was some help from the Temanese, they could hardly escape from the heat of battle. The prophet also predicted that within one year Kedar would have great calamity. All the prosperity would come to nothing. They coveted in the worldly enjoyment and ran on the path of the knowledge of good and evil resulting in destruction. Isaiah united with God and this teaches God's children ought to take warning from the judgment of the nations to abandon the world and run a life that unites with God.

**Ps 2 / Rev 10:2 Main theme: Do not be afraid of man's rejection, read the Holy Book and seek to gain all nations.**

**-Reject / the Holy Book**

1. **【The scroll is opened】** The small scroll which is the book of Revelation is opened. Those who purify themselves to seek will understand. (Dan 12:10)
2. **【Understand the word of God and seek to take possession of the land】** 1-9 From the Holy Book understand God's will and the Lord will come again to be King. Do not only see that all nations reject God but understand the Almighty God, grasp His promise and pray to take possession of all the land. Trust in God's might and lead all people to God.
3. **【Be sure to be wise to do good now】** 10-13 Do not be complacent, sink in sleep or get drunk but to tremble in joy to serve God, depart from evil to do good and finish the Lord's work lest we will be punished and wail in gnashing teeth when the Lord comes.

**Central point of the wheels: Read the Lord's Holy Word and be abundant and discerned to destroy evil to take possession of the land.**

Dear Lord, may you let me crave for the abundant life of the heavenly garden and be close with you, unite with you to stand on the Upper Room to be faithful and watchful, see and pray thoroughly and lead men to abandon wickedness and walk a path of life.

**Gen 3 / Isa 22**

**Main theme: Being tempted to disobey and degenerate; Hold firm to the Lord's word and be honored.**

**-Disobey / hold firm (Garden of Eden / Valley of Vision)**

Golden versess: Gen 3:15, Isa 22:22-24

A discussion of disobeying and holding firmly – On one side is the beautiful

Garden of Eden being destroyed because of the sin of Adam and Eve. On the other side is about the Valley of Vision – Jerusalem was routed because the whole nation of Judah indulged in evil. This teaches us to be watchful at all times and keep the Lord's command lest we may be tempted to degenerate.

**A. The Garden of Eden was ruined and the Valley of Vision was routed**

Pervert (Gen 3:1-20) / Degenerate (Isa 22:1-14)

1. **【The heart was perverted】** 1 Why was the beautiful garden being ruined?  
First of all was because Eve was perverted, her mind was led astray from her sincere and pure devotion to God. She did not delight in the fellowship with God and was not satisfied when God was with her. Instead she followed her own desire and craved for extra satisfaction. So her heart was deceived by the serpent's cunning. (2 Cor 11:1-3)  
※ **【Revelry and indulgence】** 1-2 Why was the beautiful Valley of Vision being routed? This was because the leaders and people of the city of Jerusalem indulged in revelry. They thought that the army of Assyria had retreated and disaster might be waived. So they went up on the roofs to celebrate and got drunk. They did not realize that national calamity was ahead. Their destruction soon came. On one side was the old serpent's deceit; and the other was being captured by the archer. They were harmed because they were not on guard. Therefore be careful and watchful at all times, never be perverted or indulging!
2. **【Being tempted finally】** 1-6 There was a gap in Eve's heart and gave the old serpent the chance to tempt her. The serpent masqueraded as an angel of light and changed God's word. He first led her suspect the prohibition of God, and then he made her faith waver. The cunning serpent continued to press on the woman and advanced. The serpent used smooth talk and said "You will not surely die if you eat the tree of knowledge of good and evil. But your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." The woman saw that the fruit of the tree was pleasing to the eye and was therefore induced and disregarded God's command. She stretched out her hand and took some and ate it and gave some to her husband and he ate it. From then on man sinned and fell down. Sin entered the world through one man and in this way death came to all men. (Rom 5:12-14, Jam 1:14-15)  
※ **【Being conquered finally】** 3-5 The prophet prophesied that the Holy City would finally be conquered and all the leaders fled fearfully. They were hit by the archer and could not escape. The beautiful garden was ruined because man sinned and the beautiful Valley of Vision was routed because man indulged. The city was besieged and being trampled down by the enemy! Satan is like the "archer" who attacks us. Thus we ought to take up

the shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit to resist the temptation of the wicked.

3. **【Full of gaps】** 1-6 - Eve was full of gaps in her mind:

(1) Disregarded the restraint order of God (Heb 2:1);

(2) Did not pray watchfully, her heart was opened and talked with the old serpent;

(3) Coveted in the cravings of her eyes, the flesh and the boasting of what she had and did (1 Jn 2:16) and resulted in being tempted and ate the restricted fruit

※ **【Filled with the enemy's army】** 6-7 The leaders of Jerusalem were also full of gaps:

(1) Disregarded the warning of the prophet's prophecy;

(2) Cared only for the present enjoyment;

(3) Blindly indulge in revelry and did not care for the result. Therefore the prophet saw the beautiful valley of the Holy City was filled with the chariots and horsemen of the enemy and weeping was among the mountains. The prophet mourned for the ignorant common people and wept for the coming of the destructive catastrophe and would not be consoled. We ought to take discipline, lock up our heart, be alert to guard against the enemy and discern his plan lest we may be shoot by the 'archer'.

4. **【Commit sin and cover up sin】** 7 Man's nature is sin and to cover up sin. When Adam and Eve sinned, God's glory left them and showed the nature of sin and its shamefulness. (Rom 3:23) They sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves (their own righteous act) to cover their ugliness. How deceitful to conceal their sins! (Pr 28:13)

※ **【To cover one's own gap】** 8-9 The Holy City was besieged and lost the power to defend and also the fortress of God's togetherness, like the forefathers who sinned and were just as shameful. The City of David had many breaches. They stored up water in the Lower Pool and built a reservoir. All these means were useless. The forefather sinned and became more shameful while the breaches of the Holy City were breached bigger and bigger!

5. **【To hide and conceal】** 8-10 After our forefathers sinned, they covered up and shirked. They hid and concealed and would not go before God to confess their sin humbly. But as the merciful God was walking in the garden; God sought after man, God called to the man and God waited for man to repent and return to Him. When the two of them heard God's sound they were afraid and hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. God who searches the hearts of men knows everything. How can man hide

from God's face? (Ps 139:1-2)

- ※ **【To mend and patch up】** 10 The Holy City was besieged. They tore down the houses and mended the damaged city but were of no avail. On one side was hiding and refused to repent for their sin while the other was mending without trusting in God after being besieged by the enemy; both were not amendable.
- 6. **【Sinned and shirked】** 11-13 Man's nature is corrupt! Not only did our forefather hide his sin, he cunningly shirked it. Adam shirked his sin to the woman and the woman shirked to the temptation of the serpent. They have shirked and absolved their sin from all blame!
- ※ **【Deceived without realization】** 11 When the Holy City lost the guard, not only did they refuse to look up to God, they put their hope in the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon (1 Ki 10:17) and rebelled again, still deceiving themselves without realizing! On one side is sinned and shirked while the other is refusing to confess. They were stubborn and did not understand that God is merciful, righteous and waiting for man to repent. The only path is to confess our sin. The faithful and just God will forgive and purify us from all unrighteousness. (1 Jn 1:9)
- 7. **【Will surely be cursed】** 14-20 The old serpent tempted Eve to sin and brought the curse from God above all the livestock and all the wild animals. He will crawl on his belly and eat dust all the days of his life. From then on the descendants of the serpent, that is the wicked (Jn 8:44, Mt 13:38) and the descendants of the woman (those who belong to God) were put in enmity. (Gal 4:28-29) After the woman had sinned, she had three curses. When man sinned, the ground was cursed. It would produce thorns and thistles and he had to toil painfully and be filled with sweat in his brow before he will eat. Finally he had to return to the ground exhibiting God's righteousness and because he was guilty of his crime.
- ※ **【Never to be forgiven】** 12-14 When the national calamity was before the people of Jerusalem, they reveled and got drunk, slaughtered cattle and killed sheep, crying wild without shame and said, "Let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die!" They led such mocking and befuddled life without knowledge of repentance! God revealed to the prophet Isaiah and said, "Till your dying day this sin will not be atoned for." On the one hand was the terrifying curse brought by sin and the other was stubbornness without repenting brought severe punishment.
- 8. **【The wonderful way of salvation】** 15 Our merciful God has prepared a wonderful way of saving mankind. He predicted the descendants of the woman will crush the head of the wicked. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us. (Gal 3:13) By His death on the

cross he might destroy the devil that holds the power of death and accomplished His salvation. (Heb 2:14-15)

- ※ **【We ought to repent】** 12-14 The house of Judah encountered hardship and God cried out to them to grieve in sorrow and confess, and do not be obstinate lest they will reserve wrath bringing more severe punishment from God. Our merciful God has prepared wonderful salvation for us. Let us quickly confess, repent and return to God.

**B. Banished for rebellion but those who keep the word will be exalted, honored and redeemed by grace.**

Be driven away (Gen 3:21-24) / Be banished (Isa 22:15-25)

1. **【Was driven away from the garden】** 22-24 God is righteous and man must take the result of sin. After Adam and Eve sinned they were driven out of the garden. From then their lives were separated from God and lost the enjoyment in the garden living in meaningless sinfulness. God placed the righteous cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life. Only by the redemption of Christ man can come back to the path of the tree of life and revive the life of the garden with God. (Rev 22:2, 14, 19)
  - ※ **【Deposed from the office】** 15-19 The steward Shebna represented the indulging leader of the city. He was arrogant and thought himself infallible, craving for his own interest. He was stubborn like the ancestors and cared only for revelry. He cut out a grave for himself hewing it on the height, thinking he would have a rest place after death. As a result, he died a tragic death in a foreign land! The forefathers were driven out of the garden while Shebna did not know he ought to repent and was deposed from his office like a ball rolled up tightly and was thrown out which caused himself to be blamed.
2. **【To wear the righteous robe of salvation】** 21 The Lord made garments of skin as the righteous robe of salvation for them and clothed them, not due to their righteousness, but from the righteousness revealed out of God's law for all our righteous acts are like filthy rags, (Isa 64:6) But because we are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God sent his Son as a sacrifice of atonement for our sins and brought salvation and hope to mankind who had sinned and was cursed.
  - ※ **【To wear an honored robe】** 20-25 Eliakim was a servant who feared God, a representative of keeping the word. He replaced Shebna to be the steward. He held the key to the house of David and God drove him like a peg into a firm place seated with honor for the house of his father. He was put on the honored robe and the authority was handed over to him just like when God

put the righteous robe of salvation on our forefather. Eliakim was chosen by God with everything ready, but he was burdened by his clan like the peg which gave way and was sheared off, fell and be ruined. This is our warning lest we may fall from grace.

3. **【Give thought to God's love】**24 Our forefather sinned and was driven out of the garden. On one side was the righteousness of God and also due to the love of God lest they would eat again of the tree of life and live forever in sin. How painful it is! Only by believing in Christ may we have eternal life.
- ※ **【Take deep warning】**22-25 This steward Eliakim filled with authority and honor represented Christ who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut and what he shuts no one can open. (Rev 3:17) But Eliakim was burdened by his clan and could not hold firm which is our warning. Our forefather was driven out of the garden and the righteous cherubim guarded the way to the tree of life. From then on mankind was rejected from the door of grace. By the blood of Christ, He opened a new and living way, reviving the life of the garden. Let us be kept on the way of the tree of life.

### **Ps 3 / Rev 10:3**

**Main theme: Do not look at anything but pray to the Lord by faith and we will receive more than what we prayed.**

#### **-Call on / Cry out**

The angel of God was like the watchman in Isa 21:8 “And the lion shouted, ‘Day after day, my Lord, I stand on the watchtower; every night I stay at my post.’”

- (1) **【Do not fix your eye on the environment and do not listen to man's word】**  
1-2 God's children is the object of the enemy's attack, therefore do not fix your eye on the environment, or listen to man's word but be watchful for yourself day and night and be alert for all people.
- (2) **【Call on to God by faith】**3-6 We strongly believe if we call on to God, He will answer me, not only to save and bestow me glory.
- (3) **【Pray to save me and your people】**7-8 God favors all who calls on to Him richly; not only in answering the prayer but exceeding what we ask just like the prayer of Esther. He turned all trouble to revival and all people are blessed.

**Central point of the wheels: Do not let your heart be led astray. Repent, take warning, cry out to overcome the enemy**

Dear Lord, may you keep my heart as a pure virgin, never be deceived but observe the truth, pray in watch and triumph by you!

## **Gen 4 / Isa 23**

**Main theme: He who is arrogant, jealous and hate others will be punished.  
He who offers the best will be approved by God.**

### **- Jealousy and hatred / Arrogance**

Golden versess: Gen 4:7, Isa 23:18

A discussion of jealousy, hatred and arrogance - On one side it concerned that Cain was jealous and hated his brother because God looked with favor on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering He did not look with favor. He murdered his brother and was severely punished. On the other it concerned Tyre became arrogant and received his retribution when he prospered and got rich. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead. This shows mankind a way of righteousness by faith. (Heb 11:4)

### **A. Reward for jealousy and hatred and punished for coveting and arrogance**

Jealousy and hatred (Gen 4:1-16) / Arrogance (Isa 23:1-12)

1. **【Two kinds of offering】** 1-5 Though Cain and Abel were brothers by blood, one represented evil and the other represented kind. They walked different paths and presented different offerings. (1 Jn 3:12) Though Cain was the firstborn, he did not fear or love God. He did not know he was born of sin. He did not understand that man must be redeemed by blood after sinning. He relied on himself and presented to God carelessly on what he toiled. Abel (vanity) though was not the firstborn, feared and loved God. He understood that he could not be justified by his own acts. Therefore he brought some of the firstborn of his flock, the best offered to God and the precious fat portions. Due to faith, Abel presented an offering of the blood, (Heb 9:14) and so God looked with favor on Abel and his offering; but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. He was not approved, nor was his offering.
- ✖ **【Two kinds of roads】** 1 Tyre was judged, representing God's judgment on the nations at the last day and God's redemption on His elect. (Isa 63:4)  
One is the destructive road represented by Cain and Tyre; the other is the everlasting road represented by Abel. Tyre relied on seafaring and trading, toiled and rushed about, coveting on the worldly wealth, power and enjoyment, arrogant and going against God and finally be judged and doomed to destruction.
2. **【Fellowship with God】** 2 Abel kept flocks in the desert and on the mountain had close fellowship with God in the spirit. He met God with a clear heart and understood His love; therefore his offering satisfied God's heart! We too ought to have close fellowship with God for in His light – the source of life we see light. (Ps 36:9)



- ※ **【Trade with people】** 3 Tyre was the marketplace of the nations. He had been trading with other nations, filled with hypocrisy, deceit and evil. We ought to abandon all secular. Abel loved God with purity and had fellowship with God; not to have friendship with the world. He set his mind on things above, took God as his close friend, lived before Him filled with joy in His presence and eternal pleasures. (Ps 16:11)
- 3. **【Jealousy, hatred and murder】** 5-8 Cain was very angry and his face was downcast when God looked with favor on Abel's offering and did not look with favor on his. Not only was he not humble, he bore jealousy on his brother. From then mankind started to hate and kill. Incidences of causing blood occurred again and again. This lost the image of God and is against the will of God to create man.
- ※ **【Arrogance and coveting】** 2-8 Tyre was originally a bustling and joyous old city, blindly covetous and heaping in wealth. They relied on riches and were arrogant and scrambled for supremacy on the sea. The seafaring merchants were like princes and nobles living in vanity and sin. Cain murdered because of jealousy and hatred while Tyre was arrogant due to its wealth. These serve as our warning.
- 4. **【Avenged】** 9-16 After Cain had killed his brother, God looked for him and gave him the chance to repent and said, "Where is your brother?" He lied and argued deceitfully. He was obstinate and not willing to repent and so was cursed. The ground would no longer yield for him and he could only wander restlessly. The greater punishment was being banished from God's face. Due to his plea our merciful God put a mark on him to avoid reoccurrence of shedding blood for in the image of God has God made man. (Gen 9:6)
- ※ **【Be judged】** 1-7, 9-12 The prophet predicted Tyre would be judged. Her stronghold would become desolate. The surrounding countries that used to trade with her, the seafaring merchants would weep due to the destruction of Tyre. Cain was rewarded and forever be away from God due to jealousy and hatred. God stretched His hand to the sea and tore down Tyre so other nations were horrified and never be joyful. Envy rots the bones and the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil! (Pr 14:30; 27:4, 1 Tim 6:10) This is exactly the miniature of the guilt of monstrous crime of mankind in the last phase of the age; we can hardly escape from the judgment and punishment of God in the doomsday.

**B. Commit sin and doom to destruction while cry out to the name of God and set apart for the Lord**

Cry out (Gen 4:17-26) / To God (Isa 23:13-18)

- 1. **【Arrogant and indulging】** 17-24 After Cain was banished from the Lord,

he built a city for himself and named it after his son Enoch. He did not exalt and proclaim the name of God but was self-centered and pursued personal family fame. His offspring Lamech indulge in lust and married two women. He arrogantly said anyone who killed Lamech will be avenged seventy-seven times. Though Cain had numerous descendants and they had many inventions and prospered, they abandoned the true God and continued to do evil, indulge, degenerate and were finally devoured by the flood, doomed to destruction without an exception.

- ※ 【The nature was not changed】 13-17 Tyre was surrounded, besieged and became desolate. The prophet predicted that the punishment was seventy years. The Lord would deal with Tyre at the end of seventy years; her prosperity would revive like a forgotten prostitute playing the harp and singing. After the admonition, Tyre revived but her covetous and luxurious nature was not changed. The nature of Cain's descendants were also unchanged, continuing in sinning and were not aware of repenting.
- 2. 【Cry out to the name of God】 25-26 Adam had another son named Seth in place of Abel. Through Seth brought forth a new and consecrated genealogy which prepared for the coming of Jesus Christ and God's salvation. When Seth had a son Enosh (a mortal man), men began to call on the name of the Lord.
- ※ 【Set apart for God】 18 After being punished, Tyre came under the power of God. He could not but made her profit and earnings to be set apart for God and let those who served God enjoy them. We ought to pursue for the change in our heart and set apart for God forever, call on God's name, worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, then we will enjoy the bounties of God. (Heb 12:28-29)

#### **Ps 4 / Rev 10:4**

**Main theme: God gave peace and joy to the righteous, godly, humble and obedient**

##### **- Righteous and humble**

- (1) 【Do not turn to delusions but be righteous and godly】 1-5 We ought not turn to delusions but pursue righteousness, holiness and fear the Lord with godliness and act before God in everything.
- (2) 【Be humble and obedient】 10:4 John heard a voice from heaven and obeyed immediately. He did not write down the mystery of the seven thunders. In all things he would not follow his own intention but after the Lord's command.
- (3) 【The goodness of being godly and humble】 6-8 Such holy and obedient instrument will be favored by God and be near to Him. His prayers will be

answered and all nations will be blessed because of him. God will fill his heart with greater joy, be discerned in the mystery, receiving abundance and fully enjoy the peace from God.

**Central point of the wheels: Overcome our old self and be righteous and godly**

Dear Lord, I wish to love you wholeheartedly, offer my best to be approved by you and to run a suffering and narrow path throughout my life to satisfy your heart!

**Gen 5 / Isa 24**

**Main theme: Those who sin will wither but he who walks with God will glorify Him and benefit man.**

**- Walk together / Glorify God**

Golden versess: Gen 5:22-24, Isa 24:15-16

A discussion of walking together and glorifying God - On one side it concerned Enoch feared God, by faith he walked with God 300 years like a day and God took him away. Before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. (Heb 11:5) On the other side it concerned that those who were left would go the islands of the sea and the ends of the earth to proclaim and glorify God. We ought to imitate Enoch to set apart for the Lord, offer ourselves totally, walk with God, understand His mind, proclaim the gospel and reveal the glory of God throughout the land.

**A. It is meaningless to sin and abandon His covenant. Call on to God when we are desolate.**

Meaningless (Gen 5:1-17) --- Wither (Isa 24:1-13)

1. **【Life is meaningless】** 1-2 Adam (of the earth) was created in the likeness of God himself. In the days when he and Eve were created, God blessed them and named them as man. But when men sinned, they lost not only the glorious image of God and also God's blessing. "Death" became the result of everyone because sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned. (Rom 5:12) One generation after another, mankind died in sin like a shadow, naked we come and naked we go. It is meaningless under the sun!
- ※ **【The earth is devastated】** 1-3 God laid waste the earth and devastated it, ruined its face and scattered its inhabitants because man sinned and abandoned the covenant, and the earth was cursed. All the inhabitants of the earth, no matter high or low, was under sin and waste. The earth will be completely laid waste and totally plundered. May God teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom, (Ps 90:12) fear God and obey His word and do not ever idle away chasing after the wind and

catching the shadow! (Ecc 12:13)

2. **【Prepare the salvation】** 3-5 Though Cain was the firstborn of Adam, he murdered his brother and was abandoned. God put the son of Adam, Seth to replace Abel. God chose Seth and one of his descendants, a genealogy that set apart for the Lord and prepared the coming of Christ that gave mankind redemption and hope which is the will of God before the beginning of time. Thanks be to God, through Christ, the descendants of Adam were delivered from waste and sin.
- ✖ **【The world is ruined】** 4-5 The world is languished and withered, even those exalted of the earth are not spared and languished. This is because man sinned and was against the laws therefore God would punish. But by the descendants of Seth, an elected genealogy prepared for Christ and His redemption which gave the fallen man hope and salvation so that we may due to Christ escape from the curse of the law (Gal 3:13) and become a chosen people.
3. **【Call on the name of God】** 6-17 Seth was chosen by God, faithful and loved God. Thus when he had a son Enosh (a mortal man), men begin to call on the name of the Lord. (Gen 4:26) When man understands that he himself lives in sin, is a mortal man and without hope, then he knows to call on God's name, (Rom 10:12-13) fear Him, serve Him and be separated from sin. In this way, they were redeemed by God and avoid his wrath.
- ✖ **【To grieve in vain】** 6-13 The earth was cursed because of man's rebellion. The inhabitants were burned up because they would not call on to God's name. Therefore all the cry of feasting of mankind turned to gloom. The earth became devastated and few were left. When Seth had Enosh, man began to feel they were deeply in sin and therefore humbled and contrite and called on God's name. (Gen 4:26) Thus the consecrated descendants of Seth were recorded and remembered. Mankind faces natural disasters and human calamities. If they do not repent and grieve in vain, they will be forsaken forever!

## **B. Walk with God and proclaim the glory of God extensively**

Walk together (Gen 5:18-24) ---Proclaim extensively (Isa 24:14-16U)

1. **【Walk with God】** 18-24 When Enoch (dedicated) was 65 years old, there was a change in his life. He saw that the sins of mankind have piled up to heaven, God's wrath would come. He prophesied that after his son died, God would destroy the earth by flood. After he had given birth to Methuselah he set apart for the Lord. He walked with God by faith and became a friend of God 300 years like a day. By faith he was taken away by God, a witness that he was favored by God. His catch up gave an advance

manifestation and example for the church in the last days which are awaiting to be caught up. We too ought to walk with God by faith to receive the good promise. (1 Th 4:13-18)

- ※ **【Proclaim the glory of God extensively】** 14-16 The prophet prophesied that after God's judgment, the remnants would be sent in the east, in the islands of the sea to proclaim the glory of God. They would acclaim the Lord's majesty and shout for joy. In the last days the angels of the gospel will be raised, just like Enoch who set apart to be holy and offered himself to walk with God. They will proclaim the salvation, lead thousands to return to the Lord. (Mt 24:14) and prepare watchfully awaiting to be caught up. Enoch also gave birth to children but he consecrated himself and walked with God. Similarly the remnants that were refined and returned ought to dress in white and walk with God. (Rev 3:4)
- 2. **【A warning name】** 21 Enoch had a different spirit! He was godly and loved God. He named his son Methuselah (when he is dead, it shall be sent i.e. deluge) so as to give warning to the worldly people to repent and return to God. The calamities of the last days will come, we ought to spread the salvation quickly and give warning to the worldly people.
- ※ **【The prophecy of warning】** 14-16 The prophet Isaiah was like Enoch; he walked with God in darkness, served watchfully and brought out the prophecy of warning to the worldly people and God's children. Enoch also prophesied that the Lord would come with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones and the prophecy of the prophets about the judgment and majesty of the Lord in the last days. (Jude 1:14-16)

### C. **God's judgment and God's tolerance**

Tolerance (Gen 5:25-32) --- judgment (Isa 24:16L-23)

- 1. **【God's forbearance】** 25-27 The son of Enoch, Methuselah (when he is dead, it shall be sent i.e. deluge) lived 969 years, had the longest life of mankind. This revealed that God had great forbearance and patience to those sinners of the day. God's mind does not want anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. (2 Pe 3:8-9) On one side God prepared the salvation by the ark made by Noah and on the other, he waited for the worldly people to repent with tolerance.
- ※ **【God's judgment】** 16L-23 The prophet grieved for the great judgment that would come. Woe to those who were treacherous and the nations did evil without restraint! All the earth could hardly escape the coming of the flood and the judgment of the last days. The floodgates of the heavens are opened and God's wrath will pour down. On one side we see God's tolerance; and the other is God's judgment. On one side exhibits God's unfailing love; and the other is the righteousness of God! Now is the time of God's favor, now

is the day of salvation! (2 Cor 6:2) In the last days God will punish the evil power of the spiritual world and the earthly kings who indulge in wickedness. Before Christ comes again, the sun and the moon will grow dim, the sky will be shaken. The ungodly will be judged and the days doomed to destruction will come. Therefore tremble with fear!

- 2 **【God's comfort】** 28-32 The forefathers sinned and caused the ground to be cursed lying under meaninglessness. Noah (comfort, rest) feared God, observed His commands by faith all his life and rested under the will of God. Not only did he become the comfort of his parents and of God as well.
- ※ **【God's glory】** 23 After the judgment is completed, Christ will come down gloriously. He will reign on Mount Zion and His glory will be shown before the elders. They have witness of suffering which becomes the example of the flock; just like Noah who became the comfort of God and His glory. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, they will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away. (1 Pe 5:1-4) Christ reigns and no longer will there be any curse (Rev 22:3), God's comfort and glory will come to all who fear Him. (2 Th 1:12)

**Ps 5 / Rev 10:5 Main theme: Pray watchfully to remove evil and make every effort to be perfect for God's hand will protect you.**

**-Be watchful / Raise up your hands**

- (1) **【Be watchful every morning to remove evil】** 1-3 We ought to pray watchfully every morning and request the Lord to cleanse my sins, so my thoughts and words will be accepted by the Lord.
- (2) **【The wicked cannot dwell with God】** 4-8 Those who sin and do evil, lie and be deceitful will be abhorred by God. I will make every effort to become perfect by God; be loved by the Lord, be near Him and run a righteous path.
- (3) **【The result of the wicked is miserable】** 9-10 The wicked rebel against God and their mouth is filled with destruction. They do not desire for goodness and will be banished by the Lord.
- (4) **【Walk in righteousness by the Lord and be blessed and joyous】** 11-12 The righteous who pray watchfully by the Lord, be away with evil and do good will be protected by the Lord's hand. He will be blessed and shout in joy. When we pray watchfully, the angel will raise his hands and do great and wonders for us!

**Central point of the wheels: Pray watchfully to remove evil, walk with God and proclaim God's glory everywhere.**

Dear Lord, the date of your coming is near. Teach us to number our days to gain a heart of wisdom. To offer ourselves completely to you, walk with you,

be purified and alert to proclaim your glory till the end of the world!

## **Gen 6 / Isa 25**

**Main theme: Do according to the Lord, build in the Lord and lead people to be saved**

- **Prepare the ark / Enjoy the gracious feast (prepare / go up the mountain)**

Golden versess: Gen 6:9 Isa 25:6-8

A discussion of preparing the ark and enjoying the gracious feast - On one hand it concerned mankind has been filled with all crimes. The land is full of violence and utterly corrupted. God would punish man with flood. God had chosen a righteous man Noah to prepare an ark to protect life. On the other hand it concerned God will punish the nations. He will also prepare a feast of riches. It teaches us to build and prepare our lives so we may lead more people to enter the ark to enjoy the richness of salvation and avoid God's wrath.

**A. Those who sinned will be punished. We will be favored if we come before God and He will be our protection.**

Wipe out (Gen 6:1-12) – Punish (Isa 25:1-5)

1. **【Be wiped for sinning】**1-7 When men increased in number, evil increased. Mankind has degenerated to corruption in ethics, flooded by pornography and full of violence. Every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. How painful was God's heart! God created all things so man may live and enjoy. But when man ignored the great love of God's creation and turned their backs against God, His punishment would come. God would wipe out mankind and all He has created.
  - ※ **【Punished for going against God】**1-3 The prophet praised the name of the Lord for the things He planned long ago. The nations ran wild and did evil. They sinned and went against God. They would become a desolate city and a heap of rubble and never be rebuilt just like when God destroyed the ground with flood. Even their city which was luxurious and resplendent as a stronghold came to nothing. But after the rebuke of God, they would ultimately return. They would glorify and fear God for His righteous judgment and action.
2. **【Consecrate and walk with God】** 8-12 When men's evil was like floodwaters God chose Noah. He feared God and was far away from sin. He was a blameless among the people of his time. He was like a firm rock in midstream. He stood firm by faith and walked with God. He did not follow the secular trends but trusted in God and pursue good. He set himself and his family apart from sins.
  - ※ **【God became our shelter in distress】** 4-5 God had set aside Israel from all

the nations and chose him as His children. When they were oppressed in trouble, God would protect by Himself and deliver them. He has been their refuge in times of distress, a shelter from the storm and heat just like when God delivered the whole family of Noah so the flood did not override them. God would silence the uproar of foreigners and still the song of the ruthless so the wicked could not prevail. The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him. (Na 1:7)

**B. Listen and prepare to be blessed to go up the mountain so your life will be established.**

Prepare (Gen 6:13-22) – Go up the mountain (Isa 25:6-12)

When the flood has not yet arrived, we need to prepare the “ark” and build our life on the one hand. On the other we need to go up the spiritual mountain and enjoy the rich feast and experience the perfect salvation so we may lead others into the ark. (Heb 11:7)

1. **【Construct our life】** 13-16 When men’s wickedness piled up reaching the sky, God used the flood to destroy the world. God commanded Noah to construct an ark according to His pattern. There should be rooms in the ark and coated with pitch inside and out (originally for redemption), lest it would be corroded by the flood. He was to make a roof and an opening for light by finishing so let God’s light be shone into the ark. There was only one door in the ark which represented the gate of salvation. (Jn 10:9) The ark had three decks – lower, middle and upper reviewing the perfect salvation of Christ. Our spiritual character should also be made like this; according to the measurement of God’s holiness, righteousness and unfailing love - from justification by faith, to triumph and sanctification and ultimately to the highest level of glorification.

※ **【Be blessed up the mountain】** 6-8 When the earth is judged by God, He will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, that is the feast of salvation which also represents that God’s children will enjoy the glorious kingdom. Therefore open wide your mouth to receive the fullness of His grace and truth which is one blessing after another. (Jn 1:14-17) When we are up on the holy mountain of God just like Noah preparing the ark according to His pattern and experience what God will do:

- (1) Remove the veil like coming to God’s opening for light so we may see God’s face, never to be grieved and not to be foolish.
- (2) Triumph over the power of death, truly experiencing the resurrection from death arising to the upper level of the ark.
- (3) Wipe every tear from the eyes, (Rev 21:4) just like having all the comfort of God in the ark.



- (4) Remove all the disgrace as if in the ark, God's glory was revealed everywhere. May God lead us up the spiritual mountain fully enjoying the richness of salvation, into the ark and keep away from the wild wave of evil and the punishment of God's wrath and filled with His presence.
2. **【Listen and prepare】** 17-21 God brought floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens. He established His covenant with Noah to deliver his whole family into the ark just like the church. Noah followed the command of God to make the ark and prepare everything. He brought into the ark two of every kind of all living creatures, male and female. He also did as what God ordered to store away all kinds of food.
- ※ **【Wait and sing】** 9-12 God's children who are in distress and rebuke ought to listen and prepare on the one hand; and listen and wait on the other. In time we will be saved and rejoice in gladness. God's hand will be on the holy mountain, protecting those who are waiting for Him just like Noah's family being protected in the ark. The evil ones will be like the result of the Moabites. Their pride and their cleverness would be brought down being trampled down in the manure and covered by the flood.
3. **【Do according to God】** 22 God's preparation on Noah was essential. He must first experience salvation, and then he might lead others in the ark. He truly had clean hands and a pure heart, gone up the spiritual high mountain, being dealt with in his life and gained an abundant life. Whatever God has ordered he followed, without the slightest disobedience which is an example we should learn.
- ※ **【Speak according to God】** 6-9 Prophet Isaiah himself had fully enjoyed God's grace, understood completely the will of God and entered into His abundance. He humbled and denied himself; obeyed to prophesy just like Noah preparing the ark. They both became the spokesmen of God's will and were being kept making God's will unimpeded

**Ps 6 / Rev 10:6 Main theme: Pray persistently for the Almighty ever-living God will not delay**

**-Pray persistently / Deliver**

The angel swore by him who lives forever and ever said there will be no more delay. Therefore we ought to let the trust from the beginning be upheld till the end.

- (1) **【Plead persistently】** 1-7 Know that yourselves have provoked God to wrath, so plead persistently for His mercy, healing and deliverance. Weep in sorrow for your own evil and pray that God's love will return to save me so I will not be destroyed by all my enemies.
- (2) **【The Lord's deliverance will not delay】** 8-10 Plead without being

discouraged for the Lord's deliverance will not delay. The Lord will hear my plea. The enemy will withdraw, be disgraced suddenly and in great terror. The Lord will turn all the work.

**Central point of the wheels: Follow the command to prepare for our plea will be granted and there will be no more delay.**

My dear Lord, pray you will make me alert to be away from sin, build my life so I may lead more people to enter the ark and accomplish the mission to save people.

## **Gen 7 / Isa 26**

**Main theme: Those who believe will enter the ark. They will hide then search and proclaim His salvation widely.**

**- Enter the ark / Enter the room**

Golden verses: Gen 7:23 Isa 26:20

A discussion of entering the ark and entering the room - On one hand before the flood came to the earth, Noah followed God's order to lead his whole family and all living creatures, male and female to enter the ark. On the other hand the earth was in the disaster of being judged. God's children ought to go into the city of salvation, enter the rooms and shut the doors behind; hide for a little while until His wrath has passed away.

**A. Enter the ark to escape the flood and be secure**

The ark (Gen 7:1-9) – Salvation (Isa 26:1-4)

1. **【Enter the ark】** 1-5 When Noah had obeyed and made the ark, and before the flood came to destroy the earth, God ordered him to lead his whole family to enter the ark. The whole earth was filled with evil and dirt but God found Noah to accomplish His will. God's heart was comforted because of him. He feared God, obeyed His commands and the whole family was blessed. Noah was six hundred years old when the floodwaters came. Noah and his three sons and his wife and his sons' wives entered the ark by faith to escape the waters of the flood.

※ **【Enter the city of salvation】** 1-2 The prophet prophesied in the last days before the judgment came, the returned captives will enter the strong city, that is the city of salvation, to sing God's salvation. He will make salvation like walls on all sides to protect those who trust in Him. On one side is the ark while the other is the city of salvation. These are refuges which God has prepared for those who belong to Him, just like Christ is the only one whom we can rely upon and trust in. Today the gate of salvation is still open! Seek the Lord while he may be found. (Isa 55:6-7) Imitate Noah to lead the whole family to enter the ark and receive His salvation.

2. **【Escape the waters of the flood】** 6-9 The whole family of Noah entered

the ark to escape the waters of the flood. In this world you will have trouble but there will be peace in the ark. Christ is the ark. “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on him.” (Jn 3:36) The flood is like the evil power of satan. Only by fleeing to Christ may you escape the flood and overcome the inducement of the evil and the temptation of the devil.

- ※ **【Perfect peace】** 3-4 When distress comes, God’s children should enter the city of salvation like entering the ark and be steadfast in God. He will keep them in perfect peace. He will be their fortress and the flood from all sides will not come in. The Lord is the Rock eternal. Those who trust in Him will never be shaken! The whole family of Noah obeyed and entered the ark to escape the flood. They sang and praised in the ark in perfect peace. The Lord sits enthroned over the flood. He gives strength to his people and blesses his people with peace.” (Ps 29:10-11)

## **B. Lock in the ark and hide in the room to wait for His grace**

Wait (Gen 7:10-24) – Hide (Isa 26:5-21)

1. **【To be redeemed】** 10-12 In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, on the seventeenth day of the second month, God’s judgment came on the earth. The floodwaters came for forty days. All the high mountains under the entire heavens were covered. All men and every living thing that moved on the earth perished except the family of Noah and the living things in the ark were redeemed. All the riches and wealth on earth were suddenly devoured by the flood. While people are saying, “Peace and safety,” destruction will come on them suddenly and they will not escape. (1 Th 5:2)
- ※ **【To be vindicated】** 5-7 In the last days God will corrupt all the anti-God’s power of Satan, so the arrogant and the powerful will decline. God will avenge for the oppressed and the poor. They will be blessed and raised. They will also crush their enemy under their feet. (Ro 12:19, 16:20). They trust in God and God will make the road of the righteous straight. Similarly, the family of Noah trusted in God. When the floodwaters came, they entered the ark and were delivered.
2. **【Understand righteousness】** 10-12 The family of Noah entered the ark revealed God’s righteousness. God does not show favoritism. There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil and to those who do good He will give glory, honor and peace. (Ro 2:6-11) They saw with their own eyes all the springs of the great deep burst forth. And rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights. All who had the breath of life died but they were able to escape death. Therefore they learnt deeper the

righteousness and majesty of God.

- ※ **【Learn righteousness】** 8-10 God's children wait for Him when He is walking in the way of His judgment; just like the family of Noah understood more about God's righteousness and His renown. (Pro 18:10). They learn His righteousness. Though grace is shown to the wicked, they do not learn righteousness; and regard not the majesty of the Lord. They will be put to shame and be consumed by fire in the end. Like those who did not fear God in the age of Noah, they were covered by the flood but the family of Noah enjoyed the goodness and love during the big waves. We should therefore be humble and disciplined, and learn righteousness before God's judgment comes!
- 3. **【Shut in the ark】** 13-16 Noah and his whole family were obedient to God and followed to enter the ark; all the living creatures entered the ark in pair. So God shut the family of Noah in the ark to wait to enjoy God's rich grace and love:
  - (1) God's presence and peace without worry.
  - (2) God's glory shone through and there was no darkness and suffering.
  - (3) When the water level rose, so was the ark. It was far from the worldly sin and came nearer to God. Their lives advanced.
  - (4) They stored up food and were able to live as normal and maintained their lives.
  - (5) How blessed was the whole family, gathered in praise and thanks.
- ※ **【Enter the rooms】** 16-21 Suffering is grace and blessing. This forces God's children in the room to pour out to God and have close fellowship with God just as Noah was blessed in the ark. They do not struggle in vain in the past. They receive favor in affliction and their soul advanced; in their prayer they will be able to see and pray thoroughly. On the one side is being shut in the ark by God and on the other is to go into the room and pray attentively to be near God! (Mk 6:6) In the final days those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned. (Jn 5:29) God will destroy the wicked. The family of Noah experienced rising from the dead. God's salvation is wonderful!
- 4. **【Covered by the water】** 17-24 The floodwaters came on the earth for forty days and every living thing that moved on the earth perished; everything apart from the ark was covered by the flood. The great day of the wrath of the Lamb has come, and who can stand? (Rev 6:17)
- ※ **【Consumed by the fire】** 11 God's hand is lifted high but the wicked do not see it. But they will see your zeal for your people and be put to shame. On one side is everything apart from the ark was covered by the flood while the other is the wicked will be consumed by the fire.

5. **【Life is advanced】** 17-24 God sits enthroned over the flood! The water rose up and the ark was also lifted up. When hardship rises, so is the life. No matter how great was the water, the ark would rise up. When we wait in the shelter, we may experience the mystery of fellowship with the Spirit just like the path of life leads upward for the wise to keep him from going down to the grave. (Pro 15:24)
- ※ **【Extend the territory】** 12-15 Not only will those who have suffered and returned to God and trust whole-heartedly in God be established in peace, their nation will be enlarged and the borders of the land will be extended. They will receive at no cost and give away at no cost to lead the Gentiles to return to the Lord. After Noah came out of the ark, he was fruitful and increased in number and filled the earth to accomplish the will of God. After the distress, not only do we have the advancement of life and our borders extended, we proclaim the gospel to the end of the earth.

**Ps 7 / Rev 10:7 Main theme: Walk in the righteous, pray and trust in God.  
In time God's grace word will accomplish**

**- Integrity / Fulfill**

The mystery of God's salvation will be fulfilled in time like David pursued for righteousness and integrity. In his distress he had undergone God's salvation being fulfilled on him.

- (1) **【Consecrate, obey the word and trust in God to deal with the enemy】** 1-9  
Pray that God will awake to assist me to deal with the enemy because I pursue righteousness and save those who rob him without cause. May the Lord examine and judge, make the righteous secure and bring to an end the violence of the wicked.
- (2) **【To urge the wicked to return lest they will encounter God's anger】** 10-17  
God is a righteous judge, who saves the upright in heart. In time the righteous will rejoice and praise because of the Lord's grace. If the wicked do not return, they will face the severe punishment of God, gnashing in their teeth and enter the Abyss.

**Central point of the wheels: Enter the ark in righteousness and integrity and God's will be accomplished.**

Dear Lord, pray that you will let me enter the ark to enjoy your love, enter the room to hide and pray and wait for everything to be achieved.

**Gen 8 / Isa 27**

**Main theme: Wait and refined to be the vineyard and flourish over the land**

**- Wait / Revive (come out / bear fruit)**

Golden verses: Gen 8:11, Is 27:3-4

A discussion of waiting and revival – On one hand it concerned that Noah was shut in the ark and he had to wait until the flood was completely dried. He could come out when God commanded him. On the other hand it concerned that the Israelites were able to return, revive and bear fruit on the land after being rebuked, punished and refined. This teaches us that while waiting, purify ourselves and remove the evil while waiting, trust and be obedient, die completely to the old self, do not walk too fast, do not run a crooked path, rest entirely and wait till God's time to go out of the ark and then bear fruit throughout the land to glorify God.

**A. Rebuke the flood to recede and punish the enemy for God has the power**

God remembered (Gen 8:1-3) – God punished (Isa 27:1)

1. **【Rebuke the flood to recede】** 1-3 God remembered the whole family of Noah and every living creature in the ark because He is God who keeps His covenant of love. He does not forget those who belong to Him. He can order the flood to destroy the world and order the flood to recede. He sent the wind to blow over the land and the waters receded. Then the springs of the deep and the floodgates of the heavens were closed. The roaring flood receded steadily. God made everything to work for the good of the family of Noah. Our God is the Almighty God. He does whatever pleases Him in heaven and on earth.. When He acts, who can reverse it? (Ps 115:3, Isa 43:13)  
※ **【Punish the enemy】** 1 How God remembered Noah, similarly He would remember His children. How He would raise the enemy to discipline His people, similarly he would use His fierce, great and powerful sword and His power of judgment to punish the enemy. In time He will exercise His judgment. In the prophecy of the prophet the Leviathan, the gliding serpent and the coiling serpent typify Assyria and Babylon and the monster of the sea was Egypt. They all are the enemies of God's people, the power of anti-God and evil. God has the power to rebuke the flood to recede and the power to punish the nations who are anti-God.
2. **【God controls the time】** 1-3 "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven." (Ecc 3:1) There was a time God told Noah to enter the ark and a time to come out of the ark. The flood lasted for exactly a calendar year. God wanted Noah to obey completely and wait for God's will.  
※ **【God rules over the nations】** 1 "The Lord has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all." (Ps 103:19) Everything obeys God. Though the power of the foreign anti-God is like the fierce floods and savage beasts, they are to work for the good of His will. Our God controls over everything. In His time God will use His power to punish the nations

and release His people. He rebuked the flood and let the family of Noah and every living creature to come out of the ark. There was a time for Noah to enter the ark and to come out; similarly there will be a time for the exiles of God's people to return.

### **B. To wait and die completely so you may take root and bear fruit**

Wait (Gen 8:4-12) – Bear fruit (Isa 27: 2-6)

1. **【Wait to come out】** 4-7 The lesson for Noah to trust and wait in the ark was hard to learn. The testing of the faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that we may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. (Jas 1:3-4) Noah persevered to await on God and the waters receded steadily. He waited for forty days and opened the window he had made in the ark and send out a raven. He was disappointed because the raven never returned; a bodily action without any gain.  
※ **【Wait to be revived】** 2-5 The prophet saw spiritually the vision of revival throughout the land. Israel was the vineyard of God. He waters it continually and guards it day and night. He cares for His people lest the enemy will harm them. (Ps 127:1) Again God did not forget the family of Noah and all the living creatures that were shut in the ark; only trust and wait till the end and they saw God's glory.
2. **【Die completely and rest】** 8-12 Thereafter Noah waited quietly. Every seven days he sent out a dove. He sent three doves one after the other and each time the dove implied the condition of the recession of the flood. The first one returned to the ark because there was water over all the surface of the earth and it could find no place to set its feet. The second dove returned with a freshly plucked olive leaf in its beak showed that everything has revived and there was hope. The third dove did not return and he knew that the water had receded from the earth. God wanted to refine Noah till he rested and died completely, and that was the time to come out of the ark.  
※ **【Take root and bear fruit】** 6 God's people were refined for a long time and their live rooted in God. So God helped them to dealt with the enemy and set fir on the briers and thorns in the vineyard. Then Israel would bud and blossom and filled all the world with fruit to become a blessing for all the land. There were briers and thorns in Noah's heart. So God wanted him to learn to persevere and wait in the ark, take root in life, wait to come out and bear fruit throughout the world.

### **C. Refined and return, give thanks and worship to complete the mission**

Give thanks (Gen 8:13-22) – Worship (Isa 27:7-13)

1. **【Refined and come out】** 13-16 Noah being shut in the ark was only for a short while. The purpose was to refine him. He waited till the twenty-seventh day of the second month and the earth was completely dry.

The flood within Noah's heart also receded, then God told him and his family and every living creature to come out of the ark. God is faithful; any time we are refined, any time God will open our door. God's will be accomplished.

- ✧ **【Refined and return】** 7-11 There is a limit to God's discipline on His people just like the family of Noah being shut in the ark, both of which is out of love. God struck those He loves different from other nations; He leaves some leeway for them. His purpose is to refine them from evil so they will reject the idols and do not indulge. (1 Pe 1:14) In that day the Lord will gather up the Israelites one by one and thresh so they will return to their land and live forever.
- 2. **【Multiply and increase in number】** 17-19 God ordered Noah to bring out the whole family and all the living creatures from the ark and multiply on the earth and increase in number. God's desire is to bless all the earth and the people He loves so their lives may become abundant to take up the mission of the gospel and lead all the people to return to God.
- ✧ **【Revive all the earth】** 12-13 The returned children also have an important mission – to lead the whole earth to know God and worship Him. On one side is to wait to come out, multiply and increase in number while on the other side is to be refined and come out to revive the land. In that day a great trumpet will sound. Those who were perishing in Assyria and those who were exiled in Egypt will return. Christ will reign and His kingdom comes. All nations will come to worship the Lord. For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.
- 3. **【Sacrifice a pleasing offer】** 20-21 Noah and the family had exited from death and entered life and received God's wonderful deliverance. They experienced God's great salvation and unfailing love. Once he was out of the ark, he built an altar and sacrificed offerings, gave thanks and worshiped God. He sacrificed consecrated and pleasing offerings which were well accepted by God and satisfied His heart.
- ✧ **【Thanksgiving and worship】** 13 God called back His people and they would give thanks and worship the Lord on the holy mountain with a devoted heart same as Noah who sacrificed the pleasing offerings. On one side is that they barely escaped death with one's life after the roaring flood; the other side is resurrection from death after long period of exile. (Eze 37:1-14) They all received such great blessing and offered heartfelt thanks, giving praise and offering to God! (Heb 13:15)
- 4. **【The universe is restored】** 22 Noah built an altar and offered his sacrifice after he came out of the ark. God promised He would never again curse the



ground. The universe is restored to normal with the four seasons in order without cease. The Creator still cares for everything in the universe so mankind may enjoy the abundance and peace of God.

- ※ **【Everything is restored】** 13 The elect was restored and Christ is enthroned in the glorious kingdom. A new atmosphere appeared on the land, everything renew and flourishing. Satan is jailed in the Abyss and everything in the universe will be restored to the normal sequence. The people will worship on the holy mountain!

**Ps 8 / Rev 10:8 Main theme: Humbly desire for the Holy word, know the Lord's name and everything will submit**

- The Lord's name / The Holy book

The voice in heaven has commanded again to eat the Holy book. The little scroll is the book of the books. We ought to watch out on the prophecy which is good.

- (1) **【Drink the spiritual mil and know the Lord's name】** 1-2 The Lord's name is the Lord's Word (Rev 19:13), The Lord is willing to reveal to those who are humble and desire like children, to silence the foe and reveal God's glory. (Lk10:19, 21-22)
- (2) **【Desire and obey the word and have the authority】** 3-9 Being cared by God and are given glory and honor, man is made ruler over everything so everything is under his feet, just like Joshua was able to command the sun and the moon and Daniel could block the mouth of the lion.

**Central point of the wheels: Desire fervently for the Holy word, wait to take root and bear fruit among the land.**

Dear Lord, May you control the gliding serpent and the coiling serpent in my heart, so I may wait till the end, completely die to my old self, be refined and revive to bear fruit among the land.

**Gen 9 / Isa 28**

**Main theme: Blessed are those who are watchful to keep the covenant and woe to him who is arrogant and indulge**

- Godly / indulge (blessed / woe)

Golden verses: Gen 9:14 Isa 28;16

A discussion on godliness and indulgence – on one side it concerned God made a covenant with the family of Noah who came out of the ark. He blessed them and wanted them to be godly and obedient, be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth. On the other it concerned Ephraim who was arrogant and indulging. He violated and broke the covenant and would be punished. This teaches us that we ought to be godly and keep the covenant lest we may fall

from grace.

**A. Those who obey will be blessed and reveal God's glory and woe to those who indulge**

Obey (Gen 9:1-7) – Violate the order (Isa 28:1-6)

1. **【Give thanks and be blessed】** 1-3 Once Noah came out of the ark, he gave thanks and offered to God. Then God blessed him and his sons. He told them to be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth. God commissioned them to multiply and increase upon it. God gave them meat for food to enjoy and gave them the authority to rule over all living creatures.
- ✖ **【Fail in grace and result in disaster】** 1 Woe! Ephraim lived on the mountain of Samaria and received God's grace in vain. He was not thankful and became a drunkard. They treated God's grace as a chance to indulge in lust and failed to live up to the commission which God set upon them. On one side was to undertake a new commission while the other was wasteful over the land and everything was ruined. The family of Noah was humble and grateful and God gave everything to their hands, full of authority and honor while Ephraim was proud and indulging. They boasted of their beautiful city as their wreath but was trampled like fading flower losing the honor and in disgrace.
2. **【God's prohibition】** 4-6 God ordered Noah:
  - (1) Prohibit eating blood: For the life of a creature is in the blood and it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life. (Lev 17:11) God set up Jesus as our atonement sacrifice which is the evidence of blood.  
“Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness”. (Heb 9:22)
  - (2) Prohibit shedding man's blood: Man was made according to the image of God with His glory and dignity. God desired man to strictly keep this lest the tragedy of Cain's killing and blood shedding reoccurred. He who oppresses the poor has shown contempt for their Maker. How much more than killing!. We ought to treasure life and save them from death.
- ✖ **【God's warning】** 2-4 Ephraim was proud and ungrateful. He despised God's order and the prophet's warning. Therefore their enemy would come like a hailstorm and a destructive wind, like a driving rain and a flooding downpour so what they boasted of as a wreath would be trampled. God blessed man after the flood and wanted man to strictly keep the order and obey to be blessed. Ephraim scorned at God's warning but was willing to follow man's order. Therefore they would surely encounter disaster.
3. **【God will account for those who shed blood】** 5 God has forbid man to shed others' blood; even in the ten commandments, they strictly state 'you shall

not murder' (Exo 20:13) which is God's firing laws! No matter animals or man, whoever sheds the blood of man, God will account for it. Whoever shed others' blood, his blood will be shed. This reveals that God is loving and righteous, a God who rewards.

- ※ 【God judged for the enemy had over-acted】 5-6 God is righteous and loving. He promised Ephraim mercy after judgment so they might look up to the salvation of God. God would be the beautiful wreath for the remnant of his people. God would turn back the strength of the enemy and sit in judgment to avenge for his people. After being captivated, refined and returned, they were filled with God's glorious image. As the enemy had killed and shed blood, overly ravaging, God would surely accounted for it.

**B. He who is godly and keeps the covenant will be favored but those who disdain and break the covenant will be punished**

Keep the covenant (Gen 9:8-17) – Break the covenant (Isa 28:14-22)

1. 【The faithful covenant】 8-16 God established his covenant with Noah and his descendants and with every living creature that came out of the ark. He promised never again will all life be cut off by the waters of a flood. He set the rainbow in the sky as the sign of the covenant to state clearly God's love reaches to the heavens and his faithfulness to the skies. The rainbow has seven colors representing the beauty and fullness of God's salvation. In Rev 4:3 the rainbow encircled the throne symbolizes God's faithfulness reaches to generations, He is a God who keeps his covenant of love.
- ※ 【A covenant of falsehood】 14-17 The rulers of Judah were self-deceiving and would not agree to establish the covenant with God. But they joined with men and convened with death. They had violated God's everlasting covenant, made a lie their refuge and falsehood their hiding place. They did not take God as their sure refuge but made an agreement with Egypt, thinking they could escape the attack of Assyria. In fact it was a covenant of falsehood which could not be trusted upon. Our mercy and faithful God established the rainbow in the sky as a sign of his covenant. Similarly, He laid a foundation stone in Zion, a precious cornerstone. But they would not trust in God. Their enemy came like hail and water sweeping away their lying refuge. Their result was self-deceiving and harming without a hiding place.
2. 【God's covenant stands firm】 16-17 When God sees the rainbow He remembers the covenant He made. God wanted Noah and his descendants to be godly and keep the covenant, never to violate lest they might lose God's blessings. We ought to remember forever and observe the better promises which Christ laid down by shedding his blood (Heb 8:6) never to

violate.

- ※ **【Man's covenant will be annulled】** 18-22 The rulers and people of Judah were faithless, did not keep the covenant and violated God's covenant. They made an agreement with Egypt and death. God would annul their agreement so the ungodly could not rest day and night because their enemy would capture unceasingly. The prophet warned the people to listen without mocking, otherwise severe punishment would come. We ought to honor God's graceful covenant and write His laws in our heart.

### **C. Be sure to listen in trembling lest we will be drunk and naked**

Naked (Gen ;20-29) – Fall down (Isa 28:7-13, 23-29)

1. **【Be drunk and naked】** 20-23 After Noah came out of the ark, he did not keep the covenant in trembling. Nor was he watchful before God. He planted a vineyard and drank to please himself resulting in drunkenness and naked. He was put to shame before his descendants and lost his witness. This also tested the different attitude of godliness of his three sons. Ham saw his father naked. Instead of covering him immediately, he scorned and criticized freely; Shem and Japheth walked in backward and covered their father. How godly and trembling!
- ※ **【Drunk and fell】** 7-13 The prophet turned to admonish the ungodly rulers of Judah. They coveted in feasting and staggered from wine. On one side was drunk and naked without witness and the side was drunk and fell, staggered when seeing visions, stumbled when rendering decisions resulting in broken to pieces, (Mt 21:44) a disgrace to God's name. They violated again and sinned repeatedly, would not repent in stubbornness. God would judge and punish so they would fall into the hands of the enemy.
2. **【God's counsel is wonderful】** 24-27 When Noah awoke, he gave his three children different prophecy according to their different response. Ham's vile character affected Canaan to be cursed, to be the lowest of slaves to his brothers. Finally the whole tribe was destroyed as their sins had reached its full measure. (Gen 15:16) Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem. Canaan would be the slave of Shem and Japheth. Japheth (extend) would live in the tents of Shem; the Gentiles would be blessed due to the elects. God's covenant would not be annulled. Shem was blessed because he was godly, trembling and he kept and listened to the covenant. Under the great plan of God's salvation, God chose the descendants of Shem, Abraham and his descendants, so all nations on earth would be blessed through them. Through Christ, all elects and Gentiles would receive salvation. How wonderful is God's plan!
- ※ **【God's wisdom is magnificent】** 23-29 The teaching of God towards his

people is based on wisdom, like a wise farmer would sow and harvest different seeds differently. Noah made different prophecy on his three sons, revealing God's different will when He chooses people and this clearly shows His deep love! God is wonderful in counsel and magnificent in wisdom! Only if his people will return completely, the mystery of God on the Israelites and Gentiles will be fulfilled (Rom 11:25-26)

**Ps 9 / Rev 10:9 Main theme: Eat up the holy scroll, destroy evil completely and proclaim the Lord's favor extensively**

- Eat up and proclaim extensively

Eat up the scroll, receive God's word, deny yourself to follow the Lord.

Though your flesh will suffer, your mouth will preach grace words so man will have life.

- (1) **【Rejoice and be grateful to proclaim the Lord】** 1-2 Do not hide the grace of God but willingly tell of the Lord.
- (2) **【The Lord destroy the enemy for me and sanctify me】** 3-7 The truth will sanctify me and destroy all my enemies, both inside and outside. The Lord will forever be my King.
- (3) **【The Lord is the refuge】** 8-10 Whoever seeks and trusts in the Lord, He will deliver and protect him.
- (4) **【Be sure to preach the salvation of the Lord】** 11-14 Encourage everyone to proclaim the Lord's favor to the world and tell of how God delivered me from the gates of death and declare his praises.
- (5) **【The wicked will return to the grave】** 15-17 The wicked do not trust in the Lord and they harm themselves and others.
- (6) **【The hope of the afflicted will not perish】** 18-20 The hope of the afflicted who were oppressed for keeping and proclaim the word will be fulfilled in God's time and the enemy will fall.

**Central point of the wheels: Keep the covenant firmly and do not indulge; eat the scroll and proclaim the salvation**

Dear Heavenly Father, may you let me eat up the scroll thoroughly, listen in trembling, be godly to keep your covenant, never to indulge and be arrogant, increase in number and accomplish the mission to spread the gospel.

**Gen 10 / Isa 29**

**Main theme: The hero of the world is meaningless but those who are humble and godly will rejoice**

**- Rebellion / hypocrisy (anti-God / fear God)**

Golden verses: Gen 10:32 Isa 29:17

A discussion of rebellion and hypocrisy – On one side it concerned the rebellious and anti-God nature of the worldly hero Nimrod. On the other side it

concerned the hypocritical and self-deceiving behavior of God's children. Those who are rebellious and anti-God will be punished. But God's children who have been punished ought to purge away the inner enemy, be humble and take discipline and revive. This teaches us not to be hypocritical and self-deceiving to sin against God, nor should we be rebellious and anti-God to run a path of destruction.

**A. Do not be hypocritical or drunk, those who are arrogant and anti-God will be punished**

Arrogant (Gen 10:1-14) – hypocritical (Isa 29:1-16)

1. **【Lose the godliness】** 1-5 God's intension on the descendants of Noah was to act according to God's will to be fruitful and increase in number and multiply on the earth to reveal God's glory and proclaim His name. But they gradually swerve His will. They lost the godliness of the ancestors and did not fear God and call upon Him. They only wanted to extend the borders and increase the power. They established their nation according to their own tribe and clan and forgot about the purpose of God's redemption.
  - ※ **【Lose the dignity】** 1-4 God's intension was on Jerusalem. He named her as Ariel (the lion of God) which ought to be filled with spiritual honor, majesty and power and according to God's will to lead all nations to know God. But now they have lost the spiritual dignity and blessing. They were besieged by the enemy's army on the verge of death. They in vainly bear a godly outward appearance but have lost the actual desire to be godly. They did not serve God according to His mind just like the ungodly descendants of Noah. No matter how they observe the feast and sacrifice year after year, they could not remove the wrath of God. Though the descendants of Noah established their nations, they ended in sins, were brought low and punished. Jerusalem would also be brought low, fall before their enemy and mumbled in wail. Thus the prophet sighed in distress.
2. **【Arrogant and self-deceiving】** 6-9 Cush the son of Ham was the father of Nimrod (the rebellious one), grew to be a mighty warrior on the earth, a man of celebrity of the generation, the ruler who rebelled against God. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord. Woe to him who openly went against God, was arrogant and proud, torturing and greedy, shedding the blood of man. Those who are arrogant and anti-God, do evil and self-deceiving, their result comes to nothing! Let us not learn from this world, pose oneself as hero, be arrogant and self-deceiving, but be humble, godly to love God and love man.
  - ※ **【Hypocritical and self-deceiving】** 1-16 The prophet strongly rebuked Jerusalem:
    - (1) Hypocritical and self-deceiving, honored God with their lips but their

hearts were far from Him, seeking pleasure and got drunk. The scroll was sealed before them and they know nothing.

- (2) Relied on man's intelligence
  - (3) Went to great depths to hide their plans from the Lord
  - (4) Quarreled with God and reversed the order of creation and being created. (Isa 45:9) They were like Nimrod, arrogant, hypocritical and self-deceiving. They had all turned against the Most High and Holy God.
3. **【The rebellious will fail】** 10-14 Not only was Nimrod rebellious, he was overweening ambitious. He had a wishful thinking to establish himself to be the ruler of a worldly alliance of anti-God. He created the first political power in history which was anti-God (Babylon) and he made Shinar (land of roaring) as his place of origin. He also established Erech and other kingdoms. Later on he established his kingdom in Assyria (the Nineveh city). This proved his wild ambition, was the shadow of the great sinner of anti-Christ. He dreamed of establishing the worldly kingdom – the kingdom of anti-Christ but it would be demolished in the end. (Mic 5:6, Rev 11:15) The Philistines, the descendants of Mizraim, the son of Ham were the feud of the Israelites. They were repeatedly punished severely by God. Only the Lord is King for ever and ever!
- ※ **【Those who go against God will be punished】** 5-8 The Assyrian was the rod of God's anger, the club of his wrath (Isa 10:5) through which God disciplined his children. When Jerusalem was besieged by her enemies on the moment of extreme urgency, God immediately punished Assyria and routed them, reflecting the faithfulness of God. The king of Assyria was arrogant and overweening ambitious just like Nimrod was rebellious against God. How could the ax raise itself above him who swings it? In a single day God would burn and consume Assyria like thorns and briers. God would come with thunder, earthquake, great noise, with windstorm and flames of a devouring fire to make every Nimrod of anti-God and those who attack Zion to result as such.

**B. Destroy the inner enemy by the Spirit, be humble and take discipline to revive**

Destroy the enemy (Gen 10:15-32) – Revive (Isa 29:17-24)

1. **【Remove all inner enemy】** 15-20 The descendants of Ham and the clans of Canaan scattered to live and were filled with idols and detestable adultery. Besides, the four cities of Sodom were also sinful and finally burnt by God. The sinful cravings always are against us, therefore we ought to put them to death by the Holy Spirit. (Rom 8:12-13)
- ※ **【Be humble to revive】** 17-21 The promise to revive would come, God

suddenly acted and they came to pass. In a very short time, Lebanon will be turned into a fertile field and the fertile field seem like a forest. (Isa 32:15) Once the Holy Spirit works, the deaf will hear, the blind will see. They humbly desire and the scroll is opened. Therefore once the Holy Spirit works, all power of violence, anti-God and detestable idols will be purged. Let us trust in the Holy Spirit to remove all inner enemies and inherit the spiritual heritance.

2. **【Honor God and be blessed】** 21-32 Fear God and be chosen by Him and even the descendants would be blessed. God chose from the sons of Shem Arphaxad. From his descendants God chose Abram to accomplish the great plan of redemption. Praise be to the Lord God of Shem!

※ **【Take discipline and be favored】** 21-32 God is the God who delivered Abram. He set apart the godly remnants from the swerving descendants of Jacob. They awoke and humbled and took discipline before God just like Shem was being chosen. God is the potter and we are the work of His hands. They had once failed and would honor God's name as holy. They would accept instruction and not be wayward in spirit and shameful. On one side is honor God and be blessed and the other is take discipline and be favored.

**Ps 10 / Rev 10:10 Main theme: Eat up the Holy book, discern the scheme of the enemy and rush to deliver the dying sheep**

**- Discern / The Holy Book**

If we will eat up the Holy word, bear a suffering mind, honor the word and proclaim it, our mouth will pour out graceful words sweeter than anything. When we suffer in the body we may call on the help from the Lord.

- (1) **【The wicked will hunt down】** 1-11 Those who love the Lord, honor His word and proclaim it are the target of the wicked man's hunt down. Far more poisonous is their plan to lie in wait to catch. (David fell into the trap of lust.)
- (2) **【Pray for the Lord to arise and destroy the enemy】** 12-18 God saw the trouble and grief of the enemy. Thus God would take it in hand and perish them but He would hear the cry of the oppressed and fulfill the desire of the afflicted. So all people would be relieved from the oppression and affliction to receive the joy of salvation!

**Central point of the wheels: Eat up the scroll, pray to remove all inner enemies and take discipline to revive**

Dear Lord, May You let me be in your light to know my nature of hypocrisy and rebellion. Let me eat up the scroll, be humble and take discipline to awake and revive.



## **Gen 11 / Isa 30**

**Main theme: Those who conspire and rebel will fall through but blessed are those who are contrite and return**

**- Against God / Rebellion (Chosen / return)**

Golden verses: Gen 11:7-8 Isa 30:15

A discussion on going against God and rebellion – On one side it concerned that mankind was wildly arrogant going against God. They conspired to create the city of Babel and the tower to make a name for themselves. On the other side it concerned that the people of Judah relied on the worldly power to form an alliance and rebel. They sought the help from Egypt and were put to shame and burst forth. This teaches us we ought to be humble to listen to God's teaching, do not conspire to go against God and do not form an alliance to rely on man. Seek righteousness, seek humility (Zep 2:3) and be contrite to return, obey and follow the Lord to go forward and receive the heavenly good land.

### **A. He who conspires, rebels will be disgraced and fall through**

God confused (Gen 11:1-9) – God shattered (Isa 30:1-14)

1. **【Conspire to go against God】** 1-4 “The Lord is on his heavenly throne. He observes the sons of men; his eyes examine them.” (Ps 11:4) After the flood mankind had a common speech and they were together. They chose to settle on a plain in Shinar (land of the roaring). They conspired to rebel and intended to go against the true God to the extreme. Below were their rebellious acts:

- (1) They built the city of Babel which was the first political authority of the world created by Nimrod in 10:10.
- (2) They made a tower that reached to the heavens to honor themselves and to make a name for themselves. This is the rebellion to the Most High and the Only God.
- (3) They rejected the will of God and did not obey God's order to scatter among the land. They relied on their own wisdom and strength to build the city of Babel and tower and confronted with God. They wishfully thought that man could win over the heaven, to break from the control of the Most High God which implied in advance that mankind would rebel against God in politics and the unity in religion.

※ **【Form an alliance to rebel】** 1-12 Woe, the obstinate children of Judah formed an alliance against God to an utmost level which could not be worse. Thus they heaped sin upon sin. Below were their rebellious acts:

- (1) They formed an alliance to go down to Egypt and sent envoys to bring them treasures so as to be under their protection.
- (2) They did not call upon and trust in God but relied on the help of Egypt.

- (3) They were rebellious and deceitful and went against the will of God. They hated the rebuke of the prophet. Thus God commanded the prophet to inscribe His words on a scroll to be an everlasting witness of their rebellion.
- (4) They loved false prophet, relied on oppression and depended on deceit. Their rebellion was the same as building the city of Babel and the tower to go against God!
2. **【Confuse and scatter】** 5-9 God came down to see what they had built. So he confused their language, corrupted their plot, crushed their dream and forced them to stop and scatter over all the earth. “Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain? .... The One enthroned in heaven laughs, .... You will dash them to pieces like pottery.” (Ps 2:1-4, 9)
- ※ **【Completely shattered】** 12-14 The house of Judah did not trust in God’s saying and allied with others thus heaping sin upon sin. The Lord kept a record of sins, who could stand? They conspired rebellion like a high wall, cracked and bulging that collapses suddenly in an instant. They would be in shame like those who conspired to build the city of Babel and came to nothing. Egypt was the Rahab the Do-Nothing, like a monster in the sea. His nature was weak like the tower of Babel unable to stand a blow. God would crush the dream completely. This teaches us not to be conceited and go against God but trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.

**B. Blessed is he who follows the Lord and advances forward and he who is contrite and repent will be favored**

Follow the Lord (Gen 11:10-32) – Return (Isa 30:15-33)

1. **【Obey and press forward】** 10-32 Praise to be the God of Shem. His plan of salvation will come to fulfill! God chose Arphaxad, the descendants of Shem and Abram from the descendants of Arphaxad to prepare the coming of Jesus Christ. After the flood, mankind still lived under the wrath of God in trouble and sorrow and they quickly passed. When they failed after the building of the tower of Babel, God chose Abram and called him with favor so he might obey and press forward by faith and accomplish the will of God!
- ※ **【Repent and rest】** 15-17 God called his people to repent and rest and do not struggle to find a path for themselves. The rulers of Judah were not willing to obey to rest and trust in God. Instead they fled on horses and sought the help of Egypt. As a result because of the attack of Assyria, Judah became poorer. Abram was called to press forward together with his barren wife to inherit the land of Canaan. Though he had no son, he rested and trusted in God. He walked a path of faith, obeyed to go forward and

repented in rest!

2. **【Abandon the idols】** 31 Abram was born in Ur of the Chaldeans. That place was filled with idols and false gods, living under the authority of Satan in darkness and sorrow! Abram unexpectedly abandoned the idols and returned to the true God, therefore the merciful God called on him to run a blessed and godly path.
  - ※ **【Be contrite and repent】** 18-26 Though the people were rebellious, God was patient and waited to show His grace. God gave them the bread of adversity and the water of affliction to lead them to the way. God personally taught them so that after the rebuke, weeping and confession, they received compassion, healing and revival. Just like Abram, they walked a blessed road and everything worked for the good of God and enjoyed the abundance of the harvest. God will remove the arrogant and darkness will be away. God will be the light of his people. Abram abandoned the idols to follow God. Though he experienced the bread of adversity and the water of affliction and the teacher would hide no more. He followed every step and was with God in His light!
3. **【Go forward without stopping】** 31 From the start Abram did not follow the Lord wholeheartedly; he just followed his father Terah and left his place of origin. Due to hardship on the road and the hindrance of his love ones, he stopped in Haran. God's will was to Canaan but he was in Haran. As he was not in the will of God, he did not have true happiness. Until his father died, God called him for the second time. Then he left his father's household and went to where God instructed him to Canaan. God's will was not only to leave the secular idols but also to leave his affectionate household, to obey the Lord and go forward without stopping in the middle till he reached the everlasting good land.
  - ※ **【Repent to enjoy the everlasting joy】** 27-33 God's wrath would come to all the nations which were against Him so they would end in everlasting destruction like the result of the tower of Babel. Topheth which represented the fire of hell had long been prepared to burn them down. All redeemed children ought to repent and go up to the mountain of the Lord, the Rock of Israel. They would sing and celebrate and rejoice in the glorious kingdom of Christ! Therefore we must cut off completely from the secular bondage, follow the Lord to go forward without stopping, without drawback and to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward. (Lk 9:57-62 Php 3:13-14)

**Ps 11 / Rev 10:11 Main theme: Trust in the Lord and obey His word after the trial for the Lord will use mightily**

### **- Trial / Use mightily**

Eat up the scroll and stand firm in the word after the trial for God will use mightily. He will use and re-use and all peoples will be blessed through him.

- (1) **【Trust in the Lord, obey the word and do not fall into the trap】**1-3 Trust in the Lord and obey the word, set the foundation on the Rock so you will not be hit by the arrow of the wicked to flee to other mountains. For if you depart from God's word, the foundation will be destroyed and all work will be worthless.
- (2) **【God examines and God tries】** 4-5 God in heaven will examine and try, and seek for those who love Him and obey his word to fulfill His will but God's soul hates the wicked.
- (3) **【God punishes the wicked but reward the good】**6-7 The wicked will drink the cup of God's wrath but for the righteous, their cup of blessing is full! They will see his face and prophesy to many peoples, nations, languages and kings. They will be mightily used by the Lord, be re-use and re-use, the kindness is greater than earlier.

**Central point of the wheels: Do not rebel but follow the Lord, God re-use after the trial**

Dear Lord, May you let me abandon the idols, be contrite to repent, obey in humility and run the faithful blessed path without stopping and drawing back.

### **Gen 12 / Isa 31**

**Main theme: Trust in God and blessings to all peoples but woe to those who rely on himself and man**

#### **- Obey / Rebel (Rely on God / rely on man)**

Golden verses: Gen 12:1-2 Isa 31:5

A discussion on obedience and rebellion – on one side it concerned Abram's faith to run an obedient blessed path while the other side concerned the Jews who saw by sight and relied on power. They ran a rebellious road and woe was the result. Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be shaken but endures forever. (Ps 125:1) This teaches us not to be rebellious or rely on man's help. Nor do we lie when we falter and lose our witness. We ought to learn from failure and awake to return to the blessed road.

**A. Blessed is he who follows by faith and obeys but woe to the rebellious**

Believe and trust in God (Gen 12:1-9) – beg and rely on man (Isa 31:1-3)

1. **【Obey and be blessed】** 1-5 After Abram's father died, God called him for the second time to leave his father's household and go to the land He would show him. (Ac 7:2-4) God promised to bless him, to make him into a great nation and make his name great. He listened and obeyed according to God's

instruction and brought his wife, his nephew and all his possessions to Canaan, up the road to obedience and blessings.

- ※ **【Woe to the rebellious】** 1 The rebellious people went down to Egypt for help. Woe to those who run a worldly road. The result was lost of all blessings which God promised to their forefathers. One side is blessing for the obedient while the other is woe to the rebellious.
- 2. **【By faith】**1-5 Abram ran a path of faith. When he obeyed and went out, he did not know where he was going. Then he went to Canaan. Though he did not have even a foot of ground or son, he accepted God's promise by faith – that Canaan would be his and his descendants' inheritance. By faith he made his home in the promise land like a stranger in a foreign country. (Ac 7:5 Heb 11:8-9)
- ※ **【By sight】** 1 The Jews did not trust in the Almighty God and by sight they went down to Egypt relying on the worldly power. (2 Cor 5:7) They preferred to rely on man and not on God. They thought Egypt was strong in military power and would help them. On one side was trust in God while the other was relied on man. "It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in princes." (Ps 118:8-9) The road of the cross is a road of faith. "The righteous will live by faith." (Rom 1:17)
- 3. **【Blessings to all peoples】**1-5 Abram listened and obeyed God. So not only he himself was blessed, his descendants were blessed, even all peoples on earth would be blessed through him. Everyone who has left everything for His sake will receive a hundred times in this age and in the age to come, eternal life; (Mt 19:27-29) even all peoples will have the eternal blessing through us.
- ※ **【Woe together】** 2-3 The children were stubborn and rebellious so God would arise up against the house of the wicked, against those who help evildoers. They themselves were in trouble and all the people were in trouble and also caused disaster to Egypt who had helped them. All perished together.
- 4. **【Every word would be fulfilled】**1-5 God is a merciful God, a faithful God. Whatever blessings He promised Abram, they were fulfilled. God's words are as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, will not return to Him empty. (55:10-11)
- ※ **【Will never fail】** 2-3 God is a righteous God, a jealous God. Whatever judgment the prophet proclaimed to the people would never fail. He would send disaster to them without regret which showed God's most high authority. God forms the light and creates darkness, He brings prosperity and creates disaster; He does all these things. Apart from Him there is no God. (Isa 45:6-7)

5. **【How can we be blessed if we follow man】** 4-5 Abram was faithful and trusted in God. He obeyed to follow and was blessed. Though his nephew Lot went together to Canaan, he did not trust and followed God but after Abram. How could he be blessed?
  - ※ **【How can we receive help from man】** 3 The Jews did not imitate from their forefathers and trust wholeheartedly on the only God. Instead they relied on horses, chariots and the flesh of Egypt and did not look to the arm of the Almighty God. On one side, he followed man, how could he be blessed. On the other side the people relied on man, how could they receive help? We ought to follow and trust in the Lord wholeheartedly for the rest of our lives, and then we will certainly be blessed.
6. **【God appeared】** 6-7 The first stop Abram went to Shechem (diligence) and God appeared to him and promised to give the land of Canaan to him and his descendants. He accepted in trust and also gave thanks to worship. He built an altar in Shechem and witnessed the only God, communicated with Him, went close to and called on Him.
  - ※ **【God warned】** 1-3 The Jews relied on the great strength of the horsemen of Egypt but did not look to the Holy One of Israel or sought help from the Lord. Therefore the prophet followed his order to warn them. Abram trusted in God and God appeared to him. He built an altar to sacrifice and stayed close to God and communicated with Him. But the people were far from God and cut off the relationship with God. The Egyptians are men and not God; their horses are flesh and not spirit. When God stretched out His hand, both would perish together.
7. **【Press forward on the spiritual path】** 8-9 From Shechem Abram moved to Bethel, (the temple of God, the door of heaven) and there he built an altar and called on the name of the Lord again. His life advanced step by step and everywhere he went he built an altar and sacrificed. He united with God and advanced upward glorifying God and witnessed Him.
  - ※ **【Fall behind step by step】** 1-3 The people were ungrateful and wayward and became the house of the wicked. They retrogressed and ran downward losing God's grace and their witness was shameful to God's name. Abram loved God and obeyed His word and his life advanced continuously. He pressed forward in his spiritual life filled with witness.

**B. Do not be afraid and do not lie, abandon the idols for God will protect**  
 God interfered (Gen 12:10-20) – God delivered (Isa 31:4-9)

1. **【Test of faith】** 10 While following God's path, Abram was not always smooth sailing but he experienced a lot of hardship and hindrance. So after the test of faith, it was of greater worth. (1 Pe 1:7) There was famine in the

land of Canaan and the spirit of Abram and his wife was also in famine. They saw by sight and focused on the circumstance and were afraid and lost the faith. Without prayer and request they went down to Egypt hoping to take refuge. They had forgotten to rely on the Almighty God and look to God as their bounty.

- ※ **【The discipline of God's love】**4 God's love for His people never changes. Similarly God's discipline is severe so that they may understand deeper of His love (Pro 3:11-12, Heb 12:7-13) which is to deliver them. (Gen 12:5) God's punishment on the people was like a lion growls over his prey. Though there were many who went against Him, it did not change the attitude of God's judgment. Abram encountered the famine, the people were punished; these came from the unchanging love of God to refine them so their faith would grow to rely solely on God and be more blessed.
- 2. **【Was nearly defiled】** 11-16 While Abram was staying in Egypt as a foreigner, he was afraid that his beautiful wife would be robbed and he might be killed. Thus he agreed with his wife to address each other as brother and sister so his life might be sustained. He did not rely wholeheartedly on God and thought himself clever. As a result his wife was brought to the Pharaoh's palace and nearly defiled and almost destroyed God's plan!
- ※ **【On the verge of destruction】** 4 The holy city was besieged by the enemy and it was on the verge of death or destruction! It was like Sarai being brought to the palace of Pharaoh, nearly being defiled! Due to the weakness of Abram, Satan vainly attempted to destroy God's plan to let Sarai be defiled. The enemy also made use of the weakness of the house of Judah to destroy Jerusalem so the whole nation might be perished. In distress they called on God and the Lord Almighty would come down to contend for his people and to rescue Sarai in danger!
- 3. **【God came to interfere personally】** 17 God's will would not be destroyed! The Almighty God came to interfere personally and sent great disasters to the family of Pharaoh and protected Sarai not to be defiled.
- ※ **【God would rescue personally】**5 God would hover overhead like the birds (Mt 23:37) to shield and rescue Jerusalem so the great army of Assyria who came to attack would be routed. How God 'passed over' to rescue Jerusalem; similarly He protected Sarai miraculously. God interfered and punished Pharaoh and Assyria and sent disasters on them.
- 4. **【Disciplined and awoke】** 18 Abram lied because he was afraid to die, conversely his wife was taken away and fell in distress. He lost the witness among the foreigners and was rebuked by Pharaoh. He then awoke and returned to God.

- ※ **【Rejected the idols】** 6-7 The people were deeply rebellious against the Lord. They made idols and fell into sin. God appealed to them to reject the idols and return to Him. Abram treasured his life and feared death and treated his life as an idol and became anxious. Then he awoke and returned to the promised land. When God's people rejected the idols of silver and gold, God would make the Assyrian army fail without fighting.
5. **【The everlasting Rock】** 19-20 God was Abram's everlasting Rock. He was abounding in love and made him leave Egypt through Pharaoh. He returned to Bethel and lived forever in God and was blessed again. He would not thought himself clever again and lead a life of failure. Pharaoh gave orders to send him and his wife and everything on his way.
- ※ **【The stronghold of the enemy】** 8-9 Due to God's interference, the Assyrian army fell by a sword. The stronghold which the Assyrian relied on would fall because of terror and even their commanders panicked. Only the Lord was Abram and Jerusalem's everlasting Rock. This teaches us not to lie because of terror. Nor should we rely on man because of terror. You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast. (Isa 26:3-4)

**Ps 12 / Rev 11:1 Main theme: God's word will measure and the godly and faithful to the Lord will be protected.**

**- God's word / A measuring rod**

God's word is a measuring rod (Isa 8:20). The temple of God, the altar (sacrifice and work) and the worshipers there would be measured. Those not according to standard would be in vain.

- (1) **【There is no godly and faithful man】** 1-4 Everyone flatters and speaks with deception. This is really the coming of the danger of the final days.
- (2) **【God will protect those who are godly and obey the word】** 5-8 Everyone who wants to live a godly life will be persecuted. But God will protect them away from trials and shield them forever, never to allow the lowly wicked to do what they want. The true children of God will suffer on earth, but in God, no one can take away their real peace.

**Central point of the wheels: Measure with God's word and do not rebel; blessed are the godly and obedient**

Dear Lord, may you make me never to be rebellious to follow the customs of the day and look to man's word. Let me obey to follow you and press forward by faith to inherit the promised blessings.

**Gen 13 / Isa 32**

**Main theme: Great blessings to him who obeys the word and is humble to give way; and woe to those are complacent, live in pleasures and contend**

**- Wise / Stubborn (humble to give way / righteous)**



Golden verses: Gen 13:14-15 Isa 32:15

A discussion of humility to give way and complacency – On one side it concerned Abram who did not contend on the worldly belongings. He was humble to give way and triumphed like a wise man. So he was blessed by God with the good land and offsprings. On the other side it concerned the complacency and sinful people of Judah. They would be like stubborn man in disaster. We ought to be contrite and depart from sin, till the Spirit is poured upon us from on high and then we will be revived and receive the promised blessings.

**A. Do not contend and do not be complacent but remove the veil and our spirit will awake**

Noble (Gen 13:1-13) – stubborn (Isa 32:1-14)

1. **【Return to Bethel】** 1-4 After the failure in Egypt, Abram was contrite and disciplined. He brought his whole family up from Egypt to Bethel. To live in Bethel is to live in God and lead a faithful life, call on God's name, be close to Him and revive the spiritual worship to delight in God.
- ✳ **【To enjoy rest】** 1-2 The life of the prophet Isaiah was like living in Bethel. In his prophecy he saw the Messiah ruled over the kingdom, doing what was right and just and reigned over the people. After the judgment, the people reigned on earth with the Messiah by justice. (Rev 5:9-10) When Abram went down to Egypt, through punishment he also learnt justice and thereafter he would honor God as the King in all his actions. Christ is the people's refuge and shelter. Abram returned to Bethel, into the refuge to shield off from the tempest just like a weary man enjoying rest under a big rock. His thirsty spirit was filled with water and true grace.
2. **【Covered by the veil】** 5-6 Though Lot (the veil) followed Abram and came up from Egypt, he ultimately followed man and not God. His heart was covered by wealth and benefit. He was separated with God by a veil and did not know Him. (2 Cor 3:16-18) He represented the worldly Christians. He got riches from Abram, with flocks and herds. But the land could not support them. For his personal interest, Lot did not give in an inch and did not respect his uncle.
- ✳ **【Awake and be blessed】** 3-5 The just King rose up and brought spiritual changes to the people. They did not rebel like Lot being covered by the worldly veil. But their hearts were awakened and no longer were closed. They delighted in the Lord's instruction and understood God's will. The mind of the rash was also opened by the Holy Spirit to know and understand and speak to witness God. Thus the right is clearly identified from wrong; no longer will the fool be called noble. The mind of Lot was covered and he was mean and foolish. He was a great contrast to Abram's

respectability and nobility.

3. **【Humble to give way and do not contend】**7-9 Abram had always been rich by God. He confirmed God was his everything. Therefore increase in wealth had never been in his mind. Though his servants contended with the servants of Lot, he gave way and did not contend. As a senior, he set himself as an example and did not mind about the gain or loss. He exhibited good witness in front of the Canaanites. Faced with the crucial test of personal interest and family ties, Abram decided to part with Lot and suggested the following:

- (1) Let us not have any quarreling between you and me;
- (2) Let us not have any quarreling between your herdsmen and mine, for we are brothers;
- (3) Let us part company to avoid future contention. He let Lot choose his own piece of land.

※ **【Set a noble plan】** 6-8 When the people awoke, they no longer were scoundrel but be noble. Lot was like a scoundrel without God in his eyes. Therefore he acted perversely. Like a scoundrel he plotted wicked plan and was finally punished. Nobles are highly respected like Abram who was godly and selfless, willing to humble and deny himself, never quarrel and only did noble acts. He went after the heavenly, eternal possession. He seemed to have lost the world but he received everlasting blessings before God. He was a wise man ascending the path of life (Pro 15:24), far away from the worldly quarrel and greed. How blessed is he!

4. **【A greedy choice】** 10-13 Lot looked up and saw the well watered plain of the Jordan, like the Garden of Eden. Without mercy, he chose the whole piece of plain. Thereafter he gradually moved to Sodom which was sinning greatly against the Lord. He blindly followed the sinful world. Lot as a junior did not care about any family ties. Under the prerequisite of the conflict of interest, he only cared for his own interest and made a risky decision for his life. He also exposed explicitly his nature of greed.

※ **【Follow after greed and complacency】** 9-14 Once again the prophet warned the lavish and complacent women of Judah (Isa 3:16-4:1) that great disaster would come. A sorrowful result would come to Jerusalem due to the company of their adultery and the corruption of the rulers. They were still complacent and felt secure without notice of the warning. By the twinkling of the eyes they would beat their breasts for the lost of the pleasant fields and the fruitful vines. The land was filled with thorns and briars. The holy city became desolate. Lot was also complacent and enjoying his life, filled with the thorns and briars of Sodom, choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures. One day joy would become disaster and

distress and in the end the result was loss of man and wealth.

**B. God appeared and the Spirit poured to give the good land and revival**

Promise (Gen 13:14-18) – The Holy Spirit (Isa 32:15-20)

1. **【God appeared to promise】** 14-17 Abram allowed his nephew to choose the whole plain of Jordan. It looked like Abram suffered losses and Lot took the advantage. However God blessed him far more than everything on earth. After Lot parted from him and when he had triumphed over the tests, God appeared to him in his vision. He told him to lift up his eyes and looked north and south, east and west. All the land that he saw God would give to him and his offspring. (1 Cor 2:9) God also promised that his offspring be like the dust of the earth. He also told him to go and walk through the length and breadth of the land to inherit the land of Canaan. The uplift of the eyes of Abram and Lot were definitely different; one saw the heavenly and eternal while the other was worldly and temporary. (2 Cor 4:18)  
※ **【When the Spirit pours everything will revive】** 15 After God's people were refined, God promised the Holy Spirit would pour from on high. This is the spiritual blessing which all the worldly riches cannot be compared. When the Holy Spirit pours, the desolate desert becomes a fertile field and instantly the fertile field seems like a forest. When the Holy Spirit works, everything changes. On one side was God appeared and promised the good land while the other was God promised to bestow the Holy Spirit to pour.
2. **【Up to Hebron】** 18 Abram continued to pursue before God and had blessings upon blessings. His spiritual path went from Bethel and up to Hebron (friendship, fertile), his life allied with God. Every new place he went, he would build an altar and witness before the Gentiles. He would call on God's name and glorify Him. Abram was blessed and he also brought blessings to his surrounding people.  
※ **【Peace and be blessed】** 16-20 God promised that the Holy Spirit would be poured from on high and revival would come. Everywhere was blooming and flourishing. God's children would enjoy peace and joy under righteousness and justice. Just like Abram, he reached the spiritual peak and lived in Hebron and enjoyed the unity in God with peace and joy. In his life time he pursued righteousness and justice, honored God and loved God. The Holy Spirit came to destroy all sins reflecting the effect of righteousness. God's people would live in secure homes just like living in Hebron. They would sow seed by every stream and let their cattle and donkeys range free enjoying the happiness of good harvest! When God's people enjoyed the peace and joy, God would let hail to punish the nations who were arrogant and against God and made their city level completely. As Lot craved for the sinful live of Sodom, he would be punished by God

and be captured with Sodom.

**Ps 13 / Rev 11:2 Main theme: There is a time for suffering but those who pray watchfully to obey the word will receive goodness**

**- A time / Goodness**

- (1) **【There is a time for suffering】** 1-2 When darkness overrule and the Holy people are trampled, do not fall because of the Lord. Always remember that the Lord will never forget us. There is a time for suffering. This calls for the faith and patient endurance on the part of the saints.
- (2) **【Pray that we may be alert and steadfast】** 3-4 If we sleep and falter, we will lose and be put to shame.
- (3) **【Trust in God's unfailing love】** 5-6 If we trust in God, obey His word and persevere till the end, we will be give goodness and joy.

**Central point of the wheels: Do not contend and do not be complacent but pray watchfully to await for the revival**

Dear Lord, May you help me to abandon all secular greed and wait for the pouring of the Holy Spirit. So I may inherit your promise and the gospel mission to prepare for the coming of the revival!

**Gen 14 / Isa 33**

**Main theme: It is far better to honor God and hate sin than to love the world for the sinful will be captivated**

**- Be warrior / Act righteously (To rescue man / To live with God)**

Golden verses: Gen 14:18-20 Isa 33:6

A discussion of acting righteously and seizing back the captives – on one side it concerned the fight between the four kings and the five kings to punish Lot who lived in Sodom and was reluctant to leave it. God restored the captivated Lot through Abram's trained men in Hebron and overcame the four kings. The other side concerned the prophet's plea on God for mercy to deliver the people from the enemy.

**A. Do not love the world but honor God and ask for mercy lest we may be captured**

Be greedy for the world (Gen 14:1-13 up) – Cry for mercy (Isa 33:1-12)

1. **【Punished for great and evil sin】** 1-4 The five nations with Sodom as the representative who sinned greatly against the Lord (Gen 13:13) would certainly be punished. The five kings had been subject to Kedorlaomer for twelve years and finally betrayed and went against him. This instigated the four kings to unite and fight. The Lord is a jealous and avenging God. He will not leave the guilty unpunished. Who can withstand his indignation? (Na 1:2-6)

※ **【Those who betray and harm others will be in trouble】** 1 Assyria was only

a tool of God to punish the wicked; (Isa 10:5) but he was arrogant and over treated God's people. Thus he would be punished like the worst of evil Sodom. The prophet clearly stated woe to them. Assyria who had been betraying and destroying would be betrayed and destroyed. God is righteous. The five kings sinned greatly and betrayed the four kings, so God punished the five kings through the four kings.

2. **【Fall into sleep without waking】** 5-7 There were a lot of contention between the nations. The fight between the four kings and the five kings was the will of God for the purpose of disciplining the covetous Lot. He was living in Sodom enjoying his complacent life. The rumor of the fight did not make him awake and be disciplined. He still drifted along and sought momentary ease and did not awake.
  - ※ **【Take the chance to plead】** 2 The prophet saw the fate of the enemy. So before God's voice of wrath started, he begged for His strength every morning. Great calamity was over the head and Lot was still not awake nor did he plead fervently. How could he receive the deliverance of God?
3. **【The result was miserable】** 8-12 Success and failure do not count on the size of the army but rests with the Lord. (Pro 21:31) The result of the fight between the four kings and the five kings was the five kings failed. They escaped awkwardly and fell into the tar pits and died sorrowfully. In an instant their joy turned to sorrow and all blessings turned to suffering!
  - ※ **【Honor God and rest】** 8-12 The nations were scared and scattered due to the majestic voice of God. There was no peace in Sodom where Lot lived. Due to the wrath of God, the nations did not have peace. Only those who fear God would be the sure foundation for their times with a rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge. Lot took the worldly possession as his treasure and in the end was all captured. We ought to learn from Abraham, fear the Lord as the key to his treasure during their life time and sure foundation will come.
4. **【Everything turn to nothing by an instant】** 12 Lot had long been living in Sodom. He had fattened himself in the day of slaughter. Unexpectedly disaster came and what he stored for himself turned to nothing and flew off to the sky like an eagle. (Pro 23:4-5) The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil and many have wandered from the faith and pierced with grief.
  - ※ **【Burnt to nothing】** 10-12 The plot of Assyria was only chaff. Though he sent out destroying rage to God's people, it would be like the blazing fire and destroyed himself. The nations were also in the consuming fire. The Lord, Redeemer of Israel would be lifted up. Assyria was arrogant and against God, without repenting, same as Sodom (burning) and Gomorrah (a ruin heap) would be both ruined and burnt by God. All the plot of the

- enemy and the dream of Lot were like straw and chaff, all burnt to nothing.
5. **【Ask help from God】** 13U Lot and everything of his were all captured in an instant. His whole family faced a hopeless situation. One who had escaped went to report to Abram for help which was to ask God for help.
  - ※ **【Look to man's help】** 7-9 The brave men and envoys of Judah wept bitterly because they failed to beg to the enemy for peace. Therefore the nation and the land were deserted and wasted away because they relied on man's help and took refuge from the Gentiles. They did not look to God wholeheartedly and in return was ravaged by the enemy.

**B. Refined by the fire and become righteous and hate sin, thus the captured was restored**

Trained men (Gen 14:13-16) – Refine (Isa 33:13-16)

1. **【Secure in the Lord】** 13 The four kings fought with the five kings and flames of battle raging everywhere. Abram lived in Hebron – the spiritual peak, which was living in the Lord in security. He enjoyed the heavenly joy and peace and the threat of war would not disturb him for he was alert constantly and worry for the nephew who was greedy for Sodom.
- ※ **【Terror outside the Lord】** 13-14 The prophet appealed to those who were far away and near to listen with care and acknowledge God's power and majesty. However, the sinful and ungodly still ignored the warning of the prophet. They would not be able to stand. On one side was living in Hebron, secured in the Lord; while the other, though in Zion was filled with terror outside God. Only he who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. A thousand may fall at your side but the disaster will not come near you. (Ps 91:1-7)
2. **【The triumphal trained men】** 14-16 Abram lived in Hebron. Not only he himself had close fellowship with God, he was continuously being blessed and edified. He also trained an army of warriors. They lived on the mount of Hebron. Everyday they were trained to be godly and refined by fire (Mal 3:2-3), died to the old self and became the trained men ready to fight. When Abram heard his nephew was captured, he immediately led his troops to defeat the four kings and recovered all the captured.
- ※ **【To dwell with everlasting burning】** 14-16 Our God is the consuming fire, the fire of judgment (Deu 4:24 Heb 12:29) and the everlasting fire, righteous and holy. (2 Pe 1:4) The trained men of Abram who lived in Hebron with the God of burning fire had the following requirements:
  - (1) Walks righteously: has close communication with God and obeys the word in trembling;
  - (2) Speaks what is right: godly and perfect;
  - (3) Rejects gain from extortion: lives in the light;

(4) Keeps his hand from accepting bribes: has no desire and contention with the world;

(5) Stops his ears against plots of murder: sets apart to be holy and hate evil as his enemy;

(6) Shuts his eyes against contemplating evil: dies to everything.

This is the man who will dwell on the heights. God will be his strong fortress, his bread will be supplied and water will not fail him. They are refined from the burning fire to be trained fighter, with a suffering mind, abundant life, bold to kill the enemy, attack to overcome the enemy troops and restore the captured Lot.

### **C. A complete victory to break away from the enemy and be blessed and glorious**

Triumph (Gen 14:17-24) – break away from the enemy (Isa 33:17-24)

1. **【A complete victory】** 17, 21-24 Abram defeated the four kings and came back in victory. Though the worldly king of Sodom came to greet him, he was not moved by the worldly honor. King Sodom generously gave all that Abram had restored, but he rejected them all, not even a thread or the thong of a sandal. Abram was able to resist the worldly test and not soiled by a speck of dust, triumphing completely – a representative of the trained man of this age!

※ **【Forever steadfast】** 17-20 The prophet prophesied that under the salvation of God, His people would completely be freed from the oppression and violence of the enemy. Zion would forever stand steadfast. If we rely on the Holy Spirit and overcome the world by the cross, we will be steadfast. Nothing will cause us trouble. (Gal 6:14, 17) The Lord would be our Mighty One. No mighty ship would sail them and the enemies who oppressed them would not be seen any more. They would be refined by the fire and their sins be cleansed and would not see the shadow of the enemy just like Abram's heart triumphed and broke away from the power of sin. God would be their everything and they would enjoy the everlasting peace.

2. **【Sacrificed a tenth when blessed】** 18-20 When Abram overcame and returned, he was greeted by the heavenly king of Salem Melchizedek (king of righteousness) and priest of God Most High with bread and wine. He gave him blessings far better than what the worldly kings gave him. Then Abram gave Melchizedek a tenth of everything confirming that all abundance was God given. Thus it was reasonable to sacrifice to God what we received from Him as an expression of thanksgiving and love to God.

※ **【Divide the plunder and observe the feast】** 17-24 After God's people were judged and the Lord as their King, their salvation and laws were set up in them so they might observe from the heart. (Eze 36:25-27) By that time

they would divide the plunder among the weak and the lame. The people of the holy city were strong in body and mind because their sins were removed. They no longer would be ill. After the day and night's attack, Abram returned in victory and enjoyed the heavenly blessing. The people of the kingdom would enjoy the peace in the glorious kingdom of Christ. They would observe the feast and rejoice.

**Ps 14 / Rev 11:3 Main theme: Do not act wickedly but witness the truth everyday and save the captives**

**- Stubborn / Witness the word**

- (1) **【Men's hearts are stubborn and against God】** 1-4 In the wicked age, men's hearts are arrogant and without God. Their deeds are vile and there is no one who does good. They oppress and devour God's people.
- (2) **【Trust in God and proclaim His word to save the captives】** 5-7 God's children ought to take the limited chance to seek His word, do good, under God's mind, pray and spread the word, trust in God and save the captives to comfort the Lord's heart. Those who sow in tears with love and truth will reap with songs of joy.

**Central point of the wheels: Be righteous to hate sin, be the trained men of God to keep His word and proclaim it**

Lord Jesus, may God edify and train large troops of trained men of the age so they are righteous and jealous, die to everything and rescue the sinners.

**Gen 15 / Isa 34**

**Main theme: Great blessings for those who are watchful to obey the word.**

**Cursed be to him who is faithless and do evil**

**- Great reward / great disaster (God establishes the covenant / God avenges)**

Golden verses: Gen 15:6 Isa 34:16

A discussion on great reward and great disaster – on one side it concerned God established the covenant with Abram and rewarded him greatly. He believed God and was credited as righteousness. On the other side it concerned God would avenge on the nations and sent great disasters. This demonstrated God's unfailing love and faith to Abram and his descendants, His righteousness and jealousy to the enemies. This teaches us we ought to keep God's covenant, listen to God's word and we will be rewarded greatly. If we are wayward and faithless, disasters will come.

**A. Great reward due to believe and do evil provokes God's anger**

Listen and believe (Gen 15:1-11) – Faithless (Isa 34:1-9)

1. **【God appeared】** 1 God wanted to establish a covenant with Abram so He appeared to him in a vision. Abram had undergone the test of love and



returned good for evil. He restored the ungrateful and degenerating Lot. Again he overcame the worldly temptation and rejected the riches from the king of Sodom. He did not worry that the kings would revenge but he grieved on his lack of descendant to inherit his possession. God comforted him not to be afraid for He promised to protect him and be his shield.

- ※ **【God called】** 1 Through the prophet God called to the nations and all the land thrice to go near and listen. God's judgment relates to all the earth. He wanted everyone to repent and return to Him to avoid the future wrath. Who would be as humble as Abram to listen to God's voice and calling to avoid His wrath and punishment?
- 2. **【God rewarded】** 1-3 Abram was really hands clean and heart pure staying near God and listened to Him. Thus God appeared and rewarded him greatly. God knew his worry was without a son, therefore God clearly replied him Eliezer would not be his heir; a son coming from his own body would be his heir. God also promised to give Canaan to him and his descendants as their possession.
- ※ **【God avenged】** 2-3 In the final days all nations would come to Jerusalem to contend and God would avenge for Zion. His wrath would be upon all their armies. (Zec 14:1-3 Eze 38:18-23) They plotted evil, gained dishonestly and plundered. Thus God would dissolve them all and their dead bodies would be among the mountains, their blood spilt on the valleys and all nations are ashamed. On one side was God rewarded while the other was God avenged (Isa 40:10). One side was reward for humility and obedience while the other was punishment for arrogance and waywardness.
- 3. **【Fruitful descendants】** 4-5 In a vision God brought Abram out to watch and count the stars and said to him, "So shall your offspring be." Abram believed God's promise and His power of resurrection and God credited him as righteousness. And he became the father of all who believe and are credited righteousness.
- ※ **【All things would wither】** 4 God's wrath came to the world and all things would wither. The entire starry host would be dissolved because of men's worship and the stars would fall from the sky. (Isa 13:10, Mt 24:29, Rev 6:13) The heavens would be rolled up like a scroll (Heb 1:11-12), all things would wither because man's sins like the leaves of a fig tree withered. On one side was belief in God and be credited righteousness while the other was condemnation for going against God. (Jn 3:18) Abram was promised by God to be dry tree flourish and descendants multiply in numbers. The nations bloomed and flourished but withered and dried up in an instant. The world will pass away and the flowers and the grass will wither but the man who does the will of God lives forever. (1 Jn 2:17)

4. **【Blessed by the possession of the land】** 7-10 God chose Abram to accomplish his plan of salvation. He not only promised him offspring but also gave him Canaan as his possession. At that time he did not have it and through faith, he waited for God's promise to accomplish. Later on God gave Abram the sign of the possession of the land. He obeyed and brought a heifer, a goat and a ram along with a dove and a young pigeon. He cut them in two and fulfilled the covenant, (Jer 34:18-19) to state his faith to wait that God would keep the covenant and fulfill His promise.
- ※ **【Be cursed and lost the land】** 5-9 The Edomites were cursed by God and He sentenced judgment. Edom (Esau) was the brother of Israel. He was ungodly and did not believe, scorned at God's favor, full of envy, murder, hatred and gloating. The sword of judgment of God came to him and to those who were against the elect. God's wrath was full like the sword has drunk its fill and a great slaughter would come. How the pitch became their wealth would also become their disaster. Today wars in the Middle East arise and the oil wells ablaze and the place lie desolate. On one side there was the everlasting blessing from God while the other was the temporary wealth caught by the hand which would turn to nothing instantly.
5. **【Birds of prey came down】** 11 While God was establishing the covenant with Abram, suddenly birds of prey came down on the carcasses, but Abram drove them away. This clearly stated that Satan attempted in vain to ruin God's plan to harm the descendants of Abram. But the will of God must be fulfilled and He confirmed the covenant with Abram.
- ※ **【Attempt vainly to ruin】** 5-9 All the anti-God nations represented by Edom was like the birds of prey which attempted in vain to ruin God's plan of salvation on His elect. They put every effort to hinder the prophecy of the will of the return of the elect and ultimately failed. God's covenant will not be revoked. When God acts, no one can reverse it. (Isa 43:13)

**B. Keep the word in watch and take possession of the land but who ever rebel and go against God will be punished**

Be watchful (Gen 15:12-21) – Intoxicated (Isa 34:10-17)

1. **【A thick and dreadful darkness】** 12-14 At sunset, Abram fell into a deep sleep and suddenly a thick and dreadful darkness came over him. Those who keep the covenant and take possession of the land ought to be always watchful lest they fall asleep and darkness comes. God wanted him to be sure his descendants would live as a stranger in the foreign land. They would undergo a dreadful darkness and suffer a period of four hundred years. Thus we ought to be watchful for ourselves and for our descendants. God remembered his covenant with Abram and would punish Egypt. (Exo 2:24-25) Darkness would pass away and the brightness of redemption

would come. Our God is a God who keeps his covenant of love!

- ※ **【An unprecedented great destruction】** 10 The prophet prophesied the ruinous condition of Edom which was unbearable to describe. The whole land of Edom was intoxicated in wickedness but they were not awakened. From generation to generation it would lie desolate without an inhabitant. In the last day this world will be destroyed by fire. God will stretch out the measuring line of chaos and the plumb line of desolation. The chosen people would experience a thick darkness and still be redeemed by God while Edom and the nations would face the unprecedented destruction forever perished.
- 2. **【Return to homeland】**15-16 On the one hand God instructed Abram would be buried at a good old age and go to his fathers in peace. On the other He foretold that his descendants would go back to the promise land in the fourth generation with great possessions. God's promise is forever faithful!
- ※ **【Forever desolate】** 12-13 The prophet prophesied that Edom would be forever desolate and never be rebuilt. Their citadels and strongholds would be filled with thorns and nettles, forever be cursed. On one side was the portion of the righteous, forever enjoying the good land while the other was the portion of the wicked, forever destruction. The Egyptians and Amorites were punished for they were completely wicked.
- 3. **【The descendants took possession of the land】**17-21 When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces. The God of fire made a covenant with Abram and said from the river of Egypt to the great river, the land of the Canaanites would be promised to his descendants. God's children who keep the covenant and obey the word will inherit the promise land.
- ※ **【The desert creatures took the place】** 14-15 God's day of vengeance for Zion would come and make the land of Edom without inhabitants but the dwellings for the animals and it was fulfilled. Edom became a haunt for jackals and a home for owls. The wild goats bleated to each other, the owl nested there and the falcons gathered. (Rev 18:2) On one side was the mercy and faithful God made His covenant and promised the descendants eternal possession. The other was the righteous and jealous God repaid and let the desert creatures occupied by force.
- 4. **【The promise is trustworthy】** 12-21 God is faithful! Abram had been watchful and kept the covenant during his life time so in his old age a son was born to him to inherit the promise bestowed by God.
- ※ **【The prophecy fulfilled】** 16-17 No matter how many promises God has made, they are valid in Christ and will not fail. (2 Cor 1:20) God's prophecy will be fulfilled. Blessed are those who observed His prophecy

because the time is near. (Rev 1:3) The prophet advised the people to look in the scroll of the Lord and read, and take discipline from the retribution of Edom. On one side was God's promise was trustworthy while the other was God's word would be fulfilled. Let us ensure that God's book of law be our possession. (Deu 33:4) Walk according to the path of Abram and stand firm in God's word, be watchful to keep His covenant and we will be blessed and take possession of the land! Those who are faithless and abandon righteousness will be like Edom who lost the land to the animals as forever dwelling!

**Ps 15 / Rev 11:4 Main theme: Obey the word and hate evil, pray extensively and proclaim widely so all nations will be blessed**

**- The Holy mountain / Shine**

- (1) **【Be righteous and blameless】** 1-5 Pursue righteousness, honesty, goodness, godliness, perfection, hate evil and love goodness, do not be greedy for usury or accept a bribe. Then your spirit will ascend to the mountain and dwell with the Lord.
- (2) **【Serve before the Lord and all nations will be blessed】** Be one in the Lord and catch hold of His word for all nations to spread to them so that God's ways may be known on earth, His salvation among all nations and become a lamp stand of the age.

**Central point of the wheels: pray watchfully and obey the word, put the old self to death and shine and take possession of the land**

Dear Jesus, May you let me trust in the Holy Spirit and put my old self to death, be steadfast in the truth, pray watchfully, receive the promise by faith so I will be blessed and let all nations be blessed.

**Gen 16 / Isa 35**

**Main theme: He who waits till the end will see God's glory but those who labor by themselves will be filled with trouble**

**- Man's work / God's work (wait / revive)**

Golden verses: Gen 16:13 Isa 35:5-7

A discussion on man's work and God's work – on one side it concerned Abram's faith was weakened and involved man's labor resulting in shame and pain. On the other side it concerned the deliverance and revival of God's people after punishment and they saw the glory of God. On one hand was the labor of man's hand while the other was God did the work of no man. It was the revelation of the power of the Holy Spirit. This teaches us not to focus on the environment, not on ourselves but by faith and grasp the promise of God to wait till the end and see the glory and revival of God.

**A. It is painful to follow man's desire but wait till the end and see God's**

## **glory**

Failure (Gen 16:1-6) – Revival (Isa 35:1-7)

1. **【By sight and own idea】** 1-2 "And without faith it is impossible to please God." (Heb 11:6) Abram and Sarai lived in Canaan as a stranger for ten years. In this long period of waiting, it was hard to avoid losing faith. Sarai saw herself was gradually worn out so she gave an advice according to the customs of the foreign people and gave her maidservant Hagar to her husband, hoping to have a son from her.
  - ※ **【Prophecy by faith】** 1-2 Prophet Isaiah prophesied that God's elect would revive and return to Zion. Just like the time of Sarai when she saw herself, how could she conceive a son? But the faith of the eyes of the prophet was beyond the environment; he saw the prospect of revival. He was filled with faith and boldly declared a prophecy what was opposite to the current situation. On one side was by sight and complete despair while the other side was by faith full of hope. On one hand was by man's idea while the other was from God's will.
2. **【After man's idea and involve man's labor】** 3 God wanted to gain over Abram completely to become the father of faith so all nations would be blessed through him. Thus his faith ought to be tested and perseverance must finish its work, and then God's will be accomplished. (Jas 1:3-4) But Abram's faith was weakened during the long waiting and he therefore listened to his wife's idea and acted on man's labor and took Hagar.
  - ※ **【Wait and see God's work】** 1-2 The land of God's people was conquered. They were captured and their lives were withered like the desert and the wilderness without hope. (Isa 33:9) But when the Spirit poured upon them from on high and the desert became a fertile field, and the fertile field seemed like a forest. When the Spirit worked, they would see the reviving glory of Lebanon and the splendor of Carmel and Sharon, all given by God. Abram did not have the faith to continue to wait. He followed man's idea and failed. Thus he could not see God's glory. Only those who wait for God wholeheartedly will see the desert and wilderness bloom like the crocus and everywhere exhibits God's glory and splendor.
3. **【Overrate】** 4 Sarai's maidservant Hagar was after all an Egyptian, a worldly being whose nature had not changed. She conceived through Abram and despised her mistress. She thought her social status was raised and took the place of her mistress. She did not understand she was brought low and unworthy.
  - ※ **【The spiritual eye blinded】** 5U God's people were captured for long and followed the evil customs of the other nations. They coveted the world like a blind man who did not know God and his own corruption and ugliness.

Hagar was ungrateful and arrogant. When she was pregnant she despised her mistress and was blinded and overrated herself.

4. **【give vent to by flesh】** 5-6 Sarai (be ascended) who was the mistress could not bear to be despised by Hagar. She was wronged but did not first examine herself. Instead she blamed her husband and was full of complaint and she mistreated Hagar and gave vent through her. Hagar also could not bear to be mistreated and ran away secretly; both were actions of the flesh.

※ **【See the work of God】** 3-4 The prophecy of the prophet brought great comfort to the people. God called to the weak and feeble to be bold and do not fear so they might revive in the judgment. On one hand God repaid the enemy while delivering the people, showing God's will and work. Sarai acted by flesh and brought pain without peace. Only those who are humble to accept God's punishment and acknowledge God's work; then the feeble hand will become strong and the knees that give way will be strengthened.

5. **【Sorrow upon sorrow】** 1-6 Sarai took the idea and gave Hagar to her husband and thus there was no peace in the family. She brought sorrow to herself. Abram accepted his wife's idea without prayer and acted on man's labor. Thus he regretted and suffered. He was also complained by his wife, so sorrow came upon sorrow.

※ **【Joy after joy】** 5-7 The revival which the prophet prophesied was not only the revival of the kingdom; but it was also the revival of the spirit of the church in the final day. Due to the pouring of the Spirit, the parched desert and the wilderness would be changed to live. It would rejoice and burst into bloom. Further, the living water from the Spirit would flow from the desert and the wilderness and gush like a river. The parched land would become springs. Everything will be renewed, the blind will see, the ears of the deaf unstopped, the mute will speak and the lame will leap with joy after joy! The faith of Abram and Sarai was weakened and their spiritual eyes were blinded and lost the spiritual communication with God. Their hearts were like the desert, unable to sing and were in unspeakable bitterness!

## **B. Whoever give way to lust will reap corruption but if we follow the Spirit, eternity comes**

Corruption (Gen 16:7-16) – Eternity (Isa 35:8-10)

1. **【Return to the hands of the mistress】** 7-10 Hagar represented our old self who were not willing to be under the hands of the mistress to humble, obey and be dealt with. So she was overrun by the angel. The old self is corrupt and is not willing to be under the law of God. Finally she could not but return to be under the mistress and be humble to obey. (1 Pe 5:6)

※ **【Return and have rest】** 8 God's people had been captured for long, abandoned the true God, worshiped idols, wandered in the desert and did

not have rest. God prepared a highway for them and only by staying there could they have rest. Hagar left the hands of the mistress and wandered in the desert. She violated God's command and also did not have rest. Only by listening and returning, she could have rest. Jesus is the way, the truth and life; only by coming before the Lord will we have rest. (Mt 11:28-30)

2. 【Two covenants and 2 mounts】 11-16 The two women Hagar and Sarai represented two covenants and two mounts. (Gal 4:21-26, Heb 12:18-24) One covenant was from Mount Sinai like Hagar was a slave and had the son by flesh. She represented the worldly Jerusalem under the law. The other covenant was from Mount Zion like Sarai who had a son through promise. She represented the heavenly Jerusalem under grace. This teaches us not to go by flesh but by God's promise to bear spiritual offspring and become God's heir.

- ※ 【Two roads】 8-10 The character of the son of Hagar Ishmael was like a wild donkey running here and there, savage and warlike. His road is different from the redeemed people. One road was arrogance, plundering and going against God while the other road was humble and repenting, fear God and love God. One way was going after lust while the other was obeying the Holy Spirit. God had prepared a road for the returned people:
- (1) The holy road: the unclean will not journey on it.
  - (2) The road of redemption: it will be for those who walk in that Way.
  - (3) The eternal road: the simple will not stray from it.
  - (4) The peaceful road: no lion or any ferocious beast gets up on it.
  - (5) The road of songs: the painful condition will turn away with songs of praise. After Abram went through thirteen painful years, God appeared to him. Then he marched up the road of songs and praises.
  - (6) The road of everlasting joy: When God appeared before Abram and Sarai, sorrow and sighing will flee away.
  - (7) The road of Zion: Abram and Sarai passed through the valley of tears and were favored by God. A son was born to them in their old age and they ran into the road of Zion with strength upon strength.

The road of the descendants of Ishmael:

- (1) The unclean road
- (2) The road of arrogance
- (3) Walking one's own road
- (4) A warlike road
- (5) A painful road
- (6) A sorrowful road
- (7) A destructive road

**Ps 16 / Rev 11:5 Main theme: Love the Lord wholeheartedly, be watchful**

**to obey the word, devour the enemies by the mouth and be filled with blessings and joy**

**Love wholeheartedly / power**

- (1) **【Love God and love man wholeheartedly and be kept safe】** 1-3 Apart from the Lord there is nothing we desire. Love the Lord, obey His word and dwell in Him. And love the holy people of the Lord and keep in watch for them.
- (2) **【Be far away from other gods and delight on what God gives】** 4-6 Determine not to offer to other gods or to take up the names on my lips. The Lord is my portion and be satisfied on what God gives me.
- (3) **【Be watchful to observe day and night】** 7-8 Always be alert, pray constantly and stand firm by the Lord to keep His word.
- (4) **【Full of joy and hope】** 9-11 The Lord makes me filled with joy. God will not abandon me to the grave. Therefore He is able to save completely those who come to God through him. Thus I am full of hope. He will lead me to the path of life, so I may be close to him, filled with power and enjoy the eternal pleasures.

**Central point of the wheels: Love God wholeheartedly and be empowered to wait for the Holy Spirit to revive**

O Lord, Your promises are forever faithful! May you not let me be discouraged while waiting, not staggering but watch you accomplish everything by faith.

**Gen 17 / Isa 36**

**Main theme: Do not hear and do not see but listen wholly to God and receive the promise**

**- Believe in God's word / Do not falter**

Golden verses: Gen 17:1 Isa 36:21

A discussion on believing God's word and not faltering – on one side it concerned the Almighty God appeared to Abram after his failure and made a covenant with him to strengthen his faith. On the other side it concerned the house of Judah who encountered the threatening of the king of Assyria and encouraged them to trust in God and do not falter. God is Almighty and He would strengthen Abram and his covenant. He would deliver the house of Judah and Jerusalem and break from the perseverance of Assyria.

**A. God appeared to strengthen the covenant so Abram did not falter after the test**

God's word (Gen 17:1-14) – The voice of the enemy (Isa 36:1-12)

1. **【God appeared】** 1-3 How wide and long and high and deep is God's love! Abram passed through thirteen years of failure and God appeared to him from on high to strengthen his faith. First God made him understand that



God is Almighty. Would there be anything too hard for Him? God wanted to strengthen the covenant He made with him and it would never change. God's appearance was to make him to be contrite and return to God and listen only to Him. Abram prostrated before the merciful God. He felt shameful and blamed himself and worshiped God silently.

※ **【Did not falter】** 1-3 The king of Assyria had already attacked all the fortified cities. And he sent the commander with a large army from Lachish to Jerusalem. The enemy bore down menacingly and threatened Judah to shake their faith hoping to destroy them without moving a soldier. However, after the failure of Hezekiah and his people, (2 Ki 18:13-16) their faith was strengthened and understood that God was Almighty and would deliver and protect the holy city. On one side it concerned God's proclamation He is Almighty. On the other side it concerned the house of Judah was in distress and they ought to trust in the Almighty God. The attack of the enemy forced them to come before God and not to be afraid and shaken or surrender to them.

2. **【God confirmed and strengthened His covenant】** 4-8 God confirmed His covenant again with Abram and bestowed him precious promises and revelation which concerned the relationship of Christ and His kingdom. God wanted to establish the covenant with his generations as an everlasting covenant never to be abandoned.

- (1) Very fruitful descendants
- (2) His name to be changed to Abraham (a father of many nations)
- (3) Made nations of him
- (4) Kings would come from him (referred to David and Christ)
- (5) The whole land of Canaan would be an everlasting possession to him and his descendants

God is faithful, His plans will stand firm forever! With His mouth He has promised and with His hand He has fulfilled.

※ **【The arrogance of the enemy will fail】** 4-10 The field commander first challenged the three leaders sent by Kings Hezekiah. Then he continued to challenge the people in the city with very disdainful and arrogant words. On one side was God's promise to confirm the covenant and He would strengthen it while the other was the enemy's proud and evil words. Every word of falsehood would fail. Below are their arrogant words:

- (1) They first said Egypt on whom Judah relied on was not reliable. Then they continued to pervert that it was useless even when Hezekiah demolished the idols.
- (2) They scorned at the weak power of Judah.
- (3) They claimed to work for God to destroy Judah.

- (4) They instigated the people not to listen to Hezekiah but pledge allegiance to Assyria.
- (5) They put God and the idols together and affirmed that God could not save the people. The voice of the enemy was like roaring waves but the voice of the Lord is powerful and majestic. (Ps 29:4) He confirmed the covenant and would stand firm forever.
- 3. **【Keep the covenant and be circumcised】** 9-14 God commanded Abraham and his descendants to keep God's covenant for generations and all males ought to undergo circumcision as a sign of the covenant. Those who believe are spiritual children of Abraham and need to circumcise their hearts (Deu 10:16) and be a new creation.
- ※ **【Be circumcised in distress】** 11-12 The leaders of Judah pleaded the field commander not to use Hebrew to speak. The ruthless enemy instead used more malicious curse in Hebrew. The attack of the enemy made them circumcise in distress to keep God's covenant firmly and trust in God wholeheartedly just like the male descendants of Abraham ought to be circumcised. Circumcision in distress would make us be done with sin, (1 Pe 4:1) unite with God and not be disturbed by the enemy but share in his holiness and nature. (Heb 12:10 2 Pe 1:4)

**B. Believe in God's word, walk in obedience, be circumcised and not be tempted**

Walk in obedience (Gen 17:15-27) – Do not compromise (Isa 36:13-22)

- 1. **【Believe firmly without doubt】** 15-17 God also changed the name of Abram's wife to Sarah (mother of nations). God blessed her and kings of peoples will come from her. Abraham could not refrain to fall facedown and laughed and said to himself, 'Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?' The God of Abraham can make things out of nothing, who gives life to the dead. (Ro 4:17) We ought to believe firmly without doubt and accept God's promises.
- ※ **【Stand firm and not be tempted】** 13-16 The field commander threatened the people of Judah not to be deceived by the words of Hezekiah and trust in the Lord's deliverance and be away from the hands of Assyria. He also used smooth talk to tempt them to surrender so they might live in peace and contentment and enjoy in pleasure. He used both hard and soft tactics to deceive. On one hand we ought to believe and accept God's promise without doubt. On the other hand we ought to reject firmly the gift of the enemy. Do not ask for the benefits and goodness of the Gentiles. God is our everything!
- 2. **【God's will cannot be replaced】** 18-21 Abraham believed sparingly and said to God, "If only Ishmael might live under your blessing!" But God said

to him, “Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.” God’s will could not be mixed up. Ishmael could not replace Isaac! One was from the flesh; the other was by promise. Ishmael would become a great nation but only Isaac would inherit the blessing promised to Abraham.

- ※ **【God’s will would not be changed】** 17-20 The field commander plotted another scheme to tempt the people to another land of grain and new wine to replace the inheritance of God – all was a fraud! God’s will would not be amended. God promised that by next year Sarah would bear Isaac and God’s covenant would be confirmed. But the enemy’s vow was falsehood, not worth of belief! The enemy certainly stated God could not deliver them from the hands of king of Assyria. God is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and would surely protect and deliver Jerusalem from the hands of the evil. The Lord is the God of all nations!
3. **【Obey to circumcise】** 22-27 When God had finished speaking with Abraham, He went up from him. Due to the merciful appearance of God, Abraham was strengthened in his faith. On that very day Abraham and every male of the household were circumcised without delay. The whole family humbled to keep the covenant and trusted in God.
- ※ **【Obey not to reply】** 21-22 Faced with the arrogance and threat of the enemy, the leaders and people of Judah obeyed in silence and disregarded the enemy. They told everything to king Hezekiah. On one side was Abraham led his whole family to obey to circumcise. The other side was the whole of Judah from high to low put their hope in God’s mercy and deliverance. Their hearts were really circumcised and no longer relied on Egypt, the staff of reed but trust wholeheartedly in God’s arm.

**Ps 17 / Rev 11:6 Main theme: Firmly keep the word and have power, be away from the enemy and attack the world by God**

**- Keep firmly / Power**

The two witnesses had the spiritual power

- (1) **【Observe God’s word and be blameless before Him】** 1-5 Through God’s probing, examination and test I kept the Lord’s word so my heart, my mouth and deeds will be blameless before God and stand firm in truth.
- (2) **【God will show the wonder of His great love】** 6-15 The righteous prayer has great effect for the Lord will keep them as the apple of His eye. The Lord will save me and His children from the inward and outward and my mortal enemies. God will show His great power (just like Esther’s who saved herself and the people of her tribe). We also pray that God will save us from the short-lived blessing of this life. Nor will we be satisfied by the

wealth and our children but seeing God's likeness and to proclaim the word to all nations. So we all may enjoy the blessing of eternity and gratify the heart of the Lord.

**Central point of the wheels: Keep His word firmly with power and be circumcised without swerving**

Dear Lord, May you make me hide deeply in you and see your face often, keep my word and deeds to trust in your almighty arm wholeheartedly.

**Gen 18 / Isa 37**

**Main theme: To love with zeal and pray fervently for there is nothing too hard for God**

**- Love / Faith**

Golden verses: Gen 18:14 Isa 37:30-31

A discussion of love and faith – on one side it concerned Abraham's hospitality to welcome the strangers and his intercession for Sodom and Lot to experience the test of love. On the other side it concerned the national calamity of Judah. Hezekiah faced a test of faith. Is there anything too hard for the Lord? God is faithful and His promise will be fulfilled far more than we ask for.

**A. Welcome the strangers with love, intercede with faith and there is nothing too hard for God**

Welcome the strangers (Gen 18:1-15) – Intercede (37:1-20)

1. **【Ally with God】** 1 After Abraham's failure, the merciful God came down and appeared to him to establish the covenant with him. Thus he was greatly encouraged. His life has formed an alliance with God and he lived in Hebron, (confederation, friendship) the spiritual peak. He welcomed the strangers with love of zeal and unexpectedly he welcomed the angels and God. Therefore God appeared to him again near the great trees of Mamre at Hebron.
- ✖ **【Trust in God wholeheartedly】** 1-20 During the attack of Assyria, King Hezekiah failed and sued for peace from the enemy. (2 Ki 18:13-16) He trusted in the flesh and arm of Egypt (Isa 31:1-3) but did not trust in God wholeheartedly. This time, under the threat of the enemy, he no longer relied on the worldly power but like Abraham who lived in God and allied with Him; he leaned on to God wholeheartedly in his distress.
2. **【Welcomed the strangers with zeal】** 2-8 Abraham was filled with love and he sought the chance of welcoming the strangers as a blessing. (Heb 13:1-2 Ro 12:13) When he saw the three men, he hurried to meet them. He quickly brought water for them to wash their feet and went personally to select a choice, tender calf and gave it to the servant. He ordered his wife to bake some bread. He did not care about the heat and his old body. When the

guests were enjoying the feast, he humbly stood by the side serving them hospitably.

- ※ **【Intercede with intense sorrow】** 1-4 When King Hezekiah heard that the field commander led his army to challenge the battle and abused at the living God, he was worried to burning! Their nation had encountered distress, rebuke and disgrace. He tore his clothes, put on sack clothes and went into the temple of God to intercede for the country and his people. At the same time he sent his officials to prophet Isaiah to shout in prayer for the remnants, paying the price for the spiritual prayer. Both Abraham and Hezekiah had a burning heart to love God and man, regardless of anything to pay for the price. On one side was welcoming the strangers with zeal while the other was interceding with intense sorrow, undergoing the test of love and faith.
- 3. **【Bestowed with promise】** 9-10 Abraham's love was tested by God and He was satisfied. (1 Cor 8:3) He never expected God would appear and reiterated Sarah would bear a son and promised to appear by Himself. This was the greatest blessing! The birth of Isaac gave a pre-representation of the birth of Christ, the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun would come to us from heaven. (Lk 1:78)
- ※ **【Bestowed with comfort】** 5-7 In the sorrow of Hezekiah, he sent his official to see Isaiah and was bestowed with comfort by God. God tested the hospitality of Abraham and Hezekiah's intense sorrow of intercession was also accepted by God. Through the prophet he was comforted and encouraged not to be worried by the blaspheming words of the Assyrian king. God would frighten the heart of King Assyria so they would run away and fall by the sword. On one hand was the promise to bear a son at one hundred years old while the other was the promise to overcome the enemy. God's promise surpasses our request. By His power He fulfilled everything He promised. (2 Th 1:11)
- 4. **【Is anything too hard for God】** 11-15 Sarah craved to bear a son in her old age. But when faced with such good news, she could not believe it. She could not refrain from laughing to herself and said, "After I am worn out and my master is old, will I now have this pleasure?" God heard her laughing to herself and said, "Is anything too hard for the Lord? I will return to you at the appointed time next year and Sarah will have a son." The faithful God did not retrieve His promise due to the weakness of Sarah.
- ※ **【Only the Lord is God】** 8-20 The King of Assyria sent a letter to threaten and induce again. Hezekiah was faced with a spiritual war and in this critical moment he needed faith; just like the moment when Sarah would bear Isaac, she needed faith. (Heb 11:6) By faith, King Hezekiah entered the

temple and presented the letter before God and pleaded for His help. He firmly believed that God is the Lord Almighty who made heaven and earth while Sarah, faced with this pleasure she laughed to herself without faith. On the one hand God proclaimed ‘is anything too hard for the Lord?’ while the other hand Hezekiah pleaded God to make all nations know only the Lord is God.

**B. Pray fervently and be granted, the enemy will be punished and revival will come**

Pray (Gen 18:16-33) – Revive (Isa 37:21-38)

1. **【Walk with God】** 16-21 Abraham was reluctant to part with the men and after the meal he walked along with them to see them on their way. This greatly moved God so that what He was about to do would not be hid from Abraham. Abraham became an intimate and a friend of God. He walked with God and God promised all nations on earth would be blessed through him and protected him so his children and his household after him would keep the way of the Lord, do justice and be blessed. He also told him that due to the grievous sin of Sodom and Gomorrah, they would be destroyed.  
✧ **【Be in one heart with God】** 21-38 Through the environment Prophet Isaiah was able to see the nature and destiny of Assyria and the house of Judah would turn failure to victory, so he prophesied in the spirit. He was truly in one heart with God. He understood His mind clearly and made the oracle just like Abraham walked with God in one heart and knew what God would do. Who is willing to walk with God in one heart and fulfill His will?
2. **【God saw the grievous sin】** 20-21 Though Sodom and Gomorrah were attacked by the four kings, they sinned greatly and would not take discipline. Their sin was grievous and the outcry against them was so great that God went down to see what they have done.  
✧ **【God would punish those who rage against Him】** 21-29 The prophet sent someone to reply King Hezekiah that King Assyria blasphemed the Holy One of Israel. He was insolent and arrogant and raged against God. God also said concerning the ruthlessness of Assyria and how he attacked other nations and devastated them willfully just like the cities of Sodom who sinned greatly and God’s rage was on them. God would hook him in the nose and made him return to the original path. The Lord Almighty will carry out the destruction decreed upon the whole land. (Isa 10:23)
3. **【Pray with the heart】** 22-23 Abraham understood the great love of God’s resurrection, not one to be destroyed. Thus when the two angels turned to Sodom, he remained standing before the Lord and interceded for Sodom who practiced all kinds of evil and his kindred. For six times he pleaded with God – from fifty righteous people to ten. God still allowed He would

not destroy the city.

- ✘ **【Proclaim with faith】** 21-38 Prophet Isaiah interceded faithfully just like Abraham. He understood God's mind and interceded unceasingly for the remnants and God's word came continuously - the army of Assyria would come from which way and return through which path. For the sake of David, God would protect this city. May God rise up intercessor of love and faithful workers who proclaim for this age!
- 4. **【Granted for the plea】** 22-23 Though there was not even ten righteous men in the city of Sodom, the merciful God heard the prayer of Abraham. When God destroyed the cities of the plain, He remembered his prayer and sent angels to rescue Lot and his family. (Gen 19:29)
- ✘ **【Promised to revive】** 30-35 God promised Hezekiah and the prayer of the whole nation just like He promised the intercession of Abraham. Through the prophet God sent His prophecy of revival. Judah would undergo two years of poverty. But there would be a great harvest in the third year, enjoying the grain and the good wine. A remnant of the house of Judah would take root below and bear fruit above. The zeal of the Lord Almighty would accomplish this. The family of Lot who merely escaped death ought to understand the great favor and be grateful to repay the Lord's goodness.
- 5. **【Eat one's own bitter fruit】** The people of Sodom, Gomorrah and the cities of the plain led a befuddled life and gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion without repenting. Their guilt had reached its fullest and punishment came. They had to eat their own bitter fruit and be punished with the everlasting fire. In the final days men would be the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. (Lk 17:28-29)
- ✘ **【Deserve for the sins】** 36-38 Assyria overestimated his ability and attempted in vain to go against the Lord to attack the holy city and finally was punished. Sodom and the cities of the plain also sinned so greatly reaching the sky and their result would be the same. God sent an angel and the army of Assyria with one hundred and eighty five thousand was killed in a night. Calamity came upon the King of Assyria and he escaped back to his city. While he was worshiping in his temple, his sons came to kill him which was what he deserved showing only the Lord is the righteous judge.

**Ps 18 / Rev 11:7 Main theme: Trust in the Lord and follow His way to the end and God will bestow His great favor of deliverance**

**- Till the end / Great favor**

After the two witnesses had given their witness, they were killed. Our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs

them all.

- (1) **【Call on the Lord and overcome by Him】** 1-18 By the power of the Lord we escaped from the hands of the enemies and overcome all inside and outside foes.
- (2) **【Trust in the Lord and keep His word】** 19-28 Be blameless before God and keep away from sin.
- (3) **【Destroy the enemy by the Lord】** 29-45 Rely on the Lord to destroy all enemies and the power of sin and lead all nations to God.
- (4) **【Be grateful to give thanks to the Lord】** 46-49 Everything is due to the salvation of God. Therefore we ought to give thanks and glory to God. Exalted be God my Savior!
- (5) **【We ought to learn from David】** 50 Whoever follows David and overcome by the Lord to keep and proclaim till the end will receive God's great love and favor. Even though we may be like the two witnesses to martyrize for the Lord, we will receive the superior resurrection. (2 Cor 4:16-18)

**Central point of the wheels: Follow the will to the end through faith and love for there is nothing too hard for God.**

Dear Lord, may you make the fire of love burn inside me, intercede with love so more souls will come out from the sinful city of Sodom!

## **Gen 19 / Isa 38**

**Main theme: Quickly move away from sin and press on toward the goal to repay His kindness vigorously**

**- Ungrateful / Repay kindness**

Golden verses: Gen 19:17 Isa 38:17

A discussion on ungratefulness and repayment of kindness – from the two chapters we see both the family of Lot and King Hezekiah were rescued by God and escaped death. Hezekiah recovered from his serious illness and wrote a psalm to give thanks to God. But soon after the favor he was ungrateful and failed God. Lot was never thankful and alert. He committed incest. This teaches us we ought to be thankful when we receive any favor, never be ungrateful and drift along in complacency lest we fall into sin again.

**A. We ought to take the lesson when we escaped from death and recovered from serious illness**

Was rescued (Gen 19:1-29) – Was cured (Isa 38:1-14)

1. **【On the verge of death or destruction】** 1 The city of Sodom was in great sin, filled with lust and unnatural relationship and offensive activities. God was destined to destroy it. Lot was still reluctant to leave Sodom. He was stubborn and continued to live in complacency without knowing that



destruction would come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they would not escape. Lot's life was on the verge of death. The Lord's coming is near and it will be the same (1 Th 5:1-3)

- ※ **【Ill at the point of death】**1 The Judah King Hezekiah was ill at the point of death in his mid age. Prophet Isaiah was sent by God to tell him to put his house in order. Our life and breath are in the hands of the Most High, man has no power over the day of his death. (Act 17:24-28 Ecc 8:8) Sodom was on the verge of destruction, Lot's life was on the verge of death and King Hezekiah was critically ill at the point of death.
- 2. **【Rescued in distress】** 1-11 Our God has great mercy and due to His great love, He sent two angels to save Lot's family from the sinful Sodom. Due to love Lot welcomed the two angels to stay in his place overnight. Unexpectedly, a gang of evil men, both young and old surrounded the house and called to Lot to bring out the two angels to have sex with them. To protect the two angels, Lot brought out his daughters. Lot was rescued by the angels away from the devastation of the gang of evil.
- ※ **【Pray with intense sorrow and was granted】** 2-6 Hezekiah heard the word of the prophet and turned his face to the wall and prayed fervently to the Lord. He cried and pleaded and prayed that God would remember his goodness. The merciful God accepted his prayer. He added fifteen years to his life and promised to save Jerusalem from the hands of Assyria. Through the angels God also saved Lot from the wicked. The King of Assyria thought in vainly to attack the holy city and the wicked also plotted to harm the two angels but to no avail.
- 3. **【Merely escaped death】**12-17 Sodom was a perishing city and the result of their sins soon came. The angels hurried the whole family of Lot to leave Sodom quickly lest they might be swept away. Lot was still reluctant to part with sin and hesitated to leave. Through the angels, God rescued the whole family from Sodom. The angels warned them to flee to the mountains and not to look back or stop anywhere in the plain for the cities of the plain would be destroyed.
- ※ **【Recovered from serious sickness】** 21 Hezekiah became ill and was going to die. Due to God's great love he was freed from the power of death just like Lot's family had escaped death because of God's love. Prophet Isaiah told him to prepare a poultice of figs (the word of life) and apply it to the boil and the King recovered. On one side was Lot rescued from death while the other side was the King recovered from sickness, both received the favor of deliverance. (Ps 116:8)
- 4. **【Granted to escape to a small town】** 18-22 The angel ordered Lot to flee to the mountain after leaving the city. But he treasured his life and feared

death. He was used to be complacent and would not pay any price. So he pleaded that the angel would let him run to a nearby small town to avoid the danger. The angel granted him and the city called Zoar was not overthrown which exhibited God's great love of tolerance!

※ **【Granted to a sign】** 7-8 When King Hezekiah recovered from his sickness, he asked for a sign through the prophet as a witness to enter the temple. God allowed his request just like the angel allowed the request of Lot. God gave him a sign and he selected to have the sunlight went back the ten steps it had gone down which showed God's unlimited love and undertaking.

5. **【Be a lasting warning】** 23-29 Unfortunately, though the wife of Lot was rescued and left Sodom, she still lingered on Sodom without paying any attention to the angels' warning. She lagged behind. When the Lord rained down burning sulfur, she looked back and became a pillar of salt – a lasting warning for all people to come.

※ **【Be remembered forever】** 7-8 The prophet called on to God for Hezekiah and God made the shadow cast by the sun go back the ten steps it had gone down on the stairway of Ahaz. God worked wonder and made time to go back which proved that God is the creator of the universe! Hezekiah recovered and requested to go to the temple and he was given a sign which was remembered forever. The wife of Lot became a pillar of salt – a lasting warning. On one side was the severe punishment of God while the other was God's unlimited love. "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God." (Lk 9:62)

6. **【He who disdains God's grace will be destroyed】** 14 Lot had told his sons-in-law to leave the place lest they might be destroyed. But their hearted were hardened and they were tempted by sin and thought he was joking. So they rejected him and in the end were swept away with Sodom.

※ **【Call on to God to be away from illness】** 9-14 After Hezekiah recovered from his sickness he wrote a psalm to praise God. First he recalled his agony when he was sick moaning hopelessly like a swift and mourning like a dove. In his distress he wept bitterly and prayed sorrowfully to the Lord. In the end God saved him from the power of death. The sons-in-law of Lot did not repent even when disaster occurred and they treated God's love of salvation as a trifling matter and perished with Sodom. Now is the time to wake up!

### **B Give thanks and praises lest we fall into sin**

Ungrateful (Gen 19:30-38) – Thankful (Isa 38:15-20)

1. **【Ungrateful and fall into sin】** 30-36 The whole family of Lot was saved again from death. They ought to give thanks and praises to God's great love. Instead, he was ungrateful, not knowing to give thanks and fell into

drinking and sin. He lived with his two daughters in a cave and committed incest without shame.

※ **【Give thanks and praises】** 15-20 Hezekiah was cured by God just like turning death to life. So he wrote psalms to give thanks and praised His love. He thanked God's goodness to keep him from the pit of destruction and put all his sins behind His back. The family of Lot was unthankful and lived with his daughters in a cave committing shameful deeds. Hezekiah longed to stay in the temple of the Lord all the days of his live and praise Him. (Ps 103:2-3)

2. **【Future trouble left behind】** 37-38 Though Lot's family left Sodom, they did not truly leave the sins of Sodom. Under the instigation of the older daughter, they committed the most shameful sin and gave birth to Moab and Ammon. Their seeds of sinfulness originated from Sodom and became adversaries of Israel for all generations. No Ammonite or Moabite or any of his descendants may enter the assembly of the Lord, even down to the tenth generation. (Deu 23:3)

※ **【Bore bad fruit】** God granted the pleas of Hezekiah in his sickness and added fifteen years to his life which was the tolerance of God and also a test. The unfortunate thing was Hezekiah failed in this test. He did not respond to the kindness shown him. (2 Ch 32:25). He bore a sinful son and left a lasting trouble and became a warning through the ages.

**Ps 19 / Rev 11:8 Main theme: Those who die in the Lord and are watchful will receive great reward**

**- To keep watchfully / Great reward**

To die with the Lord on the cross and to die to sins and to the world completely, then we may obey the word to glorify God and benefit man.

(1) **【We ought to glorify God and benefit man】** 1-6 All creations proclaim the glory and the work of God. We therefore ought to serve, proclaim and glorify Him daily. If we cannot proclaim with the mouth, we do by our acts and preach even to all the earth; for God will open the doors for His message for those who keep His command and love Him (Rev 3:7-8) so they may shine like the sun, its light reaches all the earth..

(2) **【Keep the Lord's word and enter into perfection】** 9-14 Purify yourselves by His blood and word to be delivered and enter into perfection so all our thoughts and words will be acceptable to the Lord. We die completely to the world and ourselves so we may become precious instruments suitable for the Lord and all nations be blessed.

**Central point of the wheels: Let us die in the Lord, give thanks and repay His kindness, keep His word and proclaim it extensively**

Dear Lord, may you make me give thanks and repay your kindness for the rest

of my life! To die with you, keep your word and be sanctified and to rescue the perishing souls!

## **Gen 20 / Isa 39**

**Main theme: Do not be coward or show off but trust in God for He is Almighty**

### **- Coward /show off**

Golden verses: Gen 20:6-7 Isa 39:6

A discussion on cowardice and show off – On one side we see Abraham's wife was captivated because he was coward and lied before the strangers. On the other side we see the country of Hezekiah was being captured in the end because he showed off. This teaches us not to lie due to personal gain or loss and be afraid and bring trouble to the wife; nor do we covet for vanity and show off and bring trouble to our country. We ought to die completely to ourselves and the world.

### **A. Do not lie and do not show off but trust in God lest we will be captivated**

Lie (Gen 20:1-7) – show off (Isa 39:1-2)

1. **【Be coward and lie】** 1-2 Abraham lived in Hebron, in the spiritual peak with close fellowship with God. He trusted in God firmly and became a close friend of God, the father of faith. Later on he gradually moved southward and stayed in Gerar of Philistia. His spiritual mind gradually became weak. Due to the beauty of his wife he was afraid to be harmed and he lied again. As a result his wife was taken away by the king of the place. As a prophet of God, he treasured his life and feared death and so lost the witness before the strangers.
- ✕ **【boast and show off】** 1-2 Hezekiah received goodness from God and recovered from severe illness and came back to life. When he was filled with honor and wealth he gradually became arrogant and greatly boasted in front of the envoys of Babylon. He was foolish and failed. Abraham was not alert to rely on God. He was coward and lied and failed. When Hezekiah faced the letters and gift from the envoys, he did not tremble with fear before the 'honored guest'. He could not refrain from boasting his treasures in the palace and the armory in his storehouses. He showed them all to the envoys. As the king of Judah he acted presumptuously and lost his witness. Abraham was weak in his mind. He feared death and failed. Hezekiah fainted in his mind and fell due to vanity. One side was thinking oneself as clever and the other side was recklessness – both are very deep lessons for us!
2. **【Not able to discern the plan of the enemy】** 1-2 Again Abraham wavered in

his test of faith so that his wife was taken by king Abimelech. This happened before Sarah was to bear Isaac as Satan wanted to destroy and hindered the birth of Isaac. Abraham overlooked the plan of God in Sarah and lied rashly and nearly made Sarah being tarnished and fell in the enemy's trap.

※ 【Fall into the trap of the enemy】 1-2 The king of Babylon specially sent an envoy to bring a gift to extend his congratulation. He had another intention to pry about the condition. Poor Hezekiah took a foe for a friend. He was not able to discern the plan of the enemy and showed off all the treasures of his kingdom; falling into the trap of the enemy. Hezekiah loved to be acclaimed and boasted before man. Irrespective of the result, he exposed his corrupt nature. Abraham was not aware of the plan of Satan and his wife was taken away while Hezekiah also fell into the trap and his heart was captivated. Their symptoms of cowardice and exposedness were not completely healed.

3. 【God interfered】 3-7 Abraham and Sarah were chosen people of God's plan, but they were weakened for the moment and nearly destroyed the will of God. However, the faithful God has restored them and blocked their breaches. That night God interfered personally and rebuked Abimelech in his dream and prevented him to go near Sarah. He forced him to return his wife to Abraham. God also warned him that Abraham was a prophet and had the power to pray for him and his people lest they would die.

※ 【God allowed his discretion】 1-2 Hezekiah was dizzy before success and boasted about, thus leaving a breach for himself and his country. God did not interfere or prevented him but allowed this at his discretion. God purposely tested him to know everything that was in his heart. (2 Ch 32:31) We should not pursue superficial wealth, honor but be always alert and be on guard lest we may fall.

**B. Be humble to take discipline and the wife be restored. He who disdains the kingdom of God will be captivated**

Take discipline (Gen 20:8-18) – Disdain (Isa 39:3-8)

1. 【Rebuked before the king】 8-13 Abimelech and his officials were very afraid due to the disasters sent by God. They knew the God of Abraham was great and awesome. So he summoned Abraham and rebuked him why he brought such guilt upon him and his kingdom. Abraham felt shameful and humbly took discipline before the foreign king. He acknowledged his fault in addressing his wife as his sister and did not trust in God wholeheartedly. Instead he asked the favor of his wife resulting his wife being taken away and could not even fend himself.

※ 【The prophet's rebuke】 3-6 Prophet Isaiah had discerned in the spirit and

rebuked Hezekiah if he had not been able to identify the intention of the Babylon envoys. Abraham was rebuked before the foreign king and returned but Hezekiah did not confess and consider himself accountable before the prophet. Thus the prophet seriously announced that the day would come and everything would be captivated to Babylon; whatever he had exposed would all be captivated.

2. **【Received favor to cover the offence】** 14-16 Abraham humbly took discipline in his failure. Thus he was favored before God and man. Abimelech returned Sarah to him. He also brought sheep and cattle and male and female slaves and gave them to Abraham. He also gave Abraham a thousand shekels of silver to cover the offense against Sarah before all who were with her.  
※ **【All sons were disgraced】** 7 Hezekiah was perverse in his failure. He lost the grace from God and was disgraced before man. While Abraham humbly had his lesson in his failure and won favor before God and man. The prophet declared that the sons of Hezekiah would also be captivated to Babylon to be eunuchs being disgraced.
3. **【Grace fell upon all people】** 17-18 Abraham returned and he prayed for Abimelech and his family. They were healed and could have children again. Not only Abraham himself was favored when he returned, he also brought favor and avoided the trouble for others. Thereafter, what God had promised him was fulfilled. Through Sarah Isaac was born and God's will was accomplished.  
※ **【The descendants were adversely affected】** 8 When Hezekiah heard the warning of the prophet, he did not accept the reprimand; nor did he feel contrite. Conversely he thought the word of the Lord was good. He would be satisfied only if there would be peace and security in his lifetime. How could he care about the future ages! After Abraham returned, he and the whole family of Abimelech were favored but Hezekiah only drifted along in complacency irrespective of his nation and adversely affected his offspring. Such selfish and scornful attitude towards God caused him grievous results.

**Ps 20 / Rev 11:9 Main theme: In time the Lord will help and exalt those who suffer for His word**

**- Salvation / Disgrace**

Blessed are those who suffer for righteousness and in time they will see God's glory.

- (1) **【Call on to God when in distress】** 1-3 In times of distress do not blame God and man but seek the Lord humbly and trust in Him. Then He will answer, protect, send you help, grant you support and accept your offering

and make all your plans succeed.

- (2) **【Obey the word and do good by the Lord】** 4-8 Do not trust in chariots and horses but only trust in the Lord and His way like David who repaid evil with kindness and obey the word and love his enemy. God will grant all his requests. He will shout for joy when you are victorious. The enemies will fall and he will be exalted.
- (3) **【Pray for others】** 9 We ourselves experience the Lord's salvation and pray that others will also be blessed.

**Central point of the wheels: Return in our failure and rely on the cross to triumph**

Dear Savior, may you let me know my ruin which I have nothing to boast of. Only by trusting in the Spirit may we to die in the flesh, look up to the cross and triumph by His salvation.

**Gen 21 / Isa 40**

**Main Theme: Let us consecrate and wait for God's word must be accomplished. Man's work is worthless.**

**- God promises / God accomplishes (care / comfort)**

Golden verses: Gen 21:6 Isa 40:3-5

A discussion on God promises and God accomplishes – on one side it concerned Abraham waited patiently by faith till one hundred years old and the promised Isaac was born. On the other side it concerned the coming of Israel's revival as promised by God after long years of captivity and waiting. The flowers and grass will wither; the idols and man's work are worthless but the word of the Lord will be fulfilled and stands forever without failing! We ought to consecrate ourselves and wait by faith for the coming of the revival as promised by God.

**A. The Lord's word will be fulfilled so do not worry but give thanks and obey**

1. **【God was gracious】** 1-2 God's promise is forever firmly established and forever faithful! God was gracious to Sarah and according to what He had promised to be fulfilled on Sarah – she became pregnant. The God in whom Abraham believed is the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were. (Ro 4:17) When he was one hundred years old in his old and worn out age, Sarah bore him a son named Isaac. Abraham and Sarah went through long years of refinement of faith and the lesson of patient waiting, and then they finally saw the fulfillment of God's promise. God's covenant is firmly established without change and never to be broken.

※ **【God comforted】** 1-2 The people of God went through long period of

hardship and punishment and God's promise of deliverance and revival was about to come. God solemnly proclaimed to comfort, comfort His people and speak tenderly to Jerusalem:

(1) Her hard service has been completed. (2) Her sin has been paid for. (3)

Her punishment has finished.

Similarly, Sarah was barren for life and now was favored by God to bear in her old age to remove her shame before man and also accomplished God's will! On one side was God's graciousness and the other was God's comfort. Both were through long period of refinement and received the blessing of God's promise and not because of their deeds. All was grace and nothing to boast of!

2. **【Full of laughter】** 3-7 Isaac's name was laughter which was given by God. (Gen 17:19) His parents at first doubted God's promise and laughed to themselves. (Gen 17:17, 18:12) Now they expressed thanksgiving laughter from the bottom of their heart. A man of one hundred years old gave birth to a son. He could not help but laugh in joy. Sarah was barren and now in her ninety years old age God promised to borne her a son. She was ever happier with laughter to give praises and thanks to witness God's greatness. "God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me."

※ **【God's glory was revealed】** 3-5 The prophet prophesied that John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus. (Lk 3:4-6) He became a voice of calling in the desert to make straight paths for the Lord in order to let man repent and accept Christ and reveal God's glory. God also prepared straight paths in the minds of Abraham and Sarah so that their hearts which were once in the desert and rugged, have been prepared to become level and straight through hardship and refinement. Now they were full of laughter and God's glory was greatly revealed. On one side was everyone who heard about this would laugh with them while the other side was all mankind would see God's glory.

3. **【How could you mock at God's will which was firmly established】** 8-10 On the eighth day after Isaac was born, Abraham followed God's command to circumcise Isaac. He strongly believed that through Isaac they were the descendants of the covenant. The child grew and on the day he was weaned Abraham held a great feast to give thanks and praises to God with his friends and relatives. In the feast Sarah saw that the son of Hagar was mocking with malice. She was very unhappy. She was filled with the spiritual decision and discerned that when Ishmael grew up, he would fight with Isaac for the inheritance; the flesh would persecute the spiritual. Therefore she brought this to Abraham to get rid of Hagar and his son. The



will of God has established that only Isaac would be the heir of Abraham and He would not allow such scornful mocking!

※ 【God's word stands forever that the flowers and grass will wither】 6-8 The worldly beauty, honor and wealth are all like flowers and grass and will fall and turn to nothing in a moment. But the word of our God stands forever. Though Ishmael would become a nation, it would be like the flowers and grass, withered in the end and turned to nothing. The sinful nature desires that is contrary to the Spirit. They are in conflict with each other, (Gal 5:17) so we ought to remove totally what belonged to Hagar and Ishmael in order to inherit the promised blessing of God. One side was God's will was firmly established while the other was God's word stands forever. We ought to have the spiritual insight to remove the worldly sin to gain the true blessing!

4. 【Do not worry but obey God's will】 11-13 After all Abraham had the affection of blood and flesh with Ishmael. Thus he was distressed due to the conflict of the Spirit and the sinful nature. He had to set his mind in accordance with the Spirit. To have Isaac he had to give up Ishmael. The will of God does not allow any intermingling. God told him do not be so distressed about the boy and his maidservant. Whatever Sarah told him he should listen, because it was through Isaac that his offspring would be reckoned. Thus he listened to God and sent them away.

※ 【Do not be afraid for God is the King】 9-11 God raised up those who bring good news to go up on a high mountain to lift up their voice to proclaim the Sovereign Lord's coming. Do not be afraid for He will be the King to rule, to shepherd, protect and lead His flock. God told Abraham not to be distressed because of Ishmael for only Isaac was borne of the promise and would inherit the intended blessing. God used good news to comfort His people and He used his words to strengthen Abraham. Therefore do not be afraid and do not be distressed.

**B. Man's work is worthless. Therefore thirst before the Lord and gain your strength again**

Limited (Gen 21:14-34) – Unlimited (Isa 40:12-31)

1. 【A skin of water is limited】 14-15 Hagar relied on some food and a skin of water given by Abraham and went to the desert of Beersheba. She lost her way and the skin of water was used up, alone without help. In despair she sat nearby her son and began to sob because in this desert and waste land where could she find water? The God of mercy heard the boy cried and called to Hagar to lift up the boy. When God opened the eyes of Hagar, she saw a well of water and experienced the richness of God. In our course in the desert, we are sometimes thirsty and wandered. Only by crying before God and the spiritual eyes are opened, we will see the living water of the

Holy Spirit.

- ※ **【God's abundance is unlimited】** 12-17 Everything on earth is limited, like Hagar's skin of water. But the Creator of the universe, the only true God is great and unlimited, all knowing and all wisdom! Who has understood the mind of the Lord, or instructed him as his counselor? We are tiny as if nothing in His unlimited creation of the universe; like a drop of the blue sea or like the dust on the scales! Whatever we get from man will be used up in the end; only the abundance of Christ can satisfy everything in our life. May God open our spiritual eyes to understand the Almighty God. He is our counselor to show us the path of understanding, never to be wandered.
- 2. **【Man's treaty failed】** 22-32 The king of Philistia Abimelech saw that God was with Abraham. So he was afraid and went to make a treaty with him. In the treaty, Abraham complained to Abimelech that his servants had seized his well of water. He was not willing to lose it. So apart from the treaty, he gave seven ewe lambs to Abimelech as a witness that he dug the well. The well belonged to him and ought to be returned to him. Thus the place was named Beersheba (well of the oath). But in the time of Isaac, this well was greatly damaged by the Philistines. (Gen 26:18) Only the covenant of God never changes. Abraham has made futile effort.
- ※ **【The idol is less than nothing】** 18-26 An idol casted by a craftsman is worthless and no good! Only God created everything, controlled over everything and ruled over everything. Man is unworthy and minute like a locust, worthless before God. The princes and the rulers of the world are also naught and nothing. Man's treaty will fail. No sooner have they flourished, they came to nothing when God blew on them. Abraham did not need to fight for the well. He ought to lift up his eyes to understand God's infinity and greatness which is immeasurable!
- 3. **【Rest and call】** 33-34 Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba. He did not make any treaty with man. He rested under the shadow of the Almighty God and allied with Him. He called upon the name of the Eternal God and confirmed He was his everything, without any struggle with the world and continued living as a stranger and serving the Lord.
- ※ **【Renew the strength】** 27-31 The Eternal God, Creator of the earth never grows faint or weary. His understanding has no limit. Only by coming under the shadow of God can we restore the unlimited power of life without growing faint or weary. When the heart is awakened and sees the understanding of God has no limit; then we can see our folly and ignorance. What amounts to a well of water when God is his everything? Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; let alone the hundred years old Abraham. But those who hope in the Lord will renew

their strength and soar on wings like eagles. They will go up the offering path of Moriah to sacrifice the only son to satisfy the heart of the Lord.

**Ps 21 / Rev 11:10 Main theme: Worldly joy will turn bitter but he who trusts and relies on the Lord will have eternal blessing and true happiness**

**- True happiness / worldly joy**

The worldly joy in sin will turn to bitterness in a moment.

1. **【Believe in the Lord and enjoy eternal blessing】** 1-6 God's power toward those who believe is great. They will have the promised eternal rich blessings, experience the perfect salvation and receive the eternal blessings as God promised to Abraham, that is through his offspring all nations on earth will be blessed. His descendants will be as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. (Gen 22:17-18) Further, they can serve before the Lord.
2. **【Destroy all enemies completely by God】** 7-13 By the Lord we may consume and destroy all enemies and their descendants. Then we can ruin their plan and exalt the Lord as the Most High and Most Holy and lead all nations to enjoy the joy of salvation.

**Central point of the wheels: The Lord's word will be fulfilled. Let us wait for the revival for blessed are those who call upon Him and trust in Him.**

Dear Father God, the flowers and grass on earth will wither. Only your word will stand forever! May you cleanse me by faith to wait for your promised revival to come.

**Gen 22 / Isa 41**

**Main theme: Great blessings to he who denies himself to obey the word but worthless are those who cast and worship idols**

**- Bestow great blessing / bestow revival (chosen / God's help)**

Golden verses: Gen 22:17-18 Isa 41:18

A discussion on bestowing great blessing and bestowing revival – on one side it concerned Abraham was tested and he offered his only son to God, thus God revealed to him and gave him great blessings. On the other side it concerned Israel, who had gone through long years of refinement was promised to stir up Cyrus and the deliverance of God to return and revive. Our faith and love need to be tested and refined before revival so all things work for the good.

**A. Offer your love and be helped by God to be a new instrument**

Love God (Gen 22:1-14) – Be loved (Isa 41:1-16)

1. **【Listen clearly to His call】** 1-2 God had a specific choice and will on Abraham which was through him all nations on earth would be blessed. God first tested him so that he might inherit a bigger promise and blessing after the test. God called him from above the sky. He was always alert and

listened carefully to respond to God's calling. God wanted him to take his only son, Isaac, whom he loved, to the region of Moriah and offer as a burnt offering. Abraham was faced with the greatest test! He immediately acted and listened to God's calling.

- ✧ **【Listen clearly to God's will】** 1-4 God also had a special choice and will on Israel which was through them all nations on earth would be favored to know God. First God called on the islands and the nations to listen. God wanted them to meet together at the place of judgment to see that He had stirred up Cyrus from the east for the purpose of the elect. And this was the will of the God of Most High. Who is willing to come near to listen like Abraham? From the start of all generations, God has called on us to offer ourselves as Isaac.
- 2. **【Obey God's will】** 3-8 Abraham was given a son by God when he was one hundred years old. He loved Isaac deeply above everything. But when he had listened clearly to God's calling, he immediately obeyed without doubt. He did not discuss this with his wife Sarah. Early in the morning he saddled his donkey, cut his wood, took his servants and Isaac, and set out for Mount Moriah. The road to Mount Moriah was a three days ride, the path of the cross. On the way, he was impelled due to God's love to become more and more strengthened. On the first day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. He told the servants to wait and brought Isaac to continue forward. The path of the cross may be lonelier the farther you go. Now it left himself and Isaac who would be offered for the burnt offering. Isaac obeyed his father to carry the wood on his back and followed him to advance. This represented Christ desired to do God's will. He walked with God and went up to Golgotha. (Ps 40:6-8)
- ✧ **【Oppose the will of God】** 5-7 The nations trembled with fear because of the rise up of Cyrus and would not go near to listen to God's will. Instead they requested the help of the idols for their protection hoping to escape from the will of God. They were foolish and self-deceiving, trying with all kinds of methods to smooth the hammer to nail down the idol so it would not topple. On one side was Abraham obeyed God's will unconditionally and walked an offering path. On the other side was the nations sought the help of the idols and opposed God's will. Abraham carried the fire and the knife and made up his mind to obey God's will. While the craftsman and goldsmith also carried the hammer and nail to struggle to strengthen their idols to oppose God's will.
- 3. **【Offer the most loved】** 9-12 Abraham had failed and was weakened and he deeply experienced the love of God was as strong as death and hard to repay. When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an

altar, placed the wood on it and bound Isaac on the altar. He made an action to offer his beloved to repay God's great love! When he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son, the angel of God called out to him from heaven not to lay a hand on the boy and do not do anything to him. God's hearts has been fully satisfied because of such acts of fearing God, ready to break oneself, steadfast to obey God's will and loved God above his only son!

※ **【Helped by God】** 8-12 God named Israel as the descendant of his friend Abraham. He took him from the ends of the earth as God's chosen people. God was with them and comforted them not to fear. He would strengthen and help them. Abraham offered his beloved Isaac and his faith was accomplished due to his action and his descendants were also blessed. Abraham's love for God could hardly be found from of old and he was forever remembered by God. The enemy would be disgraced, ruined and became nothing. One side was offered the beloved and God accepted and was satisfied while the other was Israel whom God strengthened and helped. The example of Abraham's love for God had brought blessings to thousands of people.

4. **【Saw the salvation after the test】** 13-14 After the test, Abraham looked up and saw the salvation prepared by God – a ram caught by its horns in a thicket. When Isaac was sacrificed, then we see the Lamb was prepared to take over Isaac. "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." (Jn 1:29) Abraham sacrificed his only beloved son and in return won God's only son Jesus Christ! The greatest "The Lord Will Provide"!

※ **【Saw God's glory after refined】** 13-16 Same with Israel and his forefathers, after they were refined and tested, they became humble as a worm. But God would strengthen them to be a strong people like a threshing sledge, new and sharp, with many teeth. God promised to deliver them from an exile and conquered nation, and a lowly condition. Their enemies would be destroyed completely and God's glory would be greatly revealed. Abraham offered his beloved Isaac and since then God became his satisfaction while the strong people accomplished God's will and God became their joy and glory.

## **B. Received great blessings after the test and God promised to bestow revival**

Bestow great blessings (Gen 22:15-24) – Bestow revival (Isa 41:17-29)

1. **【Promised to bestow great blessings】** 15-18 God called to Abraham a second time after the test. He swore to himself to bestow great blessings to Abraham:

(1) His descendants would be as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore.

- (2) His descendants (Christ) would take possession of the cities of their enemies.
- (3) Through his offspring all nations on earth would be blessed. (Gal 3:7-14)  
All these promises have been fulfilled before our eyes, so we, unworthy Gentiles have become the descendants of Abraham! The blessings that God promised were like fountain pouring on Abraham and his descendants, all because he obeyed His word. Only if we will learn from the faith of Abraham and his wholehearted love for God, we too will have the blessings from God. (Gal 3:9)
- ※ **【Promised to bestow revival】** 17-20 The blessings which God promised to Abraham also came upon his descendants. After they were refined, God poured the living water of the Spirit to those who seek humbly and the thirsty. This revival would come to the churches of God:
- (1) Rivers will flow on barren heights and those on high who are humble and thirsty will have the living water.
- (2) Springs will flow within the valleys and the lowly and in difficulties will be filled with the living water.
- (3) The long dried up wasteland and desert will be poured with spiritual water and all planted with cedar, acacia and myrtle which are fruitful and materials for the temple. Whoever sees this will appall at God's deeds. We Gentiles will also be planted as wild olive trees to witness God's glory.
2. **【The good news of finding Rebekah】** 19-22 After Abraham was promised with the great blessings, he learnt that Bethuel, the son of his brother Nahor bore a daughter named Rebekah. This was God's grace of blessing within blessing; a bride for his son Isaac, a blessing which God has prepared for those who love him. (1 Cor 2:9)
- ※ **【The good news of having King Cyrus】** 25-27 God not only promised to provide the living water of the Holy Spirit, He also gave the good news of stirring up Cyrus through the prophet to Zion. The rising up of Cyrus was to crush the nations, so the captives might return to re-build the temple to accomplish God's will. On one side was the good news reached Abraham while the other was the good news of Cyrus came to Zion; both are the deeds of the Lord.
3. **【Everything is empty outside God's will】** 20-24 Abraham's brother Nahor had eight sons but only Bethuel was chosen by God. Through him Rebekah was born and became the bride of Isaac to fulfill God's plan. Reumah, the concubine of Nahor had four sons but were out of God's will and thus were empty.
- ※ **【The idols are less than nothing】** 21-29 The prophet rebuked that the

people did not trust in their Holy One but to serve the empty idols. Idols are less than nothing. They could not foretell the future, nor could they tell of before. They could not send blessings or bring disasters. Only God's prophecies and promises are true. Though Nahor had many descendants, they are out of God's will and not remembered. The work of the idols is but wind and confusion. Everything man made amounts to nothing.

**Ps 22 / Rev 11:11 Main theme: Endure the suffering of the cross and obey the will till the end and see the glory of the resurrection**

**- To hear from above / stand up**

In time God reveals the power of resurrection and who dares not to fear God?

(1) **【Pray earnestly day and night by faith】**1-21 When great distress is near, do not focus on anything and do not be shaken by man's word. Trust in God wholeheartedly and pray earnestly day and night. By faith we know the Lord has answered and will deliver me to overcome the suffering of the cross.

(2) **【Proclaim extensively the great power and grace of the Lord's resurrection】** Experience the Lord's hearing on my calling during hardship and in time His glorious power of resurrection will be revealed. Therefore, let us encourage others to search in humility without despair and may all nations fear my God.

**Central point of the wheels: Love God and offer everything, die completely and then resurrect. Hence all nations will be blessed.**

Dear Father God, pray that you will make me humble like a worm, willing to offer my 'Isaac' and walk a sacrifice path so I may overcome till the end by you to reveal your majestic glory!

**Gen 23 / Isa 42**

**Main theme: Listen carefully and determine correctly to pay the price to obey the word and God will work wonder**

**- Pay the price / Obey the word (deny oneself / shine)**

Golden verses: Gen 23:13 Isa 42:1-4

A discussion on paying the price and obeying the word – on one side it concerned Abraham while buying a piece of land for his deceased wife was scrupulous in every detail. He denied himself to obey the word and paid the full price. On the other side it concerned Christ as the servant of God, was humble to obey the word all his life. He suffered hardship to proclaim the word and was the light to the Gentiles bearing good witness and revealed God's glory before the Gentiles.

**A. He who obeyed the word as a servant and denied himself to shine would witness God's glory**

Obey the word (Gen 23:1-9) – Proclaim the word (Isa 42:1-9)

1. **【Cared by God】** 1 Sarah lived to be a hundred and twenty-seven years old. Her whole life and Abraham's were chosen by God and they both walked a faithful path though filled with hardship. They were watched over by God and in her old age she bore the promised Isaac. By faith a barren woman accomplished the will of God. (Heb 11:11-12) Now she saw God's glory and rested in peace and inherited the promised blessing with Abraham.  
※ **【Delighted by God】** 1 Jesus Christ was a servant whom God chose, upheld and delighted. He humbled and was obedient to come down on earth as a man to accomplish God's salvation plan. He was anointed and filled with the power of the Spirit. (Lk 4:14) He brought the truth of the gospel to the nations. Both Sarah and Abraham were also chosen and followed to walk a faithful path all their life. They were faithful servants and watched over by God. They bore a son in their old age to accomplish God's will and rested and were both delighted by God.
2. **【Bought the land by faith】** 2-4 Abraham lost his beloved wife and mourned. But he was not discouraged because God was his everlasting Shepherd. He lived in the promise land for sixty years without an inch of property. Thus he decided to buy a tomb from the Hittites of the land to bury his wife. Abraham was filled with faith to buy a tomb for his wife as a witness for his descendants to inherit the land of Canaan. He strongly believed in God's promise that Canaan would be given to his descendants as an everlasting inheritance.  
※ **【Be the light of the Gentiles】** 5-9 The God who created the heavens and stretched them out, the Sovereign of everything and the source of life not only gave breath to man, He also delivered them through His beloved son who was made flesh. The Lord had called Him in righteousness to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles. Abraham and Sarah had for their whole life been an alien in the promised land and by faith built altars, sent offering and led a stranger's life. They witnessed the only true God and were also a light of the Gentiles. Christ is the light of the world that made the blind see, the captives out of the prison away from the bondage of sin. Abraham lost his wife and God was the light in his heart thus he had the faith to buy the land for his inheritance.
3. **【The example of godliness】** 5-9 Abraham feared God, obeyed the word and humbled toward people during his life. In his place he was treated as a mighty prince. The Hittites let him bury his dead in the choicest of their tombs. But Abraham has been trusting God for his whole life and he confirmed God was his everything. He was not the least bit negligent and insisted to pay the full price to buy the land. He did not want to take others



advantage or get any benefit from people and thus set a godly example for his descendants.

※ **【The example of Christ】** 2-4 As a faithful servant of God, Christ set us seven good examples:

(1) He would not shout. (2) He would not cry out. (3) He did good quietly. He humbled and hid and never showed off himself but gave glory to God. (4) A bruised reed he would not break. (5) A smoldering wick he would not snuff out. He was a man of sorrow and familiar with suffering. He sought to save what was lost. He became a friend of tax collectors and sinners. (6) He would not falter. (7) He would not be discouraged. No matter what kind of suffering or hardship He would be firm to keep the will of his Father God, never be shaken. Thus in his law the islands would put their hope. Abraham was treated as a mighty prince in the place where he lived. He was spotless and insisted to pay the full price of the land which is an example for us. On one side was the witness of godliness and obedience to the word and the other was the witness of suffering for proclaiming the word; both glorify our Father God.

**B. He who paid the full price to buy the land would sing the new song together. Those who were faithless would be punished.**

Pay the full price (Gen 23:10-20) – God opens the way (Isa 42:10-25)

1. **【Full price for the land】** 10-20 Ephron the Hittite was generous to Abraham's request. He immediately offered to give the field and the cave freely to him. Abraham was determined to reject the gift. He was worthy to be God's friend, the father of faith who lived in Hebron and united with God, full of spiritual wisdom and insight. He insisted to pay the full price to bury his wife.

※ **【Sing the new song together】** 10-13 The prophet sang a song of faith to call upon all nations to give glory to the Lord. Those who went down to the sea, all that was in it, the islands and all who lived in them. Let the desert and its towns raise their voices and the people of Sela would sing for joy from the mountaintops. The Lord would march out like a might man and won over the enemy. Abraham was also spotless in the Gentiles witnessing to pay for the full price which was also a praise song to glorify God.

2. **【Brightness overcomes darkness】** 14-16 Ephron was after all a Canaan, blinded by greed but pretended to be charitable. On one hand he ruthlessly quoted a high price; on the other he replied hypocritically to show his friendship. Abraham had insight and was firm to keep the good way. He overcame darkness and his eyes of faith saw the future and the far distance. Thus he did not desire for the present benefit or to be greedy for other's advantage. He preferred to pay the high price and did not counter-offer. So

he paid the full price for four hundred shekels to Ephron.

- ※ 【Darkness turns to brightness】 14-17 The Lord proclaimed He had for a long time kept silent and endured. Now He would cry out, gasp and pant, and lay waste the mountains and hills. All nations and their splendor would be dried up like the vegetation and came to nothing. His might will strengthen his justice. The people of God were not willing to pay the full price to keep God's way so that they fell down and got lost like the blind in the dark. If they were willing to pay the full price and keep the Lord's way, God would turn their darkness to brightness.
- 3. 【Obey the word and the off springs are favored】 17-20 Abraham bought the cave and field from Ephron the Hittite at the gate of the city in the presence of the people and was deeded to Abraham. So he buried Sarah in the place. This little piece of land became the burial place for three generations of the forefathers, (Gen 49:29-33) and also a target for his descendants to possess their inheritance in Canaan. The place of Canaan was named as the burial place for their fathers. (Neh 2:3) Abraham feared God and obeyed the word. He paid the full price for the tomb and this favored his descendants. He took God's promises as the most precious wealth and held fast to them and firmly believed that in time God would accomplish them.
- ※ 【Be wayward and become the plunder】 18-25 It pleased our Lord for the sake of his righteousness to make his law great and glorious. But his people did not honor the teaching of God's law. (Isa 8:20) They did not pay close attention in time to come and in the end were plundered and looted and became the plunder of the enemy. Abraham was careful to obey the word and he had wisdom to deal with outsiders in time to come. He was favored and so were his descendants.

**Ps 23 / Rev 11:12 Main theme: Those who persevered to listen to the voice of the Lord and live forever in Him will have an overflowing the cup of blessing**

**- The Lord's voice / Overflowing blessing**

The two prophets listened completely to the voice from heaven till the end. They martyred for the Lord and in time were raised to heaven and received the better resurrection. Their deeds would follow them.

- (1) 【Listen completely to the good shepherd】 1-5 The Lord is our Shepherd and He laid down his life for the sheep. Therefore we ought to rely and listen completely to the voice of our Heavenly Father and his beloved Son (the Bible – the heavenly voice) and we will not be in want, with rest and awakened to run a righteous path. Though we may go through darkness, we have the comfort and protection of the Lord so the enemy will be ashamed.

Thus those who listen completely to the Lord's voice will have an overflowing cup like Joseph and Paul, etc and all people and generations will be blessed because of them.

- (2) **【Dwell forever in the Lord】** 6 Not only do we want overflowing blessing, we also wish to possess an everlasting overflowing blessing. Then we ought to listen completely to the Lord's word till the end and do not be like Josiah or Solomon, a blemish in an otherwise perfect thing which is our warning.

**Central point of the wheels: Obey the word as a servant, deny oneself to shine and dwell forever in the Lord**

Dear Lord, I will live forever in you, be humble to be your servant for my whole life to deny myself to proclaim the word and to become the light of the Gentiles so all islands will sing a new song to you together.

### **Gen 24 / Isa 43**

**Main theme: Let us pray and wait, be faithful and diligent in our work for God will do a new thing.**

**- Be a faithful servant / See a new thing (call on a bride / call on the elect)**

Golden verses: Gen 24:60 Isa 43:2

A discussion on being a faithful servant and seeing a new thing – God's promises are forever faithful! On one side it concerned the predetermined Rebekah was being called on to be Isaac's bride. On the other side it concerned God's chosen elect would be redeemed and return to be a beloved people. They were new things revealing God's deeds were great and miraculous! We ought to be faithful in His commission and through prayer we see God accomplishes everything. Isaac pre-represented Christ and Rebekah pre-represented the church, the bride of the Lamb, forever united with Christ.

**A. Through prayer God works and whatever is predetermined will return**

The bride (Gen 24:1-27) – The elect (Isa 43:1-13)

1. **【The faithful servant was commissioned】** 1-2 In everything Abraham was blessed by God. This had even reached the peak of perfection in his old age. He firmly believed God's promise would make all nations be blessed through him and his descendants. Therefore he summoned his faithful old servant who was the chief servant of his household to get a wife for Isaac to establish his family for the purpose of having godly descendants through him.
- ※ **【The prophet was commissioned】** 1 Israel was created and formed by God. Isaiah was also God's faithful servant, commissioned to pass God's promise to the people and prophesied that God would summon them from afar and from the ends of the earth just like the old servant was commissioned to call

on the bride.

2. **【The predetermined bride】** 3-9 Abraham made his old servant swear:
  - (1) Not to get a wife for Isaac from the daughters of the Canaanites, lest they might follow the detestable customs and worship other gods.
  - (2) Go to his relatives and get a wife predestined by God for Isaac. (Eph 1:4-5)
  - (3) Ensure not to take Isaac back there, but to bring the girl out just like the church is called from the world. (Ro 8:30)

So the servant swore before Abraham and went out in obedience.

- ※ **【The chosen people】** 1-7 God had a predestined bride for Isaac. He also summoned Israel by name to be his chosen people. (Deu 7:6-8) How He redeemed them in the past, He would redeem them in future. God treated them as precious and honor so people in exchange for their life and gathered them from all directions. Therefore do not be afraid for God would be with them. Similarly the old servant who was commissioned need not be worried for God would send an angel to guide him. God permitted his people to go through water and fire but would not be harmed. The church which was called upon to be the bride of Christ was also the predestined will and grace of God. (2 Tim 1:9)

3. **【Saw God's work through prayer】** 10-27 The old servant took up the master's important commission and he set out his way filled with the abundance of his master. When he reached the town of Nahor (Haran), it was toward evening and he saw the women went out to draw water. In this strange place he prayed for God's favor to give him success. He requested for a sign and sure enough he saw a girl came out with her jar on her shoulder. The servant hurried to meet her and requested water from her. She quickly gave him a drink and drew water for his camels. Without saying a word, the servant watched her closely and knew that God had made his journey successful. When he knew that the girl was the predestined wife prepared by God, he could not help but bowed down to worship the Lord and praised Him for bringing him to the brother's place of his master.

- ※ **【God acts and nothing can reverse】** 8-13 God challenged all the nations and their false gods and questioned if they could bring in their witnesses to prove and declare what was yet to come. Though all the nations gathered together and the peoples assembled, the Lord foiled their plans. Israel was the chosen servant of God and God wanted them to know, believe, obey and understand only the Lord is God; apart from Him there is no other savior. When He acts, who can reverse it? Similarly, through prayer the old servant saw God personally worked all the way and accomplished everything. Rebekah and the elect were chosen and predestined by God and He would

use His own hand to gather them.

4. **【Good moral character】** 16-20 God's predetermined wife of Isaac Rebekah had the following good moral characters:

(1) A pure virgin who did not defile herself in sin (2 Cor 11:2) (2) Beautiful, godly and spotless (Pro 31:30) (3) Love God and love man (Mt 22:37-39) (4) Hospitable and eager to help (5) Ready to deny herself and sacrifice, bear hardship and stand hard work.

“But my dove, my perfect one, is unique, the only daughter of her mother, the favorite of the one who bore her.” (SS 6:9)

- ※ **【Was God's witness】** 10-12 God chose Israel and put them in the furnace of hardship to refine them so they might be redeemed and return to become God's witness; the people whom God created for His glory. All the good character of Rebekah was created by God. (Eph 2:10) The church ought to cleanse the body by the washing with water through the word, to present herself as a radiant church. (Eph 5:26-27) However, Israel became a people with eyes but was blind and had ears but was deaf. They did not understand the mind of God, have not gone through hardship and without any witness. On one side was Rebekah became Isaac's bride filled with witness while the other was refined and became God's witness.

#### **B. Obey the will and act quickly. God did a new thing for He made a way in the desert**

Obey the will (Gen 24:28-67) – Make a way (Isa 43:14-28)

1. **【Opened the way miraculously】** 28-51 The faithful servant came to the house of Bethuel and received the hospitality of Rebekah's father and brother. Before the meal he spoke clearly of the purpose of his coming and witnessed how his master was blessed by God as he had a son in his old age. He also witnessed how he was entrusted to find a wife for the son of his master. On the way he prayed and was shown a successful journey. He saw the proof of God's favor on his master when he met Rebekah. The father and brother of Rebekah saw that it was from the Lord so they could not say one way or the other and let her become the wife of Isaac as God directed.

- ※ **【Opened the way in the desert】** 14-17 The Lord was the Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel and for His sake would pour on the arrogant Babylon. By the army of Cyrus God crushed Babylon so they would flee like a routed army and know that the Lord was the King of Israel who created Israel. Babylon was overthrown, the elect returned to their land and the departure of Rebekah were all God's work to make a way through the sea and a way in the desert to fulfill God's will.

2. **【God worked wonder】** 52-53 Rebekah was dearly loved when she was young. She was diligent in her work; thus leaving her house was totally the

work of God, nothing done by man. When the old servant heard the answer of the father and brother, he bowed down again to God in worship with thanks. He brought out the jewelry and costly gifts to Rebekah and her family to show the abundance of his master.

- ※ **【God did a new thing】** 18-21 The return of the elect was a new thing; Rebekah could be sent out was a miraculous thing. These were like streams in the wasteland. God told them not to remember the past. He would let His elect drink the living water of the Holy Spirit so they would thirst no more and be filled with His abundance to proclaim His praise.
- 3. **【Obeyed the will】** 54-59 The mother and brother of Rebekah were not quite willing to let her leave, but as the old servant hoped to bring this good news to the master earlier, not a moment would be delayed. Rebekah was willing to submit to God's will and firmly replied 'I will go!' to confirm God's guidance of the path she should go. Thus she resolutely left her family and advanced boldly.
- ※ **【Backsliding】** 22-26 God's people were faithless. They did not understand the love of God and did not offer the pure and sincere incense and burnt offerings. Instead they were fed up with God and offended Him. Still for God's own sake, He blotted their transgression and did not remember their sins so they would not state their innocence. Rebekah loved God with a pure heart and denied herself to obey the will firmly and offered the aromatic good offering!
- 4. **【Was blessed】** 60-67 Before Rebekah left, she received blessings from her family:
  - (1) Increase to thousands upon thousands to accomplish the promise God swore to Abraham (Gen 22:16-17) (2) Her offspring possess the gates of their enemies (Gen 3:15)Rebekah followed the old servant and mounted their camels through the vast wasteland. She prayed while she went on her way and came to Isaac. Before evening came, Isaac was in the field and he looked up and saw the camels. Rebekah also looked up and saw Isaac. She quickly got down from her camel. "My lover is mine, I belong to my lover and his desire is for me." Isaac was comforted when he had Rebekah. He took her as wife and loved her just like Christ loved the church. When the church unites with Christ, His heart is satisfied.
- ※ **【Was cursed】** 27-28 Since their forefathers, the Israelites had been faithless and sinned. The priests and officials were even the leaders to provoke God's anger leading to curses and national subjugation in shame. Rebekah was humble and submissive and ran a blessed road. Isaac's heart hoped to possess Rebekah and was satisfied; likewise God's heart was waiting for his

people to return and be comforted. God would never break his covenant!

Only if his people would unite with God, curse would turn to blessing.

**Ps 24 / Rev 11:13 Main theme: There was a severe earthquake and the cities collapsed. So do not turn to delusion but prepare to meet the Lord.**

**- Earthquake / Ascend the hill**

- (1) **【A great shake on the earth】** 1-2 God created the land and the world. May all the earth fear and obey the Lord's word, and to have the eternal blessing. But instead men rebelled and blasphemed God. Thus there was a severe earthquake and the cities collapsed so men might awaken to do good.
- (2) **【We ought to consecrate and seek the Lord】** 3-6 We need to confess and repent, keep our hands clean and a pure heart. Then we may ascend to the spiritual peak to see God. He who seeks the Lord will receive his blessing and vindication. We ought not be the wife of Lot who stayed on the bottom of the hill in trouble and shame.
- (3) **【Lead all people to meet the Lord's coming】** 7-10 Let us lead all people to be alert and wait for the Lord's coming and to overcome all inner and out foes by the Lord. By the Lord Almighty God, accomplish his commission so when He comes, we will be caught up and reign with the Lord.

**Central point of the wheels: Be awakened by the quake and consecrate ourselves, pray and be faithful in our commission, and lead men to meet the Lord.**

Dear Lord, may your word renew me everyday, shake me so my life may unite with you to satisfy your heart.

**Gen 25 / Isa 44**

**Main theme: Listen quietly and be redeemed to return to glorify God for apart from the Lord everything is in vain**

**- Blessed / Worthless (chosen / redeemed)**

Golden verses: Gen 25:23 Isa 44:22

A discussion on being blessed and worthless – on one side it concerned the descendants of Abraham from Keturah and Ishmael, born of man's will, were all nothing. Esau pursued the cravings of the flesh, the pleasure of the eyes and all who made idols were nothing and worthless. On the other side Jacob treasured the birthright and pursued the everlasting salvation so all his descendants who returned and was promised with the Holy Spirit would all enjoy the blessing. We ought to thirst for the pouring of the Holy Spirit and pursue the everlasting blessing.

**A. Thirst for the pouring from the Holy Spirit to obtain the destined blessing for apart from the Lord everything is empty**

Possession (Gen 25:1-18) – Holy Spirit (Isa 44:1-8)

1. **【Not being chosen】** 1-4 Abraham took another wife after Sarah died. His wife Keturah bore him six sons and became the forefathers of the Arabian tribe. Their descendants were numerous but were not chosen by God and born of a husband's will and thus had no share in God's promise.
  - ※ **【Chosen by God】** 1-2 God had his purpose of election on Israel and he was chosen by grace. (Ro 9:11, 11:5). He was born of promise and from the Spirit. God called them as "Jeshurun, whom I have chosen" (the darling upright). Though the descendants of Keturah were numerous, they were not chosen and not remembered in God's will. As Israel was chosen by God, they ought to listen to God's word and understand God's will on them. They were formed in the womb and God was their help. Therefore fear not for trouble would soon pass away while grace and revival would come.
2. **【Inherit the destined blessing】** 5-6 Though Abraham was in his old age, he was alert in the spirit and clearly know the will of God. Before his death, he left everything he owned to Isaac. He confirmed that only the descendants through Isaac would be reckoned. (Gen 21:12) Isaac had inherited God's destined and everlasting blessings. Abraham gave gifts to his other sons and sent them away from Isaac.
  - ※ **【Thirst for the pouring of the Spirit】** 3-5 The prophecy of the prophet showed the love of God, His comfort and promise of revival to His beloved Jeshurun. God told them not to be afraid for He would pour water on the thirsty land. They had gone through long period of desolation, drought and would thirst for the pouring of the Holy Spirit. (Jn 7:37-39, Rev 21:6) By then the whole of Israel would revive and the Gentiles would also be blessed to return to God. (Joel 2:28-29) Therefore we ought to thirst for the pouring of the Holy Spirit, an abundant life filled with God's love and power to lead people under God's name.
3. **【Rest by faith】** 7-11 Abraham accomplished God's will all his life and rested. He entered Canaan as an alien in the promise land when he was seventy-five years old. He built altars and sent offerings to serve God. By faith he walked with God for a hundred years and experienced the God who called things that were not as though they were and gave life to the dead. Though he did not receive the things promised, he was commended for his faith and enjoyed the everlasting rest. (Heb 11:13, 39)
  - ※ **【Witness the true God】** 6-8 The Lord Almighty declared to his people – The Lord was Israel's King and Redeemer. He is the first and He is the last. The Lord did not forsake them forever and there was the witness of God's faithfulness, unfailing loving, righteousness and power in His people. The life of Abraham was the living witness of God. During his life he experienced God was the first and the last; how God promised in the



beginning and accomplished at the end. Though he rested by faith and up till now he still witnessed God, his deeds would follow him. (Rev 14:13)

4. **【Apart from God everything is empty】** 12-18 Ishmael was the son bore by Hagar to Abraham, born of a husband's will. Though his descendants bore twelve tribal rulers, they were illustrious and became a great nation, they were outside God's will and promise and came to nothing at the end. They were the enemies to the elect for generations, presumptuous and warlike, devouring God's people and were ultimately destroyed. Only Isaac was chosen by God. After his father's death, God blessed him ever more and he never failed in God's will.

※ **【Besides the Lord there is no other God】** 6-8 God declared to his people that He is the first and He is the last. He is the God, I AM WHO I AM. Besides He, there is no other God. God strengthened them not to worry and only God could proclaim and foretell what was yet to come and what would come. Who then was like Him that might declare and lay out what would happen? Surely no! Only God was the elect's only Rock. Isaac was promised with the destined blessing and God was his everlasting Rock for God's promise never failed! While the foundation of the descendants of Ishmael and Keturah was built on the sand and toppled ultimately. All came to nothing.

#### **B. Grab hold of the fundamental and be redeemed and revived for idols are worthless**

Select (Gen 25:19-34) – Redeem (Isa 44:9-28)

1. **【Prayed and was answered】** 19-21 After Isaac had married Rebekah, she was barren for years, through long period of waiting and the trial of faith. Then Isaac prayed to God. The Lord answered him and Rebekah became pregnant. Isaac experienced that the Lord God was not only his father's God but also his God. After his father died, God still watched over him. God is faithful in His promise!
- ※ **【Prayed without effect】** 9-17 On one side the prophet stated that the Lord was true God and on the other side the idols and false gods were nothing. The prophet used all sorts of satirize and mocking words to describe the folly, ignorance and the futile effort of those who formed the carved idols. The carpenters and blacksmith took great pain and superb craftsmanship to make and carve, and finally were still dead idols. They bowed down to them and worshiped, prayed to be saved but to no effect. Isaac prayed to the true God and was answered; but he who asked help from the idols would fail completely. By faith Isaac waited for God to accomplish but those who depended on human hands and work were self-deceiving and harming themselves. They would be put to shame. Isaac and Rebekah trusted God

and were not disgraced.

2. **【The spirit and lust would jostle each other】**22-26 Rebekah bore twins and they jostled each other within her. She was distressed and went to inquire of God. God advised her that there were two nations and two peoples in her womb. One people would be stronger than the other, and the older would serve the younger. She gave birth to twin boys. The first to come out was red and his whole body was hairy; so they named him Esau (hairy). Then came his brother, with his hand grasping Esau's heel; so he was named Jacob (grasped the heel). The nation of Esau was enemy to Israel for generations. This also represents the struggle between the spirit and lust within us. We ought to overcome by trusting in the Spirit (Gal 5:16-18, Ro 8:12-13).
- ※ **【The fight between true and false god】** 18-20 All the surrounding nations of Israel believed in false gods. For generations God's people have been induced to follow worthless gods which provoked God's anger and were disgraced and captivated. Idols are worthless and detestable and opposed the true God. The underlying power was the evil spirit of Satan. God's children have been blinded by the god of this age to follow the ways of this world, submitting to the evil spirit in folly and ignorance. (2 Cor 4:4) Therefore we ought to set our minds on what the Spirit desires, trust in the Spirit to put the flesh to death and overcome all the power of the evil spirit of the idols. Then we may love God wholeheartedly for apart from the Lord, there is no other god.
3. **【The grace of election】** 27-28 Esau and Jacob selected two different roads. Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the open country coveting delicacies and pursued on gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature. While Jacob was a quiet man, staying among the tents and had fellowship with God. Isaac showed favoritism on Esau and always enjoyed his wild game. While Rebekah loved Jacob. She remembered well what God said to her that the older would serve the younger. Jacob was already been selected while he was in his mother's womb; before anything good or bad had been done, God's purpose in electing Jacob had stood. (Mal 1:2-3 Ro 9:11-13)
- ※ **【The grace of redemption】** 21-23 This is a song of redemption. It called upon the people to return in peace for God would never forget them. Though they had forsaken God, worshiped the idols and filled with sins and filth, God would blot out their transgression only if they would return. God's election and redemption are grace and nothing to boast of. Both Jacob's election by God in his mother's womb and his descendants' redemption from sins were because of God's great love! God elected and edified them. God never forgot them and He wanted himself to be glorified

because of Jacob and his descendants. All heavens and all things would sing together of God's grace of election and redemption!

4. **【Superficial and fundamental】** 29-34 Though Esau was the firstborn, he disdained God's grace and his birthright. He pursued the superficial things on the earth and wearied himself all day long for his flesh and grew famished. For a bowl of red stew to satisfy his temporary thirst, he sold his birthright. He ate it, drank it and went away. Though Jacob had a lot of corruption in his character, he grabbed hold of the fundamentals and regarded for God's grace. Thus he replaced Esau as the firstborn and received the everlasting blessing.

※ **【False words and God's words】** 24-28 Once Israel was born, he was formed by God. The Creator of all things declared to His people again: He would foil the signs of false prophets and made fools of diviners. But the words of his servants would be carried out and the predictions of his messengers would be fulfilled. Cyrus would accomplish what pleased God. He would order to rebuild the Holy City and its foundations be laid. The false prophet pursued superficiality. They were self-deceiving and deceived others. While the true prophet sought the fundamentals. They faithfully proclaimed God's word and all prophecies fulfilled. The descendants of Jacob sinned and degenerated. Thus the Holy City became ruin. But after deep repentance and grabbing on the fundamentals, it was rebuilt.

**Ps 25 / Rev 11:14 Main theme: There is woe after woe on earth. So seek and obey the word and God will treasure.**

There is suffering and hardship on earth. Only by believing and obeying the word of the Lord, and living in Him will there be peace.

- (1) **【Pray to triumph and not be put to shame】** 1-3 Pray and hope in God to trust Him, then we may triumph over our inward and outward enemies and not be put to shame.
- (2) **【Seek to understand and obey the way】** 4-5 Only by triumphing to obey the way may we live in the Lord and not be harmed by the evil and disasters of the earth.
- (3) **【Hope in the Lord for his mercy and love】** 6-14 Be humble to put hope in the Lord's compassion so all my sins will be forgiven and be able to keep the demands of his covenant.
- (4) **【Always pour out to the Lord】** 15-19 Always pray to be away from the traps and snares for the enemies are many.
- (5) **【Pray that the Lord will guard and redeem all people】** 20-22 The Lord will work wonder on those who take refuge in Him. May the Lord redeem his children away from all their troubles!

**Central point of the wheels: Thirst for the Holy Spirit and seek for true**

**grace, fear God and be led.**

Dear Jesus, May you save me to be away from false idols, grasp the fundamentals, fear God, keep the way and thirst for the pouring of the living water of the Holy Spirit.

## **Gen 26 / Isa 45**

**Main theme: Do not fear and do not contend but seek without ceasing and all nations be blessed**

**- dig well / seek**

Golden verses: Gen 26:24 Isa 45:11

A discussion on digging wells and seeking – on one side was the oppression of the Philistines on Isaac. Time and again he gave way and insisted to dig wells. He had good witnesses in the Gentiles. On the other side was God called upon the people to return and advance to seek God and know Him. This teaches to put hope in the Holy Spirit and seek Him without ceasing, dig out our sins, empty ourselves so we may flow out with the living water and see that everything will work for the good and brings thousands of people be blessed because of us.

A. Obey and be blessed but rebel brings disaster. Apart from the Lord, there is no other god.

Obey (Gen 26:1-17) – Rebel (Isa 45:1-13)

1. **【We ought to listen when God reveals】**4-2 Isaac followed God and walked a path of faith and still came across famine and trial. (1 Pe 1:7) He went to Gerar so he might go southward to Egypt. There God appeared to him:

- (1) Do not go down to Egypt but stay in Gerar for a while for God will be with him and bless him.
- (2) Promised to give all these lands to him and his descendants.
- (3) Promised all the blessings sworn to Abraham would also be to him. God would confirm the oath He swore to his father. Isaac was blessed because Abraham was obedient all his life. He kept God's word. Therefore Isaac obeyed and lived in Gerar.

※ **【We ought to obey His will when God prophesies】** 1-4 Prophet Isaiah was full of faith. Before God's people were captivated, he prophesied in the spirit. He was instructed by God: He would anoint Cyrus to be king and level the mountains. Through him God would break down gates of bronze and bars of iron of the enemies. God revealed to Isaac so he would obey and be blessed. King Cyrus was anointed to obey God's will and to give him the treasures of darkness. Isaac was given all the blessings of promise because of Abraham. While Cyrus was called upon because God elected the Israelites; God's plan on Abraham and his descendants must be fulfilled!

2. **【Lost the witness】** 7-11 Isaac lived as aliens with the Gentiles. He was afraid that he might be killed due to the beauty of her wife. So he lied that his wife was his sister. But lies would be exposed ultimately. He was rebuked by King Abimelech and lost the witness in the Gentiles. One of the men might well have harmed Rebekah and brought guilt upon them.
- ※ **【Witnessed the true God】** 5-8 The rise up of Cyrus was the prophecy which the prophet made before Cyrus was born. This revealed the Lord is God. Apart from Him, there is no other god who can declare the future. Isaac lived as an alien with the Gentiles. He ought to have witness the only true God. But he was afraid and lied. He forgot that God created light and darkness; He brought prosperity and created disaster. Why should he be afraid? God gave authority to Cyrus so all kings of other nations could not stand before him. God has the power to shower down righteousness, to open the earth wide and let salvation spring up. The God who anointed Cyrus accomplished great wonders by righteousness and salvation. Not only for the elect but also for all nations to be redeemed to witness the only true God! Isaac failed and put the people of Gerar in sin and lost the witness.
3. **【Took discipline, prospered and was blessed】** 12-13 As God has watched over Rebekah, she was not sullied. From then Isaac became humble and took discipline; he worked boldly in God's will. He planted crops in the land and reaped a hundredfold. He prospered and was blessed, and thus became rich. His spiritual life also changed from famine to abundance and was greatly blessed.
- ※ **【Rebelled, contended and in trouble】** 9-10 By His will God worked on all things. Cyrus was raised by God and who could contend with the Creator? The rebellious men were foolish and ignorant. We ought to understand that we were but clay. How could we resist against the potter? Isaac failed and was disciplined. He knew that he was but a potsherd being elected God and like clay under His hands, so why fear? Isaac humbled, took the lesson, prospered and was blessed. While the people were arrogant, rebellious and contended with God. Thus they were in trouble and gained nothing.
4. **【Persevered to give way and was favored】** 14-17 Isaac was blessed by God with many flocks and herds and servants. Thus the Philistines envied him. All the wells that his father dug were filled with earth. When Abimelech saw that Isaac was stronger than himself, he hated him and sent him away. Isaac trusted and put hope in God. He confirmed that all occurrences were from God. So even when the wells were filled he was not discouraged. He willingly went away when he was being hated. Therefore he moved to the valley of Gerar. He humbly walked with God and led a life of an alien.
- ※ **【Everything would work for the good of it】** 12-13 God raised up Cyrus in

His righteousness and straightened his way so he might assist that the Holy City be rebuild and set the exiles free. This was not for a price or reward. God raised up King of Philistia to persecute Isaac so as to force him to come before God and be blessed. God also raised up King Cyrus to rebuild the Holy City and the Temple so the exiles might be blessed. Both had the predestined good will of God. Isaac was persecuted and persevered to give way by God and was more blessed. The people had for a long time suffered and waited for God to raise up Cyrus to work for their good.

**B. Persist to dig well, advance to seek and all people will return to the Lord**

Dig well (Gen 26:28-35) – Seek (Isa 45:11, 14-25)

1. **【Persisted to dig well】**18-22 Isaac consecutively dug four wells which was the account of his spiritual account:
  - (1) The well of faith: a well which his father dug when he was on earth but was filled up by the Philistines. But he was not discouraged and by faith he re-dug.
  - (2) The well of quarrel: The herdsmen of Gerar came to quarrel over this well and he named it Esek (dispute). But he did not dispute and dug another well.
  - (3) The well of opposition: The Philistines came again to quarrel over this well which he named Sitnah (opposition) and he continued to move on to dig.
  - (4) The well of room: The Philistines no longer quarreled over this well. His heart overflowed with the living water and overcame by the Holy Spirit. No matter they were being occupied, he endured and was willing to bear the loss. Thus he was favored by God. (Ro 6:6-7, 12-13, Gal 5:16-18) He kept on unflaggingly digging wells, to deal with himself until he life reached a roomy and abundant condition.
- ✧ **【Advanced to seek】**11, 14-19 Prophet Isaiah continued to advance to seek, just like Isaac continued to dig wells and flowed out with living water and preached out important prophecy. Isaac dug well despite hardship while the prophet preached God's prophecy and also paid the price. He could understand the mystery of God's salvation will. God edified Israel so they might seek Him, to understand the things to come and to give orders to God. Isaac insisted unceasingly to dig wells and to advance in life. We also ought to dig out every blockage in order to understand deeply the will of God. God did not speak in the darkness of the shelter; he only too anxious that we sought Him and was found. (Pr 8:17) Isaac re-dug and cleared the blockage while the prophet advanced in the spirit and prophesied that Egypt, Cush and the Sabeans would come over to worship the true God. Those who

quarreled over the wells and made idols would be put to shame. While Isaac and all who insisted to seek would be given the eternal salvation, and never be put to shame or disgraced.

2. **【The only true God】** 23-26 From Gerar Isaac went to Beersheba and experienced a profound edification and break His life advanced one step upward. That night God appeared to him again. It was definitely not by accident that he was favored by God! God had tested and chosen him, comforted him and strengthened him not to be afraid for God would be with him and bless him. For the purpose of Abraham, his descendants would be numerous – a great reward! He understood clearly the Lord is the only true God, and was his God! There he built an altar and called on the name of the Lord. He witnessed the God whom he believed in the Gentiles.
- ※ **【The only Savior】** 20-21 God's final purpose of calling Cyrus was to make all nations be blessed and to know God. For this God declared that all nations ought to depart from the idols and return to the true God. Ignorant were those who carried about idols of wood, who pray to gods that could not save. God declared from the distant past and stated the things to come. The Lord is the only true God, the only Savior. He would send judgment through Cyrus and deliver His people. God called on the nations to know that the Lord is the only Savior. God is the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac. What was the benefit of the idols that the nations carried about?
3. **【The enemy came for reconciliation】** 26-33 Abimelech once hated Isaac and did not allow him to stay in the place. Now he saw that God was with him and hostility became fear. So he came to reconcile and make a treaty. Isaac acted with love and honesty. Thus he was favored before the enemy. (Pr 16:7) With compassion and not counting their previous evil he made a feast for them and reflected the abundance of God. They swore an oath to each other and the Philistines left in peace. On that day the servant of Isaac dug another well and he called it Shibah. He united with God and glorified His name.
- ※ **【Every knee should bow】** 22-24 Since the idols were worthless and only the Lord is the only Savior who prepared the abundant salvation, all the ends of the earth should turn to Him and be saved. By Himself He had sworn and uttered in all integrity that the time had come, every knee would bow before Him, every tongue would praise Him, salvation would be wide spread and the glorious kingdom of Christ would come. On one side was the enemy came for reconciliation and God's glory was revealed while the other was all nations were restored and joy was brought to the world.
4. **【Grief was brought to the parents】** 34-35 Not only did Esau disdain the grace of God, coveted the world, sold his birthright and indulged in lustful

desire, he took two Canaanite wives consecutively. This brought much quarrel and without tranquility in the family and a source of grief to the parents.

- ※ 【The descendants were all blessed】 25 Not only did God promised Israel would restore to their homeland and revive, He also promised that his descendants would be blessed and be found righteous and would exult and praise. Esau did not set apart from the Lord and married foreigners. This not only broke the heart of the parents but also made God grieve. His descendants were also being rejected and condemned.

**Ps 26 / Rev 11:15 Main theme: Lead a blameless life, the Lord will reign and spread the salvation widely**

**- Honor God / Integrity**

In time God will reign forever and ever. The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord. To prepare for the coming of the kingdom of God, His children ought to:

- (1) 【Honor God as King and lead a blameless life】1-3 In all our heart, thought and actions go on to maturity. Be a blameless man before God and in everything walk in the truth. Then God will vindicate for us.
- (2) 【Hate evil and love good】 4-6 Do not sit with hypocrites and the wicked. Serve the Lord with cleans hands and a pure heart.
- (3) 【Proclaim the Lord's grace extensively】7-12 Consecrate yourself, set apart for the Lord and become an instrument for noble purposes. Then we may proclaim the Lord's grace extensively, love God's holy temple, tremble at the result of the wicked, be delivered, compassionated and mightily used by God.

**Central point of the wheels: Advance to seek by grace, lead a blameless life and share in the kingdom of God**

Dear Lord, May you make me advance to seek, understand your will profoundly, lead a blameless life, not be discouraged, not quarrelsome, dig deeply in the well and gain the living water.

**Gen 27 / Isa 46**

**Main theme: Those who worship idols will be captivated but he who listens to God's words will receive the predestined blessings**

**- man's desire / God's will (man's work / idol)**

Golden verses: Gen 27:27-29 Isa 46:3-4

A discussion on man's desire and God's will – on one side it concerned Isaac and Rebekah were in the flesh, working according to man's desire and man's work which destroyed the will of God resulting hatred between the kindred. On



the other side it concerned the worthless idols which Babylon relied on. Only the will of God would be accomplished. This teaches us to listen to God's word, do not be rebellious, to understand deeply the everlasting love of God, remove all man's desire and man's work but to trust in God's promise wholeheartedly and wait to receive the predestined blessings of God for He will accomplish everything.

**A. Not by man's desire and do not worship idols but trust in God and be blessed**

Man's work (Gen 27:1-29) – Idols (Isa 46:1-7)

1. **【Be partial and muddled】** 1-4 Isaac was old and his eyes were weak. He coveted in wild game and was muddled in the spirit. He gave partiality to his firstborn Esau and resulted in confusing God's will. He called for Esau and ordered him to go the open country to hunt some wild game and prepare some tasty food which he liked, so that he might give him blessing before he die.
- ✖ **【The idol and burden】** 1 The prophet was farsighted in the spirit and prophesied that the idols of Bel and Nebo which the Babylonians worshiped would not be able to deliver them when the Persian King Cyrus attack. Instead they became a burden to the refugees of Babylon being carried on the wearied beasts when they fled in panic. Those who worshiped the idols for deliverance were also hard to escape the adversity. Isaac loved Esau, Rebekah loved Jacob and they both had partiality and their own motives. They had their own idols and did not honor God as great. Therefore their 'idol' became their burden and misery. Isaac gave much consideration on his human desire and was muddled in the spirit without understanding God's will. Prophet Isaiah had much concern for the Holy Spirit and he suffered to spread the word. He was discerned in God's will and therefore prophesied the result of Babylon.
2. **【Crafty plan and man's work】** 5-17 Rebekah gave partiality to Jacob. She knew that Jacob was chosen by God. When she heard what Isaac had ordered Esau, she grasped the opportunity to instigate Jacob to use falsified means to obtain the father's blessing. Rebekah who was excessively clever made some crafty plot and resort to deception and held herself accountable. The only worry for Jacob was his brother was hairy; for when his father felt he was not, he would be greatly cursed. Rebekah was eager for Jacob and was willing to hold herself responsible for all the curses. Therefore she used the goatskins to cover his hands and the smooth part of his neck. She also gave the best clothes of Esau for Jacob to wear and brought the tasty food which Isaac loved; she mixed the spurious with the genuine to cheat for blessing.

- ※ **【Man's intervention and man's work】** 2 The two idols of Bel and Nebo stood straight on the ground and were worshiped by men. But when the army of Cyrus came to besiege, they were also forced to escape. They bowed down and stooped low and could not stand straight up again. All of men's work and the idols could not stand firm but finally bowed and fell. No matter how Rebekah used crafty plans to let Jacob snatch the father's blessings, but anything that came from deceit and duplicity would not stand before the Holy and jealous God. All of men's work, carving and shaping by the craftsmen were detested by God. The deceptive Jacob hoped in vain to gain blessings but ultimately led to the admonishment of God.
3. **【Only listened to the mother's word】** 5-17 Jacob was the predestined firstborn and he was chosen by God in his mother's womb. He should have listened to God's word and waited quietly for God to accomplish. Instead he lived in the desire of the flesh and could not wait to seize the blessing of the firstborn. Thus he was attentive to his mother's word and was absolutely obedient. In his mind his mother had already replaced the position of God.
- ※ **【We ought to listen to God's word】** 3-5 God called upon the captivated remnants to listen to His words and not to forget His love. They should understand that God could not be compared. The idols of Babylon needed to be carried by man and even the idols could not save themselves. Since Israel was conceived he was upheld and carried by God. Even to his old age and gray hairs God still sustained him. God made Jacob, carried him and blessed him. How could his mother be compared to God? The help and love of his mother could not replace God's everlasting deliverance, love and care.
4. **【Self-deceiving and deceived the father】** 18-29 While in his mother's womb, Jacob had been grasping his brother's heel and would not let go. Later, with a bowl of lentil stew, he got the birthright of a firstborn from Esau. But he did not treat this as sufficient. He used deceptive ways to cheat his father and brother to seize the blessing of the firstborn. Jacob took the tasty food prepared by his mother and served as wild game before his father. To beguile for blessings, he lied four times. Old and muddleheaded Jacob was not able to identify the truth from false and thought he was his beloved Esau. How would you know that Isaac was trapped and cheated? Jacob succeeded to deceive his father and felt happy but did not realize that trouble was coming.
- ※ **【Self-deceiving and deceived others】** 6-7 The prophet sharply pointed out that those who poured gold from their bags and weighed out silver on the scales; they made it into a god irrespective of their price. Then they bowed down and worshiped it but it did not answer. When distress came, it could

not save them from their troubles. All the work was worthless; they were self-deceiving and deceived others. On one side was cheating the father for blessing deceptively while the other was making idols to worship. Both were worthless and self-deceiving. Jacob had the full support of his mother and thought he might succeed. Those who carried the images of god thought they were strong. Both were without effect.

**B. Following man's intention would reap destruction but God's purpose would stand**

Man's intention (Gen 27:30-46) God's will (Isa 46:8-13)

1. **【Man's intention would fail】** 30-40 Right after Isaac had blessed Jacob, Esau came in from hunting. He too prepared the tasty food and brought it to his father so he might bless him. Isaac trembled violently and began to understand. He knew he was cheated by Jacob with the blessings of the firstborn. He did not honor God and on important matters he muddled the will of God. He forgot that God said in future the older would serve the younger. By human flesh and desire he nearly changed the will of God!  
※ **【God's will would stand】** 8-11 The prophet reminded the Israelites to take heart to think and not to be rebellious and not to worship idols. Only God made known the end from the beginning and prophesy what was to come. Apart from Him, there was no other god. The Lord's purpose would stand and He would do all that He pleased. The King of Cyrus whom God promised would be raised just like the bird of prey that He summoned from the east. This was to deliver Zion so His people might return. Isaac was not attentive to God's prophecy and did not seek His will. He only wanted to give his blessings to Esau by his own desire but only God's purpose would stand and the will of God would not be hindered. The muddleheaded Isaac was disciplined; and the rebellious should take heart to think. Isaac did by his own will, Rebekah did by man's work and both had a sorrowful lesson.
2. **【Both would take the lesson】** 41-45 Esau saw that the father had given the blessing to Jacob, so he held a grudge against him and planned to kill him to revenge. Rebekah did not forget that God chose Jacob to replace the firstborn but she did not wait for God. She only thought of letting Jacob to inherit the blessing of the firstborn and unfortunately tried to be clever only to end up with a blunder resulting in hatred between the brothers which was a sorrowful lesson for Rebekah. When she knew that Esau wanted to kill Jacob, she could not but send Jacob away from home to escape the disaster in Haran to his uncle's place. From then she could never see her son. Jacob was forced to leave his close ties and had to introspect and take discipline.  
※ **【Take discipline and return】** 12-13 The prophet exhorted the Israelites to take discipline on God's rebuke and punishment to refine and return. Their

captivity and Jacob's escape were due to God's righteousness and their return was because God's salvation would not be delayed. Those people who really took discipline would be the glory of God and salvation would be granted to them. Rebekah gave partiality to Jacob and departed from righteousness resulting to a broken family which ought to be a great lesson. After Jacob was refined he became God's glory.

3. 【A lesson drawn from previous mistakes】 46 Esau was supposed to be a devoted descendant and ought to be faithful and obedient who set apart from the Lord. However he married the Canaanites and took two Hittites as wives. This brought trouble and worry to his parents. Even his mother was disgusted with living. Thus this was a lesson drawn from previous mistakes to Jacob.

※ 【Do not be stubborn-hearted】 12-13 Isaiah called upon the people to take discipline and punishment, to listen to God and not be stubborn-hearted and do not be far from righteousness. The salvation of Israel would come soon and not be delayed. This revealed that God had been waiting for their complete return to become a redeemed people and God's glory. Esau lived in lust. He was stubborn-hearted and would not return. So he took the daughter of Ishmael as a wife and was still in sin. He became the disgrace of the family and did not win the heart of the parents nor of God. These should be the warnings of Jacob.

**Ps 27 / Rev 11:16 Main theme: Seek to obey the word, be bold and steadfast to believe and you will see the glory of God**

**- Seek / God's glory**

- (1) 【Dwell in the Lord and do not be afraid of the enemy's attack】 1-6 Those elders who are humble to serve the Lord, faithful in their duty and shepherd their flock will not be afraid of the enemies' attacks. They need only to rest in peace before the Lord for He will protect, hide and exalt them.
- (2) 【Those who seek and obey the word will see God's grace】 7-14 Those who call in humility, seek the Lord's face, pray to understand and obey the word, wait in boldness and confident of the land of the living will see the favor the Lord.

**Central point of the wheels: He who does not worship the idols but seek God's face humbly and obey His commands will be blessed.**

Dear Lord, may you let me abandon the idols and be refined by you, so I may dwell in your temple forever, to seek your face and gaze upon your beauty.

**Gen 28 / Isa 47**

**Main theme: Willing to undertake the refinement and be blessed thereafter but the wicked will be destroyed.**

### **- Humble / Arrogant (be blessed / was punished)**

The golden verses: Gen 28: 13-17 Isa 47:1

A discussion of humility and arrogance – On one side it concerned Jacob was compelled to leave his kindred. In loneliness and sufferings he took the discipline humbly and was blessed to see God's revelation. On the other side it concerned the pride and arrogance of Babylon. He was filled with sins and ultimately corrupted and was punished. "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." (Jas 4:6)

#### **A. Blessed is he who humbles to take discipline and those who are proud and ruthless will be punished.**

Take discipline (Gen 28:1-9) – Proud (Isa 47:1-7)

1. **【Punished for being arrogant and willful】** 1-2 Jacob was the chosen instrument of God and through him a chosen people would be developed to be His specially chosen children. But he was spoiled by his mother to do whatever he pleased. Further, due to his own deceptive character, he had to undergo a period of hard refinement to take discipline and be blessed to inherit God's promise. This time he had cheated for his blessings and resulted in a fatal disaster. He was forced to escape to his uncle's place.  
※ **【Punished for being arrogant】** 1-2 Babylon (confusion) originated from the rebellious hero Nimrod and the Tower of Babel (confused) was created at the same time. It was a sign of arrogance and anti-God. "The Virgin Daughter of Babylon" reflected that the new kingdom of Babylon was very strong and no one could overcome them. They were high on the throne, tyrannically abusing other's power. God would punish her, stripped her off from her honor, brought her down from her arrogant throne, cut down the horns of the wicked and would not exalt herself. God loved Jacob and disciplined him through sufferings so he might come down from his place of arrogance and willfulness. Sufferings were to refine his deceptive and arrogant character. On one hand was due to the love of God to refine the dross while the other was God's jealousy to grant righteousness.
2. **【Be blessed】** 1-5 Isaac told Jacob to come to him and commanded him not to marry a Canaanite woman but to go to his uncle's family and take a wife there. He gave him blessings again. This time the blessings were made after Isaac was awakened and confirmed that Jacob was the firstborn to inherit God's blessings to Abraham with numerous descendants and increase in numbers and to take possession of Canaan.  
※ **【God avenged】** 3-4 Babylon represented every arrogant and anti-God power and the wicked world. (Isa 13:11) When evil had filled its cup, God would punish and avenge. God would let Babylon uncover her ugly nature to be put to shame and disgrace for God would avenge and not relent. The

Lord Almighty is the Redeemer and the Holy One of Israel. The prophecy of the prophet was to warn the people to set apart for the Lord and not to unite with Babylon but to run away from the ever wicked Babylon. (Isa 52:11) Isaac seriously warned Jacob not to marry woman for a wife and the purpose was to tell him to run away from the sins of the other nations and the worship of idols. (Deu 7:1-4)

3. **【Those who pleased the sinful nature would encounter God's wrath】** 6-9 Esau coveted the secular things and lost the grace of God as he sold his birthright. This time he did not have the blessing (Heb 12:17) but he did not repent. Instead he bore hatred on his brother and explicitly claimed to kill Jacob. He also heard the command which his father gave to Jacob but he did not take any lesson. Rather he took the daughter of Ishmael as his third wife. His nature was not changed. He sowed to please his sinful nature and reaped destruction. He could not please the heart of his parents and even invited God's wrath.
- ✕ **【Judged for merciless】** 5-7 Babylon was extravagant and dissipated, did nothing but evil, treated God's people with ferocity and ruthlessness and added to the calamity. They did not understand God's majestic judgment. Esau was also merciless toward Jacob and revenged on him. Similarly he received the same terrifying result. (Jas 2:13) Babylon thought she herself would continue forever to be the eternal queen, be the first among the nations and would not reflect on what might happen. When Jacob was in darkness, he awoke and returned, listened to his parents and saw the light again. But Esau and Babylon continued to be stubborn and would enter the everlasting darkness. God's judgment was just and true!

**B. In trouble he saw God and was favored but those who was arrogant and against God would be destroyed.**

God revealed (Gen 28:10-22) – God sent disaster (Isa 47:8-15)

1. **【Saw a heavenly stairway in trouble】** 10-13 Jacob was forced to leave his parents and went to the far away Haran alone. When there was no one to turn to, alone without help and everywhere was darkness, he called on God alone. Night came and he took a stone under his head and slept on it. He dreamed of a heavenly stairway. God stood at the top of the stairway and revealed to him. Jacob was blessed in trouble. Through the stairway reaching to heaven, he was close with God and looked to Him wholeheartedly. This heavenly stairway was the mystery of salvation, representing Christ who was the Word made flesh. "He is the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (Jn 1:51, 14:6) The angels of God were ascending and descending on it to serve those who will inherit salvation. (Heb 1:14)

- ※ **【Sought sorceries in trouble】** 8-9 Babylon had been turning to sorceries and thought herself was above all gods. She sat alone on the throne above all nations thinking she would continue forever to be the eternal queen and would never be a widow or suffer the loss of children. But the prophet proclaimed that both of these would overtake her in a moment, on a single day. They would come upon her in full measure, in spite of her many sorceries and all her potent spells. National calamity and captivity would be her destiny. Jacob experienced God was his Redeemer in trouble. The stairway (Christ) that he saw led people to enter eternity while the sorceries and idols of Babylon led men to destruction. Apart from Him there is no way of redemption. (Ac 4:12) When Jacob was spoiled by his mother, he could not see God; only by departing from the dependent 'idol', in loneliness he saw God.
2. **【Was revealed by God】** 13-17 In the lonely desert God revealed himself to Jacob and promised him with the following:
- (1) The place (Canaan) where he was lying would be given to him and his descendants.
  - (2) His descendants would be numerous.
  - (3) All people on earth would be blessed through him and his offspring.
  - (4) God would be with him.
  - (5) God would bring him back to this land.
- Jacob awoke and was extremely happy! He held a fearful heart and called the place where God appeared to him 'Bethel' (the house of God and the gate of heaven). He took the stone he had placed under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on top of it and set it apart to be holy and be remembered forever. The blessings of God were far beyond from those he snatched by himself!
- ※ **【Trouble came suddenly】** 10-11 Babylon had been relying on her own wickedness and insisted on overtaking God's position. She was arrogant and boastful, harbored evil intention and thought herself as wise as God. Thus God would destroy her. (2 Th 2:4, 8) On one side God re-instated the blessings of Abraham to Jacob, while on the other side God reiterated his punishment toward Babylon. Jacob and his offspring would forever enjoy the beautiful place of Canaan while total destruction would be poured on the sinful Babylon. The Lord is our Sovereign Lord. Apart from Him there is no other god just as what Jacob experienced on his way. Babylon was proud, self-deceiving and thought no one saw her evil deeds. God would destroy the wisdom of the wise and let catastrophe come suddenly. On one side God revealed and God blessed while the other side God was angered and God sent disasters. For the Lord Almighty has purposed and no one

could turn it back! (Isa 14:27)

3. **【Gave thanks and vowed to God】** 18-22 Jacob's encounter in Bethel was his first experience of God's revelation and this was also the most important turning point of his life. He bore a grateful and revering heart and vowed to God. If God would watch over him and take him safely to his father's house, then he would accept the Lord to be his God for life, the place where God revealed to him would be God's house and he would give one tenth of what he had to God.
- ※ **【Put up a last-ditch in vain】** 12-15 Babylon had long since been with many sorceries and magic spells which would doom to destruction and could not be retrieved. Jacob woke up and gave thanks to God and worshiped Him. Babylon called upon the deities and relied on falsehood. She was in her death throes but still could not escape from the burning fire of God's punishment. Those partners who had been trafficking with Babylon had gone on in their error and there was not one that could save her. All anti-God's power would be like stubble to be burned up by the fire. Babylon faced her result of dead end while Jacob's experience in Bethel was his new starting point to advance forward in life. God's people had been suffering under the refinement in Babylon and they humbled to call upon God. So God became their heavenly stairway and delivered them and had mercy on them.

**Ps 28 / Rev 11:17 Main theme: He who pleads for the everlasting Almighty God will be helped and rejoice.**

**- Plead for / God's might**

- (1) **【Call humbly to depart from evil】** 1-5 Plead for humbly and do not remain silent, give no rest to call (Isa 62:6-7) and do not let evil rule over or bind me, otherwise God will drag me away with the wicked and those who do evil.
- (2) **【Honor the Lord as King and be greatly blessed】** 6-9 God is good to those who call on Him. My heart trusts in hum, and I am helped. I pray and have the power to shun away evil and do good, honor the Lord as King and bring all people be blessed.

**Central point of the wheels: Come down from the throne and see the heavenly stairway, God is in authority and seek and be granted**

Dear Lord, You are my heavenly stairway! I am willing to be humble and come down from the throne. May you rule over me in my heart. I give thanks and worship you.

**Gen 29 / Isa 48**

**Main theme: Do not act recklessly, listen to the command and honor His**



## **will so you will be blessed and bear fruit**

### **- Wayward / Stubborn (Obey the command / Rebel)**

Golden verses: Gen 29:20 Isa 48:10

A discussion on waywardness and stubbornness – on one side it concerned the corrupt character of Jacob that needed to undergo a long term of refinement in the house of Laban, then he could understand himself profoundly, undergo a change in his life and accomplish God's will. On the other side it concerned the stubborn and rebellious descendants of Jacob. They also needed refinement and then obeyed the commands and be blessed. The house of Laban and Babylon were furnaces of refinement so as to refine the dross of those whom God chose to accomplish His plan.

#### **A. Do not rebel and be wayward but be refined to understand the will of God**

Wayward (Gen 29-1:20) – deceptive (Isa 48:1-11)

1. **【Overweening wayward】** 1-14 Jacob arrived Haran to a foreign place. He did not pray to seek God but act according to his flesh and exposed his waywardness.

- (1) Inquired about his uncle's house and seek man's help instead of relying on God wholeheartedly.
- (2) Arbitrarily set his own idea to change the shepherds' practice of watering the sheep and was rejected.
- (3) When he saw Rachel came, he tried to please her and rolled the stone away without permission to water the sheep of his mother's brother.
- (4) When he first saw Rachel, he showed his affection without consideration.
- (5) He poured out his misery before Rachel and Laban.
- (6) He allowed his sinful nature to choose and took Rachel as his lover.
- (7) To win over Rachel, he set for himself a seven-year wages.

The above reflected that Jacob was swayed by emotions and overweening wayward!

- ※ **【Overweening treacherous】** 1-8 Prophet Isaiah rebuked the remnants of Judah as treacherous and had lost their godliness:

- (1) Swore by falsehood.
- (2) Without truth or righteousness.
- (3) Called themselves citizens of the holy city.
- (4) Stubborn and rebellious, the sinews of their neck were iron and their forehead was bronze.
- (5) Relied on carved idols.

2. **【A choice of the sinful nature】** 15-20 Jacob was received by his mother's brother for a month and he allowed his sexual desire to choose and was

fond of Rachel without honoring God or seeking God. Nor did he care about God's will but acted according to what he pleased. For the sake of Rachel, he was willing to serve his mother's brother for seven years. Laban was a honey-mouthed and dagger-hearted man. His deception was far beyond Jacob. On one hand he tried to calculate how to take advantage while the other hand he agreed to his request. Jacob was deeply in love with Rachel and took seven years as a few days and was willing to serve Laban for Rachel.

- ✧ 【The refinement of suffering】 9-11 The remnants of Jacob's offspring were called a rebel from birth. But for the sake of God's own name and His praise, He delayed his wrath and did not cut them off. They had to undergo Babylon's refinement of the furnace of suffering; just like Jacob had to be refined in the house of Laban before they might be cleansed and favored to glorify God's name. God would not yield His glory to another. This exhibited God's great love of forbearance. Similarly God treated Jacob the same. The deception, waywardness and partial love of Jacob required to be dealt with by Laban before he could be refined to accomplish God's will.
- 3. 【Neglected God's will】 15-20 Before Jacob left home, Isaac blessed him and confirmed him to be the firstborn to inherit the promises given to Abraham. But when he first reached Haran, he did not pursue righteousness and truth. He was extremely wayward and did not honor God as holy neglecting God's will and acted rashly on important matters as marriage.
- ✧ 【Neglected God's deed】 3-7 God has an everlasting plan for his chosen people and through the prophecy of the prophet it will be fulfilled when the time comes. God foretold them of the things to come, lest they would cling on to the idols. Although His people saw the might of God, they were stubborn and faithless from ages. Therefore He proclaimed to them, from now He has created a new thing, that was Cyrus would be raised and the chosen people would be redeemed. God had revealed and prophesied to them many times, but because their body was corrupt and their stubborn character, they had neglected God's deed! Only prophet Isaiah bore the mind of God and exhorted them repeatedly revealing to them God's intention on them.

## **B. Suffer due to the flesh and partiality but peaceful and fruitful for being attentive**

Distress (Gen 29:21-35) – Peace (Isa 48:12-22)

1. 【Cheated for partiality】 21-25 For the sake of Rachel, Jacob had served Laban for seven years. On the date of their marriage Laban gave a feast. But he took his elder daughter and gave her to Jacob. The deceitful Laban was bent solely on profit and intended to cheat. He did not give Rachel to him

according to their promise but took their local custom as an excuse so Jacob would serve him another seven years. Laban had already plotted, no matter what reason Jacob said did not help. Jacob was cheated at the end for his partiality on the flesh.

- ※ **【Prosperous for obeying the will】** 12-16 God called upon His people to listen to Him to understand that God is the first and the last. Not only did He create everything, He controlled the history of mankind. God raised Cyrus to carry out his purpose against Babylon. Cyrus obeyed God's will and conquered the Chaldeans and God would succeed in his mission. The prophet proclaimed this news and prophesied the future and God's Spirit was with him. By his flesh Jacob grasped a wife not within the will of God and he was cheated at the end. He did not understand God is the first and the last. God's will, God would fulfill. Only by believing and trusting and it will prosper.
2. **【Double the suffering for going after the sinful nature】** 26-30 The cunning Laban cheated Jacob. He used fine-sounding words to promise Jacob that after the bridal week of Leah, Rachel would be given to him as wife. But the condition was another seven years' work. Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah and was willing to pay the price for seven years. He made the choice of a sinful nature and brought twice the suffering.
- ※ **【More blessings for obeying God's command】** 17-19 The Lord is the Redeemer and the Holy One of Israel. He called them again to obey His teaching and direction. If only they had paid attention to His commands and God would promise them:
- (1) Their peace would have been like a river.
  - (2) Their righteousness like the waves of the sea.
  - (3) Their descendants would have been like the sand.
  - (4) Their name would never be cut off nor destroyed from before Him.
- The prophecy of the prophet would ultimately be fulfilled in the time of the Kingdom of Christ. Jacob did not obey God's will and had to suffer for a double portion; God's people obeyed God's command and were blessed a million times.
3. **【Come before God and be fruitful】** 31-35 Leah was not loved by her husband. So she poured out her bitterness before God. God was gracious to her and gave her four sons namely: Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah (praise) consecutively. This showed: God was gracious to her bitterness, heard her calling, her husband would unite with her and praise God. Rachel was favored by man but was disfavored by God. Only by uniting with God, call to God on her bitterness then she would receive the grace and be fruitful.
- ※ **【Shun away evil and the living water would gush out】** 20-22 Finally God

called on the people to escape from Babylon and completely shun away from evil so they might shout with joy and proclaim God's salvation till the ends of the world. God even promised His people to return through the deserts, thirst before God and he would split the rock and water would gush out from it. Leah was disfavored so she poured her bitterness before God and gave birth to four sons. She united with God, gave thanks and praises. The people returned, rejoiced and proclaimed. On one side she experienced the broken life and finally became fruitful. While the other side was the rock split and living water gushed out. On one side was favored before God with peace and joy while the other side was not willing to depart from sin and there was no peace.

**Ps 29 / Rev 11:18 Main theme: The time has come to reward and punish. Therefore honor the word, consecrate yourselves and ascribe all the glory to God.**

**- Consecrate / Reward and punishment**

The Lord's coming is near, the time for reward and punishment has come.

Therefore we ought to bear the mind of the Lord to love God and save people.

- (1) **【Consecrate and glorify God】** 1-2 If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master. This exhibits God's glory and strength but we must ascribe all the glory and strength to God.
- (2) **【The effect of the Lord's voice】** 3-9 The power of God's word to a man who is humble to accept is so great, like thunder being broken in pieces (like Paul treated everything as filth for the Lord and was willing to die the most cruel death). He will have the power like a wild ox, skipping and trampling on the wicked. The Lord's word shakes the desert and makes straight the path. The Lord's word clears away every intention and nonessentials that do not belong to Him. Only by eating thoroughly the word of God may we lead man to return to the Lord and proclaim His glory.
- (3) **【God will give strength and peace】** 10-11 The path of the cross is a suffering path but will bring glory for the Lord will give strength and peace.

**Central point of the wheels: Tremble to keep the word, proclaim the salvation and be rewarded after refinement.**

Dear Lord, may you let me be refined and take up the mission of spreading the gospel and proclaim your salvation.

**Gen 30 / Isa 49**

**Main theme: Refine to remove evil, pray in waiting and all peoples will return.**

**- Refine / revive**

Golden verses: Gen 30:30 Isa 49:15

A discussion on refinement and revival – On one side it concerned God would refine Jacob and his family so they might return to the good land which God promised after the refinement and fulfill God's will. On the other side it concerned God did not abandon Israel forever. He would let them return after refinement and rebuild Zion to prosper and revive.

**A. Refine the old self to humble, be hidden and be the light for the Gentiles.**

Refine (Gen 30:1-21) – Shine (Isa 49:1-7)

1. **【Refine the flesh and the old self】**1-13 Rachel was favored by his husband Jacob but was disfavored by God. God made her barren so she might be dealt with to be humble to call on God. However, not only did she not humble to pray to God; she saw her sister had four sons continuously and became jealous and was angry at Jacob. She did not understand that it was God who made her barren. She was not willing to accept her weakness in front of her sister so she acted by flesh and made her servant Bilhah as a wife in order to have a child. Bilhah gave birth to two sons but Rachel was still barren. Leah saw that she stopped bearing, so she also gave her maidservant to Jacob and had two sons. The two sisters had open strife and veiled struggle. But Jacob, as the head of the family, did not lead his family members to love one another, be harmonious and faithful to serve the Lord. They all needed to be refined.  
✂ **【To be a sharpened knife and pointed sword】** 1-4 Jesus Christ was the servant of God being called upon the mission. First He called upon the islands to listen to His good news of salvation. He humbled and obeyed. His mouth was like a sharpened knife (Heb 4:12), like a pointed sword (Rev 1:16, Eph6:17), full of power and strength deeply concealed in God's quiver. The house of Jacob was full of man's work. Christ did not work by Himself but by honoring God's will. God was glorified because of Him. The house of Jacob ought to have been God's glory and witness. Instead it was filled with jealousy, strife, selfishness and partiality. They needed the sharpened knife and pointed sword of Christ's words to penetrate even to divide and after refinement to be the sharpened instrument in God's hand.
2. **【Struggled in vain】** 14-16 Rachel was favored by Jacob above her sister. Thus she did what she pleased. She was in control of her husband and robbed the mandrake plants (a plant which speeds up child bearing) from Reuben's hands. To possess the mandrakes, she could not refuse Leah that she might sleep with Jacob. Such unscrupulous, without humility and repenting and the struggles were all in vain.  
✂ **【Ought to return to God】** 5 Christ who was formed by God from birth was

His servant for the purpose to lead His people to return to God so Israel would return and revive. He let God to be His strength and God honored Him. Rachel struggled by her old self. She was not willing to trust in God or let God be her strength. Only by returning to God would she bear fruit.

3. **【Gone through refinement】** 1-16 Leah and Rachel should have been sisters by blood but they had been working for their own interest, were jealous of each other, quarreled without ceasing and there was no peace in the family. They allowed their old self to be the king, each tried to win, each tried to get the upper hand and would not humble to give way or be willing to be oppressed. They ought to go through refinement and be dealt with thoroughly to rid the old self, and then they would bring out godly children and accomplish the will of God.

※ **【Be the light of the Gentiles】** 6 God's servant was being summoned and entrusted, not only to restore the house of Israel; God also made them a light for the Gentiles to bring His salvation to the ends of the world. Christ has denied Himself to be the light of the world and the light of life. (Jn 8:12) Christ is the light shining in the darkness. Only if the house of Jacob would refine their old self and abandon darkness to come the light, then they might be the light of the Gentiles (Isa 60:1) to bring God's salvation to the ends of the earth. (Mt 4:16 Jn 3:19-20)

4. **【Prayed and was granted】** 17-21 Leah as the elder sister did not bear a humble heart to give way and quarreled with the younger sister unceasingly. She stopped to bear children and after being dealt with and repented before God was granted. She had two more sons and a daughter. She understood that God rewarded her with the value of life, presented her with a precious gift and everything was from God.

※ **【God is faithful】** 7 Christ was God's servant. He humbled to come down on earth going through all sorts of scorn and affliction and revealed His glory among the nations. All kings and princes would come and bow down because God is faithful. The prophecy and promises He gave to the chosen people would never fail. He is the Holy One of Israel and will accomplish everything. Leah had for long been barren and after prayer would be granted by God and experienced God's faithfulness. (1 Th 5:24 Heb 11:11)

## **B. Granted after humble prayer and rejoice in return**

Granted (Gen 30:22-24) – Restored (Isa 49:8-13)

1. **【Granted after humble prayer】** 22-24 Rachel had for long been favored by Jacob and was extremely overweening and indulging but God made her barren. When she had learnt to be humble, to take away her disgrace to be barren, that it was useless to be jealous, not by relying on her maidservant to oppose her sister but the only way was to call on God humbly. Therefore

God cared for and granted her and opened her womb. She immediately gave thanks and witnessed God who removed her shame. Rachel gave birth to a firstborn and named him Joseph (increase). Full of faith she cried out to God to add to her another son. She had gone through hard refinement and rejoiced in praise. The church has for long been desolate without bearing fruit. Only by crying out to God humbly and repenting, God will have mercy on us and make us fruitful. (Isa 54:1)

- ※ **【Favored and answered】** 8-13 God promised His people to deliver them back to their land and reassign its desolate inheritance. In the time of His favor he would answer them and help them just like Rachel prayed humbly and was granted to give birth.
- 2. **【Blessed and revived】** 22-24 Rachel united with God, gave birth to a son and was no more in shame. Christ as a servant of God restored the land and released those who were bound by sin under the power of darkness. Rachel also had the relief in the spirit just like the restored people sprinkled by the living water of the Holy Spirit. They did not thirst any more but enjoyed the abundance and fullness in life. Rachel was barren for long and Zion had long been desolate, all because of their corruption. Through hard refinement they were granted, restored and gave great praises.
- ※ **【Rejoice and return】** 8-13 The truth of Christ is the bright path and is made for all nations. In the last days all nations will come from all directions and pledge allegiance to Christ. They will rejoice in God's salvation. How God comforted His people; He also comforted Rachel and made her shout for joy. By faith she requested for another son with blessings upon blessings. The prophecy of foreign nations returning to the Lord will also fulfill.

### **C. Restore and prosper, start a household and wait to be blessed**

Expanded (Gen 30:25-43) – Prospered (Isa 49:14-26)

- 1. **【Man's urge to stay】** 25-28 Jacob had been tested in the house of Laban for fourteen years. He had vowed to God to return to his land so he brought this to Laban. Laban clearly knew God blessed him because of Jacob. Thus he tried to urge him to stay and let him suggest a wage and agreed readily.
- ※ **【God's everlasting love】** 14-18 God comforted His people and guaranteed to them He did not forget them but would love them with an everlasting love. Although a mother might forget her baby, God would not forget them. God's love for Jacob was never changed. The urge to stay from Laban was a selfish intention. God did not forget Jacob and his offspring but engraved them on His palms. When his sons hastened back, the desolate holy city was like a bride wearing on ornaments with great beauty!
- 2. **【Did something for his own household】** 29-41 Jacob had toiled in the house of Laban for fourteen years. He had nothing except his wives and

children. Laban's repeated urge to stay was due to God's good intention so Jacob's last six years might prosper greatly and return with fruitful result. Jacob requested to do something for his own household. He suggested a strange wage and was the lowest wage – that was to take the speckled or spotted dark-colored sheep and the streaked goats as his wage. The greedy Laban saw this was profitable and accepted the offer.

- ※ **【Restored and prospered】** 19-23 The prophet prophesied the long wasted city of Zion would be rebuilt. The place for the restored would be too small for them. Zion would no longer be bereaved and barren but prosper again. The house of Jacob was also watched over by God to do something for his household. He who waited for God would not be put to shame. God would beckon to the Gentiles and lift up His banner to the peoples. How did God make the kings work for the restoration of his people; similarly He made Laban work for Jacob so he prospered great in his last six years.
- 3. **【Restored the wages】** 42-43 Jacob was blessed by God and gave him faith and wisdom to restore completely what Laban mistreated him in his wages. In his dream he was instructed by God's angel to reveal him God's power and wisdom so he prospered exceedingly at the end.
- ※ **【Retrieved the captives】** 24-26 At the end God proclaimed to His people, 'The Lord is the Redeemer of Israel, the Mighty One of Jacob.' All those who were taken from the fierce would be retrieved. God would save the captives. God's might would make Jacob restore his twenty years wages from Laban so the greedy and deceitful Laban would taken a severe lesson. Those who are against God's people, God will be against them so that those oppressors will eat their own flesh.

**Ps 30 / Rev 11:19 Main theme: Exalt the word of God and pray for His healing so wailing turns to rejoice.**

**- God's word / The Testimony**

There is the holy word of God in the Testimony. In the final days God will judge all peoples with His word and whoever is offensive and rebellious will be punished.

- (1) **【Exalt God's word】** 1-3 Cry out to the Lord so I may overcome, be healed and spare me from going down into the pit. After failure and weakness, we ought to exalt the Lord's word above everything.
- (2) **【Exhort the people to sing praise and give thanks to God's grace】** 4-5 For God's anger lasts only a moment, but His favor lasts a lifetime, therefore His saints should be thankful and praise Him.
- (3) **【Tell of the witness】** 6-11 I was nearly down into the pit for indulging in His grace. But I cried and called to the Lord for His mercy and help. so God made my wailing into dancing.



- (4) **【Do not be silent to give thanks】** I will not forget the Lord's goodness for the more forgiveness, the more the love for God. From now on I will give you thanks forever!

**Central points of the wheels: Be flawless and revive, exalt the Lord's word and cry out in praise.**

Dear Lord, may you make me humble and be disciplined, flawless and shine, and proclaim your salvation to the ends of the world!

### **Gen 31 / Isa 50**

**Main theme: Remove your sin and take discipline, be bold to obey the Lord's command and there will be help from God.**

#### **- Obey the will / God helps**

Golden verses: Gen 31:12-13 Isa 50:4

A discussion on obeying the will and God's help - On one side it concerned Jacob's obedience to the will of God and ran away from the house of Laban to return to his homeland. Though Laban pursued him, God helped him. On the other side it concerned the suffering servant was commissioned to preach the word. He was willing to bear the mistreat and humiliation but also had the help from God.

#### **A. Turn away from sin, take discipline and be bold to obey God's will**

Take discipline (Gen 31:1-21) - Obey the will (Isa 50:1-4)

1. **【Suffered due to sin】** 1 Jacob was loved by God, (Mal 1:2) and God's will and plan were on him. But he was born deceitful and corrupt. So he had to be refined to remove the impurities before he could accomplish God's will. Thus God placed him in Laban's house through long periods of refinement and being dealt with inhumanely so as to get hold of him completely.  
✖ **【Abandoned due to sin】** 1 Israel was like the beloved wife of God, under the oath of love with God. (Jer 2:2) Jacob was also loved by God, being chosen by Him and the center of His plan. Israel was deeply in sin and provoked God to anger. So he was handed to his adversary just like a divorced wife. They had to go through the furnace of Babylon just like Jacob had to undergo the furnace of Laban's house, being refined to flawless and being won over by God forever to be a holy people to serve God.
2. **【The attitude was changed】** 1-2 In the last six years of Jacob's service in Laban's house, he was blessed by God and prospered. He owned large flocks, maidservants and menservants which invited jealousy from Laban's house. The sons of Laban complained that Jacob had taken away everything from their father. Laban who treated wealth as his life, had changed his attitude toward Jacob and was not what it had been. All this had awakened Jacob and made him aware that God's time was near. In all things God

worked for the good of it and through the circumstances to reveal God's will.

✘ **【God's love never changes】** 1 Even though Israel was divorced because of her sins, God did not abandon them. He would not discard forever the covenant He made with His people. Therefore God said, "Where is your mother's (Israel's) certificate of divorce with which I sent her away? Or to which of my creditors did I sell you?" This showed that God's love far exceeded the law. According to the law, the divorced wife could not return to her first husband. This was detestable. (Deu24:1-4) But God said, "But you have lived as a prostitute with many lovers - would you now return to me?" (Jer 3:1) The environment may change and human sympathy is rare but God's love never changes. The attitude of the house of Laban toward Jacob had changed but God never abandoned His love for Jacob.

3. **【Determined to return】**3-16 God's words came to Jacob and told him to go back to his relatives for God would be with him. Again God's angel called him in his dream and said, "I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and where you made a vow to me. Now leave this land at once and go back to your native land." God's appearance was his only comfort and strength. The God of his father was ever with him. So Jacob told everything to his two wives. Leah and Rachel understood the will of God and the whole family left the father's house toward Bethel in one heart with the husband, determined to return.

✘ **【God would redeem】** 2-3 Though Israel abandoned God, God would seek and call them and wait to redeem them. So that they would know God's arm was not too short to ransom. Only if they would determine to return to God and abandon their wickedness just like the whole family of Jacob decided to go back to their homeland. God's arm would be stretched out for them and redeem them. Men are submerged in sin and ultimately do not repent. One day heaven and earth will turn dark and be cursed. (Exo 10:21 Rev 6:12) Though Laban changed the wages of Jacob for ten times, God would not allow him to harm Jacob for God's arm is powerful! He rebuked and the Red Sea dried up so the people went through. Similarly God worked and Laban's flock (the speckled, spotted and streaked) all belonged to Jacob. In all things God works for the good of those who love Him.

4. **【Obeyed and escape】**17-21 After Jacob heard God's command, he decided to obey His will without hesitation. So he brought his whole family, his livestock and the goods he had accumulated in Paddan Aram and went to his father Isaac in the land of Canaan. Jacob ran away without telling Laban and headed for the hill country of Gilead.

✘ **【Obeyed and took discipline】** 4 Christ was God's servant and He often

turned to His Father's presence and accepted the lesson from His Father God. (Jn 8:26-29) Thus His words are filled with love, might, comfort and gives healing to the sorrowful. To have an instructed tongue to instruct, we ought to have instructed ears. In distress, Jacob's spiritual ears were opened to take lesson and obey so he might bring his whole family to take lesson and be in one to observe the will and go forward. Those who suffer God delivered them in their suffering; He speaks to them in their affliction. (Job 36:15-16) This was the experience of Jacob. Today who is willing to come forward to listen to the calling in heaven?

## **B. God helped to press forward in distress and be bold without fear**

God's help (Gen 31:22-55) - Without fear (Isa 50:5-11)

1. **【Though they pursued God obstructed】** 22-25 Laban found Jacob fled with his wives and children. So he took his relatives to pursue them and caught up with him. Jacob escaped from the house of Laban to obey God's will to return to Bethel to fulfill his vow and to lead his family to serve God. God did not permit Laban to harm Jacob and obstructed him personally. God came to Laban in a dream and warned him not to say anything to Jacob, either good or bad.
  - ✧ **【No matter what affliction God helped】** 6, 9 The servant of God took discipline and preached. He proclaimed the truth, was much abused and afflicted. But God helped Him and who is he that would condemn Him? Jacob obeyed and moved forward. Though he was pursued but God helped him and obstructed Laban to put a hand on him.
2. **【Was not at all ashamed】** 26-36 Laban brought a brood of relatives and overtook Jacob with a fierce oncoming force. He rebuked Jacob for running away without telling him, carrying off his daughters like captives and stolen his gods. He claimed he had the power to harm him but God warned him in his dream. Jacob was troubled for no reason and he was not aware that Rachel had stolen Laban's gods. So he was bold and assured and he replied sternly. Jacob narrated his hardship for twenty years in Laban's house. Had it not been God was with him, he would have returned empty-handed. Laban searched the whole of Jacob's tent but could not find the lost gods. Jacob was blameless in heart, so he was not all ashamed and rebuked Laban in anger.
  - ✧ **【Would not be ashamed】** 4-7 God's servant was faced with all sorts of persecution but he did not withdraw. He was willing to persevere and bullied by men but he was steadfast and his face was like hard stone. (Eze 3:8-9) He had the teaching of God's words without violating or drawing back just like our Lord on the cross who firmly obeyed the Father's will and overcame till the end and was not ashamed. Jacob was God's chosen

servant. Under the pursuit of Laban, he was not ashamed and unperturbed without fear. He spoke with the force of justice so Laban was unable to respond.

3. **【Saw my hardship】** 37-42 Jacob witnessed before Laban of his bitter days for twenty years with him. The heat consumed him in the daytime and the cold at night. The harsh Laban changed his wages ten times. But the God of Jacob's forefather Abraham was with him and saw his hardship. He remembered him, protected him and did not allow Laban to harm him.
- ✧ **【Vindicated me】** 8-9 God's servant was faithful and dutiful, eager to obey God's command and willing to persevere no matter what circumstances. He had the help from God and would not be ashamed. Thus God vindicated him and was near to him unperturbed without fear. Jacob was subjected to lots of hardship and God saw his complaint and was with him, thus he did not fear.
4. **【God helped in his trouble】** 43-55 Laban was awed by the majesty and deed of God, so he did not pursue Jacob. Instead he made a covenant with Jacob and gathered stones as witness that neither would infringe on each other. He kissed and blessed his grandchildren and his daughters and left. The family of Jacob joyfully ran toward Bethel. Jacob was able to escape from the deceitful Laban because he was innocent without any handle to be caught. Further, as the Lord was Jacob's Mighty One and helped him in his trouble to advance vigorously.
- ✧ **【A tormenting ending】** 10-11 By the end of the chapter, the prophet encouraged God's people to fear God and trust in Him for He was their help; just like Jacob relied on God and He made his pursuing adversary to turn to compromise with him. But the prophet warned those who did not trust in the Lord and find their own way, who lit fires and provided themselves with flaming torches. Their ending would definitely be tormenting. Jacob feared God and trusted in God so he had large flocks and returned in abundance. Those who were faithless lit fires and harm themselves just like Laban deceived others and in the end deceived himself.

**Ps 31 / Rev 12:1 Main theme: The woman who was about to give birth trusted in God firmly, obeyed the word and was blessed.**

**- Trust firmly / The woman**

God hopes that His children become women who are about to give birth to be fruitful.

- (1) **【Pray and trust in the Lord to break away from the trap of the enemy】** 1-8 Trust in God to break away from all inward and outward foes, then we may become a woman who will give birth, be clothed with the sun (be righteous) and the moon under her feet (God's mercy), with a crown of twelve stars on

her head (to bear the mind and glory of all God's children).

- (2) **【Call and trust in the Lord to be freed from persecution and trouble】** 9-22

He who loves the Lord, obeys His word and does His work will always be in distress, persecution and temptation. But if he fears Him, takes refuge in Him and calls to God, He will keep him safe, grant him great favor and show His wonderful love to him.

- (3) **【Exhort all his saints to love the Lord】** 23-24 Be faithful to trust in the Lord (be honest and devoted to call), be strong and take heart to hope in Him and He will preserve and recompense the arrogant.

**Central point of the wheels: Take discipline, obey the will and press forward; pray and trust in God to have His help.**

Dear Lord, I wish to be your servant, take discipline and obey your will, be brave to march forward irrespective of what hardship and with your help overcome and rejoice.

### **Gen 32 / Isa 1**

**Main theme: Do not worry or fear, listen to the Lord's word, pray by faith and you will rejoice.**

**- Do not worry or fear / Walk in righteousness (trust yourself /trust in God)**

Golden verses: Gen 32:24-25 Isa 51:3

A discussion on not to worry or fear and walking in righteousness - on one side it concerned Jacob before he returned to Bethel, he had to face his brother Esau in fear and fright. He had to obey humbly, walk in righteousness, pursue harmony and then be blessed. On the other side it concerned the redeemed people after returning to Zion. They first had to pursue righteousness and put God's word in their heart and then be blessed.

**A. Listen to the Lord's word, walk in righteousness, do not be afraid and do not struggle**

Righteousness (Gen 32:1-21) - Salvation (Isa 51:1-16)

1. **【Did not walk in righteousness and was afraid】** 1-12 Jacob went on his way and the angels of God appeared. This showed that the angels of God would be with him, guide and protect him. Jacob had been watched over by God, he thus ought to reconcile with his brother to acknowledge his lacking. But he did not pursue righteousness from the bottom of his heart and was filled with fear. He sent messengers to see his brother Esau and found that he was coming to meet him with four hundred men. Jacob was in great fear and distress, he was worried that Esau would not release his hatred and came to kill him. So he divided the people and his livestock into two groups to guard against anything. If we do not deal with our sin and do not walk in

righteousness, we will definitely fear without peace.

- ※ **【Listen and walk in righteousness and be blessed】**1-6 Through the prophet God sent comforting promise to the people. Firstly He required them to listen to God's word and pursue righteousness. Jacob did not confess his sins or seek righteousness, thus he did not find God's help. The people ought to recall how God chose Abraham and Sarah, blessed them and made their offspring multiply. God would also give blessing to Zion and make the desert like Eden, the wastelands like the garden of the Lord full of joy, gladness, thanksgiving and the sound of singing. God's will never changes, the key is to listen carefully the precepts of the Lord. The truth of Christ is the light to the nations and all nations rely on God's salvation. Let alone his people? Jacob did not rely on God but trusted in his own means to evade Esau. Thus he could not see God's salvation and light. Nor did he have peace. Jacob ought to listen and follow God's word, pursue righteousness and be blessed without fear.
2. **【Prayed for help】**9-12 Jacob was faced with Esau's coming so he could not but prayed fervently. Firstly he acknowledged that God was not only the God of his grandfather and father, but also his God. He grabbed hold of God's will and promise. He prayed that God would save him from the hands of Esau. He recalled that God had given him favor for several times and made him return abundantly. He was unworthy of all the kindness and he was filled with a thankful heart. Jacob prayed earnestly and he also needed to put them in action. He humbly confessed to his brother and pursued righteousness and had rest.
- ※ **【Sought righteousness】** 7-9 God's arm was not too short and would rise to save. (Isa 59:1-2) Men's reproach and insults needed not be feared. They would be eaten by worms (Ac 12:23) and pass away quickly. The most important for God's people was to pursue righteousness, shun away from sins and keep God's precept in their heart. God announced that His righteousness would last forever and His salvation through all generations. God's ear was not too dull and did not hear Jacob's prayer, but He was waiting for his complete pursuit of righteousness and to lay down his own hands. Then he could see God rising up His arm far better than the hand of Esau.
3. **【Struggled by oneself】** 13-21 Jacob feared Esau more than God and he trusted in himself more than God. After his prayer he still could not entrust himself to God but he used all his plans to deal with Esau. He quickly chose some livestock as generous gift to his brother to resolve his hatred and then to meet him. Again he divided his flocks into two groups and gave them to his assistants and ordered them to keep some space between the herds. Then

he would be the last. His purpose was to win the heart of Esau. However, all these struggles failed. How could he win by luck? He concealed his sins in such a way and would not prosper; only by confessing and renouncing them, he would find mercy. (Pro 28:13)

- ※ **【Returned by grace】** 9-16 When God's people cried out according to His will, the Lord's arm would be raised as in the days gone by. How God worked great power to make the water in the sea dried up and delivered His people out of Egypt, similarly He redeemed his people and returned quickly. He created the heavens, laid the ends of the earth and churned up the sea. His people needed not fear. They would be blessed to restore in songs and gladness. Jacob relied on himself and the more he struggled, the more suffering and the more fear. Esau was only the son of a man, who was but grass. He would disappear in a moment's time and need not be frightened. Though Jacob was insignificant and minute, he was under the shadow of God's hand. But if he did not humble and confess his sins to his brother, his heart would be like roaring waves without peace and without relief. How God promised Jacob would return to Bethel, similarly He would promise the captives be released to return to their homeland. Every word of God fulfills.

**B. Grabbed hold of God and received the blessing, return to God and the enemy will be recompensed.**

Grab the favor (Gen 32:22-32) - Awake (Isa 51:17-23)

1. **【Met God in wrestling】** 22-25 The ford of the Jabbok was a juncture of Jacob. His whole family had passed through leaving him alone. He had to make a decision to humble himself to confess and ask for forgiveness from his brother. This night his heart had greatly struggled. God's angel came to wrestle with him till daybreak. Jacob was stubborn in flesh. When the angel saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched. At this time he could but surrender and acknowledged his failure and God's victory. His experience in Peniel was a face to face experience with God. He was touched by God in wrestling and being dealt with, then he met God and his life was changed.
- ※ **【Awoke in indulgence】** 17-20 Due to violation Jerusalem provoked God to anger, so she was heavily punished like drinking a staggering cup being drunk to death. But now God's anger toward His people was completed and He called them to awake from drunkenness. Affliction had passed and they had comfort from God. Jacob was touched by God in wrestling and saw His face. He was greatly blessed. Had not his life been wrestled, his spirit still staggered, struggling bitterly and could not awake vigorously. The churches of the last age were also like intoxicated with the wine of the great

prostitute, (Rev 17:1-2) such that the spirits degenerated, staggered and suffered God's wrath. May the Holy Spirit awaken the drunken churches, completely set apart for God and return. Then God's compassion and revival will quickly come.

2. **【Grasped blessings】** 26-32 Though the wise Jacob was being touched and became wrenched, he was not willing to give up. He turned wrestling to requesting for blessing. Jacob grasped the angel of God and said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." Jacob struggled with God and with men and had overcome. Thus God gave him a new name Israel (wrestled with God, prince of God) and blessings. So Jacob called the place Peniel, (see God face to face) and thus he became Israel who was blessed by God. As he was blessed, all peoples on earth were blessed through him. (Gen 28:14)
- ※ **【The adversary was recompensed】** 21-23 When God's people were rebuked and punished by God and returned, He would pass the cup of wrath and punishment to the enemy of Zion, so Babylon would stagger and be punished. Jacob was blessed after wrestling. The people of Zion were favored after punishment. God vindicated for His people. In former days they were oppressed and walked over by the enemy. Now it would turn to the enemy showing that God was a righteous and avenging God. His judgments are true and just! Jacob experienced Peniel and his spirit awoke and no longer prostrate to the control of his flesh. The people of Zion had gone through punishment and no longer stagger.

**Ps 32 / Rev 12:2 Main theme: Those who confess their sins contritely and earnestly, follow the commands and obey the will of God will rejoice in gladness**

**- Confess sins / in pain**

When we confess our sins contritely, it is like paying the price of giving birth in pain; sins are removed and God's mercy surrounds us.

- (1) **【Blessed is he whose transgression are forgiven】** 1-4 If we did not confess our sins we would be wasted away, God's hand was heavy upon us. Only by acknowledging our sins honestly to God, be contrite to stop doing evil and produce the fruit of repentance, then we would be forgiven.
- (2) **【Grab the chance to seek the Lord】** 5-7 Now is the time for deliverance, to seek the Lord's Holy word, confess and pray to the Lord. The Lord will freely pardon and protect us from trouble so we may sing songs of deliverance.
- (3) **【We ought to take discipline, obey and run a righteous path】** 8-9 The Lord watches over and puts his desire on us, so do not be like the horse or the mule which have no understanding, indulging in presumptuous action.
- (4) **【He who trusts in the Lord, obeys His command will shout in joy】** 10-11



Trust in the Lord, shun evil, do good and mercy will surround you. We ought to rejoice in the Lord and be glad for greater blessings await us ahead.

**Central point of the wheels: Pursue righteousness, confess our sins and be blessed, and you will see God's face.**

Dear Lord, I am willing to be under your control and be face to face with you! Pursue righteousness, let your word be in my heart and accomplish your will.

### **Gen 33 / Isa 52**

**Main theme: Be humble and tender, consecrate yourselves, be bold to obey the will and spread salvation widely**

**- Humble / Consecrate (repay the debt / proclaim salvation)**

Golden verses: Gen 33:20 Isa 52:11-12

A discussion on humility and consecration - on one side it concerned Jacob had passed through Peniel and confessed his sins humbly and completely before his brother and they met in harmony. On the other side it concerned the redeemed people completely set apart from the sins of Babylon and served the Lord in a holy manner. This teaches us to be humble and confess our sins, repay all our debt of sin, take off the filth and put on the splendor and proclaim salvation till the ends of the earth.

#### **A. Humbly confess your sins and put on the splendor**

Confess the sins (Gen 33:1-11) - Consecrate (Isa 52:1-6)

1. **【Repay all debt of sin】** 1-4 On his way back to Bethel Jacob ought to repay all the debt of sin due to his brother. Then he could lead his whole family to fulfill the vow and serve the Lord faithfully. God decided to win him over completely so as to let him inherit all the promises God gave to Abraham. Through Peniel he was touched by God and really surrendered. He no longer struggled by himself to send gift to resolve the hatred of Esau. When Esau's group of men came upon him, he was not afraid and he himself went on ahead. He bowed down to the ground seven times before his brother in complete humility confessing his deceit to his brother. God also heard his prayer and made Esau's heart returned. The two brothers embraced each other and kissed in reconciliation.
- ✕ **【Put on splendor】** 1-2 God's redemption for His people had come to call on Zion to awake, awake! They were put to shame and degraded due to their sins. Now that they have restored, they shook off their dust and freed themselves from the chains on their neck and no longer unite with the foreign nations. Due to the mighty power of God's redemption, they were no longer slaves of sin but slaves of righteousness, (Rom 6:15-18) and were freed in the spirit. Now they were clothed with strength to serve the Lord with cleanliness. The uncircumcised and defiled would not enter them again

and they have set apart for the Lord completely. (2 Cor 6:14-18) Jacob had repaid his debt before his brother and be freed from sinfulness, thus the spirit was released. He put on splendor and was clothed with strength to serve the Lord in Bethel.

2. **【Witnessed God's grace】** 5-11 Jacob witnessed before Esau how God was gracious to him and gave him numerous children and plentiful property. He sincerely urged his brother to accept his gift. And because Jacob insisted, Esau accepted it.
- ✖ **【Glorified God's name】** 3-6 Israel were sold for nothing, suffered all sorts of bully and without money they would be redeemed, (1 Cor 6:20) and forever be God's possession. When they returned after much suffering from the oppression of Egypt, Assyria and other nations, God would redeem them by His great power. They had personally experienced God's great love and God's name would not be blasphemed because of them. Their return witnessed God's glory; just like Jacob witnessed and glorified God before Esau. Jacob was oppressed by Laban for no reason, God's people were cruelly ruled by the nations and God's name was constantly blasphemed. Everything would pass away. God's name would be glorified by Jacob and his offspring.

## **B. Obey God's will, run a holy path, bring good news and proclaim salvation.**

Obey the will (Gen 33:12-20) - Set apart to be holy (Isa 7-15)

1. **【Ran a holy path】** 12-16 Esau eagerly invited Jacob to bring his whole family to go with him to Seir. But Jacob deeply knew that his path with Esau was different. He had to set apart to be holy and turned to Bethel. Further his children were tender and he had to care for the ewes and cows that were nursing their young, how could he hurry forward? So he softly rejected his offer and went on his way.
- ✖ **【Beautiful feet】** 7-10 When God had beaten Babylon and redeemed His people back and good news was proclaimed to Zion, "Your God reigns!" How beautiful on the mountains were the feet of those who brought good news! We ought to proclaim Jesus' second coming and the peace, (Eph 2:17 1Cor 2:2) so the people and the church that had been waiting for long would receive the good news and return to Zion to worship God together. They would also burst into songs of joy together because of God's holy arm. God wanted the whole of Jacob to return to Bethel to build the temple and lead all the surrounding people to know God. They too would have beautiful feet. As to Esau's invitation, they would have no consideration. Jacob and the watch keeper of the holy city were alert and tireless, so they would see the coming of the revival and shout for joy.

2. **【Be complacent without moving forward】**17-19 Jacob left Esau and brought his family towards north to Succoth and stopped there to build a place for himself. He arrived at the city Shechem in Canaan and bought a plot of ground from the people of that place and lived there. God's will was to let him return to Bethel and fulfill his vow and serve God. But he stopped in the middle without obeying the will positively and moving forward quickly. He delayed God's will and was complacent. He only planned for his wives, children and his flesh.
- ✖ **【Be pure and depart from sin】** 11-12 The prophet called on the people to consecrate and come out from Babylon and touch no unclean thing. Those who carried the vessel of the Lord, who took part in the holy duty should be pure and depart from sin. Then God would promise to be with them and they would not leave in haste or in flight. Jacob left Esau and turned toward the promise land. Though the children were tender and the ewes and cows were nursing their young, God guided them personally and became their rear guard. But they stopped in the middle of the way and tainted with the secular. He left a breach and became a warning to us.
3. **【Built an altar to offer】** 18, 20 Jacob finally arrived safely at his old place in Shechem in Canaan. He was filled with thanks and praised God that he had gone through twenty years of hardship and suffering. At the beginning he only had a staff to cross River Jordan, now he had built up a family and returned with full load. He deeply gave gratitude for God's great love! So he built an altar in Shechem (Gen 12:7-8) and called it El Elohe Israel (God, God of Israel) to remember God is his God. It was a pity Jacob stayed in Shechem without going forward immediately to fulfill his vow and trouble came.
- ✖ **【Deny oneself to obey the will】** 13-15 Christ as the servant of God had denied himself and suffered to obey His will in his life. He is our example! God's Spirit was on Him so He acted with wisdom. (Isa 11:2) He humbled till the end for our sake but was raised and highly exalted. (Php 2:6-11) He suffered humiliation and hardship, his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and his form marred beyond human likeness. He sprinkled the sins of many people and His salvation was widely proclaimed and made kings revere in silence. Jacob returned to his homeland, built an altar to offer and remembered God's love. But he did not obeyed the will to go forward immediately and created a big trouble and let down God's love. Christ totally obeyed the will for us and was sacrificed. (1 Cor 5:7) We ought to remember Him forever and lead millions of people to return to the Lord and repay His love.

**Ps 33 / Rev 12:3 Main theme: Do not be afraid of the power of the enemy.**

## **He who fears God and keeps the word will triumph.**

### **- Trust in God / Overcome the enemy**

- (1) **【Consecrate by the Lord and give praise】** 1-3 Those who consecrate by the blood, are justified and vindicated will not fear the ferocity of the enemy. They give thanks and praise to the Lord.
- (2) **【For God is Almighty】** 9-12 Understand that God is Almighty. All the ways of the Lord are loving and faithful for those who fear and obey His command.
- (3) **【God's eyes watch over】** 13-19 God watches and keeps His eyes on those who fear Him and to deliver them from death and disaster.
- (4) **【Those who wait in hope and trust in the Lord will rejoice】** 20-22 Do not be complacent or wait without purpose but be in one heart towards God's promise and pray watchfully while we wait. We press forward to enter perfection and wait. Further we ought to trust and put our hope wholeheartedly in the Lord (not trusting in ourselves or others). God's unfailing love will rest upon us.

### **Central point of the wheels: Humble and consecrate to overcome the enormous dragon and proclaim salvation.**

Dear Lord, Pray that you will make us completely humble, pursue peace and harmony, proclaim the gospel widely till the ends of the earth.

## **Gen 34 / Isa 53**

**Main theme: He who belongs to the flesh and the mortal man will harm people but those who deny themselves to obey the will can save people.**

### **- Harm people / save people**

Golden verses: Gen 34:14 Isa 53:5-6

A discussion on harming people and saving people - on one side it concerned the whole family of Jacob who stayed at Shechem and did not obey the will to go onward quickly which led to his daughter being violated and his sons cruelly killed some people. This left a big breach. On the other side it concerned Christ who denied himself to obey His Father's will while He was on earth. He endured all the suffering on the cross and delivered millions of people from death and returned to life. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way and we need the redemption of Christ so we may quickly get up and press forward to "Bethel" to fulfill our vow and serve God.

### **1. Indulge in evil, degenerate and be abandoned; suffer to pay a high price to redeem**

Degenerate (Gen34:1-17) - Redeem (Isa 53:1-6)

1. **【Indulged in evil and degenerated】** 1-7 Dinah (be judged) was the daughter of Jacob represented the daughter of God and full of honor! But she did not

rejoice in God, instead her heart leaned on evil and went out recklessly to visit the women of the land. As a result she fell into Satan's trap and was violated by the prince of Shechem city and disgraced! She became a friend of the world and lost her virginity!

- ※ **【Headstrong and did not believe】** 1-3 Prophet Isaiah deeply sighed on man's headstrong and would not believe. Who was willing to believe such great salvation? To whom had the arm of the Lord been revealed? Some disdained salvation, others were like Dinah had indulged and degenerated in grace. The Holy Spirit has been sighing and worried on this. Christ as God's only beloved son grew up before Him like a tender shoot. He humbled to come down on earth like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to Him. He was a man of sorrows and familiar with suffering. Jacob was not alert and did not bring his whole family to honor God's grace and consequently his daughter indulged in evil, degenerated and was disgraced.
- 2. **【A high price to engage】** 8-12 Satan used all sorts of evil schemes to destroy God's will on Jacob's house. He not only tried to catch Dinah and also tempted Jacob's family to settle at Shechem (the world) and no longer returned to Bethel to serve God. He tried to make the consecrated kind mingle with the world. This is Satan's formidable deception! Shechem's father came to seek a marriage alliance and was ready to pay a high price to take Dinah as wife. The greedy people of Shechem bent solely for profit and hoped to draw Jacob's house in marriage so they might obtain huge quantity of livestock and wealth.
- ※ **【A high price to redeem】** 4-6 Christ as God's only son was blameless and suffered. He was crushed, rejected and even stricken by God, smitten and afflicted. He was pierced for our transgressions to take up our infirmities and carried our sorrows! All our iniquity was laid on him. We were originally dead in our sins, miserable and hopeless. Christ paid the high price to redeem us and engage us to be the new bride of the Lamb! The people of Shechem hoped to engage Dinah for a price and wanted to get her irrespective of a high price. We ought to discern the deceptive plan of the evil, understand the great love of Christ's redemption deeply and be caught by God's love forever. (Rom 5:8)
- 3. **【Acted as a mortal man】** 13-17 Jacob's sons came back from the fields and heard the disgraceful thing done by Shechem on the house of Israel. They were filled with grief and fury. They did not discuss with the father, nor did they pray and call on God and acted as a mortal man. They used deceitful way to press the male of Shechem to circumcise and took the chance to revenge.

※ **【Turned to one's own way】** 6 All have sinned and fell short of the glory of God. (Rom 3:23) We all, like sheep, have gone astray; each of us has turned to his own way. We followed the ways of this world to gratify the cravings of our sinful nature like Dinah coveted vanity running her way and suffered in the body and mind. Jacob's sons acted by the flesh and used deception to revenge on the people of Shechem and made a gross disaster which was also running their own way against God's path. The Lord is instead tender as a lamb, denied himself to obey the will to redeem man from death to life because of His abundant mercy and compassion and all our iniquity was laid on Him.

**B. Deceitful and violent to harm people; endure suffering and deny oneself to save people**

Harm people (Gen 34:18-31) - save people (Isa 53:7-12)

1. **【Killed people violently】** 18-29 Shechem and his father wished wholeheartedly to accomplish this marriage, so they agreed fully to the condition of circumcision. They also persuaded the people of the city to accept circumcision. On the third day, while all of them were still in pain, Jacob's two sons Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers killed Shechem and his father and every male of the city in anger and left a big breach. Before Jacob died, he rebuked Simeon and Levi's - cursed be their anger, so fierce, and their fury, so cruel! (Gen 49:5-7)

※ **【Denied his life to save】** 7-9 Christ is the author of life, the Holy and Righteous One. (Ac 3:14-15) He was oppressed and afflicted, and led as a lamb to the slaughter. The two sons of Jacobs lived in the flesh without goodness; they acted deceitfully and violently. Christ had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth but He took our transgression and was nailed with the robbers. The great love on the cross of Mount Calvary is the love of denying one's life to save people! (1Tim 1:5) The sons of Jacob killed men cruelly and lost the witness before the Gentiles. We ought to nail our lust and sinful nature together with Christ on the cross and imitate our Lord to deny our lives to save people!

2. **【A grievous lesson】** 30-31 Jacob was brought to trouble because his daughter was violated, his sons had murdered and invited great disaster. So he became a stench to the local people. Further there was a danger of being revenged, thus they could not but leave Shechem immediately. Jacob had a grievous lesson and forced him to awake and move forward to fulfill his vow quickly.

※ **【A perfect result】** 10-12 Christ was the Passover Lamb and was sacrificed. (1 Cor 5:7) It was God's will to crush Him and caused him to suffer. He was numbered with the transgressors as a sin offering. (Heb 13:10-12) and

fulfilled the work of salvation on the cross. Due to His effect of suffering God was satisfied. Jacob ought to take the grievous lesson, wait in God's redemption for God's love never changes. Christ poured down His life to death and produced many seeds so that millions of people due to faith were found righteous. God's hope in the house of Jacob was the same.

3. **【Left a breach】** 30-31 Jacob stayed in Shechem lived complacently but his spirit was muddled. He overlooked God's will and entrustment on him. He was not watchful for his family and left a breach which brought loss that could not be remedied.
- ✧ **【Bore the blame to intercede】** 12 Christ not only denied Himself to redeem man's sin, He also bore their iniquities. Now He is at the right side of the Father as our High Priest and mediator. Therefore He is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. (Heb 7:25) Jacob was neglectful in intercession; he was not alert and left a breach. Jesus Christ as the merciful and faithful high priest bore our sin and interceded day and night to fill our breach. We therefore ought to bear His heart and be a faithful priest for our family, our church and for everyone to intercede watchfully. (1 Ti 2:1-4, Isa 62:6-7)

**Ps 34 / Rev 12:4 Main theme: Seek the Lord at all times, shun evil and do good lest we be harmed by the enemy**

**- Fear / Devour**

How sinister was the evil one towards God's children! He used his tail that no one was aware of to sweep down a third of the spiritual and who were able to shine for the Lord like stars. He also wanted to devour the male child that God would use mightily. How can we be spared from his harm?

- (1) **【Let God be with you at all times and seek Him humbly】** 1-4 We ought to hear His word, read the Bible and call on Him.
- (2) **【Blessed is he who fears the Lord】** 5-14 Seek the Lord with a fearful heart; make every effort to enter perfection. That is to keep your mouth from evil and your lips from speaking lies, seek Him daily, fear Him and depart from evil and do good which is the true blessing. Then there will be no lacking and the Lord encamps around and delivers him.
- (3) **【The righteous will be protected and the wicked will be removed】** 15-22 The righteous is contrite and cry out to God. God delivers them from all their troubles. They will be redeemed and not be condemned and the enemy cannot harm them. The wicked that sins and does evil will be condemned.

**Central point of the wheels: Fear God, keep His word and be spared from harm; deny yourself to obey the will to save people.**

O Lord, May you make me imitate you to deny myself to obey your will for all my life. Let me be watchful at all times and press forward in my journey

without stop!

## **Gen 35 / Isa 54**

**Main theme: Remove other gods and do not be afraid; open your mouth wide to take possession of the land**

**- Consecrate / Restore**

Golden verses: Gen 35:17 Isa 54:2-3

A discussion on consecration and restoration – on one side it concerned Jacob who brought his whole family to obey the command to consecrate and remove other gods pressing toward Bethel. On the other side it concerned the chosen people were restored from the captive land. They rejoiced to take possession, prospered and flourished. This showed that God's love for them never changes. This teaches us to bear the mind of God's love and stand up from our failure and weakness, obey His command to consecrate and press forward, expand our spiritual boundary and lead more people to return to God.

**A. Being loved and called upon. Thus we ought to consecrate and move forward to rejoice and take possession of the land.**

Purify yourself (Gen 35:1-15) – Take possession of the land (Isa 54:1-8)

1. **【Purify yourself and move forward】** 1-5 Jacob sighed at the discipline of God and the merciful God appeared to him. He told him to go up to Bethel and build an altar to serve God. Jacob immediately obeyed and brought his whole family to pursue holiness thoroughly, ready to move forward:
  - (1) Get rid of all foreign gods – The idol god whom Rachel stole from the house of Laban. Though she was able to escape the search of Laban, she had to bring it out.
  - (2) Purify yourself – remove every sin, deception and acts of violence (2 Ti 2:21) by redemption
  - (3) Change your clothes – put off the former way of life and put on the new self. (Eph 4:22-24)

Jacob buried all the foreign gods and the rings in the ears and made a clean break. He brought his family towards Bethel. When Jacob obeyed the will of God and set out forward, God made the terror fall upon those who pursued him and they backed out.

※ **【All nations were blessed】** 1-3 The prophet prophesied that Zion would prosper and revive due to God's unfailing love and faithfulness. Jerusalem had long been desolate because God's people sinned and were taken captive; just like a widow without children. But after the restoration, there would be lots of children gathered in Zion in songs and rejoice. The number of restored people would be many and they had to enlarge the place of their tent, spread out to the right and to the left by faith and take possession of all the



land. They would be held firm and not be pulled out. As Jacob buried the idols and obeyed to move forward, he would then sing and rejoice to take possession of the land and was no more desolate. The family of Jacob returned to Bethel and God's people returned to Zion, both had the promise land and all nations were blessed because of them.

2. **【God's appearance】** 6-15 Jacob brought his family back to Bethel after twenty years of refinement and weather-beaten. He was blessed to return in safety. So he built an altar and led his family give thanks and offerings to worship God. The merciful and faithful God appeared to him and blessed him. God re-instated His promise. From then on he would no longer be called Jacob; his name would be Israel (the prince of God, who rules with God). This showed that he would not only be the prince of God; God also wanted him to work with Him. Through him a tribe (Israel) would be established to set apart to be holy to accomplish the plan of God. Jacob was greatly moved by God's appearance so he set up a stone pillar and poured out a drink offering and oil as an everlasting remembrance.

※ **【God's comfort】** 4-8 God loved Israel with an everlasting love. Though He was angry with them and hid His face from them for a moment, God would call them back with His love. How God appeared to Jacob, He would comfort the people of Zion in the same way. He told them not to be afraid for they would not suffer shame as God would deliver them so they would forget the shame of their youth. God would still be their husband and swear not to be angry with them. Jacob would be the prince of God and Israel would be accepted as God's beloved wife for He would have compassion on them with everlasting kindness. God hid His face from Jacob only for a moment's time. When he arrived at Bethel, he would dwell in God's temple and enter into the door of heaven. God's appearance strengthened him and gave him a new name so he was greatly comforted and forgot all his reproach.

## **B. Continue to move on and be established in righteousness thus the enemy cannot harm**

Move on (Gen 35:16-29) – Be established (Isa 54:9-17)

1. **【Continued to move on】** 16-21 The spiritual journey of Jacob passed through Bethel and he led his family moved on continually. On the way Rachel gave birth and was under great difficulty. She gave birth to the second son. Jacob named him Benjamin (son of God's right hand). This represented that his life was through hardship and suffering but would finally see God's care and watch over. Rachel died of childbirth so Jacob buried his beloved wife, wiped away his tears and moved on.

※ **【God's love would not be shaken】** 9-10 Though the mountains be shaken

and the hills be removed, yet God's unfailing love and the covenant of peace would not be removed from His people. God swore not to be angry with Israel just like He has sworn that He would not let the waters cover the earth. Jacob's dearly love Rachel left him. But God's love and the promised covenant would never leave him. On one side was man's love would leave while the other was God's love never leave! Israel was due to God's great love that he might wipe away his tears and move on without backing out.

2. **【Indulged and lost grace】** 22 Reuben was the firstborn of Israel and should be highly exalted with power beyond the others. Yet he slept with his father's concubine and defiled his father's bed and committed incest. Thus he lost his right of the firstborn. When Jacob breathed his last, he prophesied he would no longer excel. (Gen 49:3-4 1 Ch 5:1)

※ **【Righteousness be established】** 11-14 God's people were rebuked due to sin just like man lashed by storms and not comforted. Now they were restored and being treasured by God. God ornamented them with all sorts of precious gems just like the honored splendid holy city, (Rev 21) from the foundation to the city wall, and the gates were built with precious jewel. This signified the restored people were being refined by God to be precious jewel with abundant life and filled with the light of honor. This also means that the church would be refined and shine, holy without blame and filled with glory! All this was due to God's precept to be humble to discipline, to learn to be righteous and be established thus the terror of the enemy would not come near. Reuben as the firstborn acted shamefully and lost the grace of God. He was not established but disgraced.

3. **【Up to Hebron】** 23-29 Jacob brought his family to Hebron (confederation, friendship) where Isaac had been staying for long. His spirit was even closer to God, dwelling in the spiritual peak which was in the fortress of God. His enemies who were pursuing after him could not harm him. Isaac was blessed before his last breath and was able to see his son returning home peacefully after twenty years of separation. He also saw the twelve grandsons who inherited God's promise and came to Hebron. God's will was accomplished before his eyes, thus he was fully satisfied and rested.

※ **【The enemies could not harm】** 15-17 God promised Zion would be established and no enemy could overcome her. Those enemies who destroyed and the weapon which forged against them could no longer harm them. God's salvation was accomplished on Israel, the offspring of Jacob so they might restore and was vindicated from God. Jacob's spirit was up in Hebron on the spiritual peak and gained the vindication of God so no one could harm him. Our spiritual journey ought to start from Bethel to Hebron and be confederated with God as friends. Up in Hebron, dwell in God's

fortress with victory and no failure so no one might be against us.

**Ps 35 / Rev 12:5 Main theme: Contend by the power of the throne and lead all nations to the Lord**

**- Contend / Proclaim widely**

To him who overcomes and does my will to the end, God will give him authority; he will rule them with an iron scepter. (Rev 2:26) – is the male child, the object whom the enemy wants to devour.

- (1) **【Contend with the power of the throne】** 1-10 Our inner and outer enemies pursue us day and night and try to put us to death. Therefore contend by the Almighty God before the throne and we will win.
- (2) **【Repay good for evil and God will vindicate】** 11-25 Tell the Lord how the enemies repay evil for good. But God will rise and vindicate. He will not allow the enemies to devour me.
- (3) **【Those who exalt the Lord will rejoice】** 26-27 God will put the enemies to shame. Then I ought to be more humble when I am favored and exalt the Lord. So blessing will come after blessing and I will shout for joy and gladness like Joseph.
- (4) **【All day long speak of and praise God】** 28 Give thanks and repay His kindness unceasingly. Lead others to righteousness to glorify God and benefit people.

**Central point of the wheels: Purify yourselves and return, triumph before God and proclaim salvation widely**

Dear Lord, May you make me confederate with you, overcome the great red dragon and lead the sinners to return under your name.

**Gen 36 / Isa 55**

**Main theme: It is in vain to thirst for the world. But he who thirst to obey the Lord's word will become the light of all nations**

**- Grasp the world / Thirst for the Lord's word**

Golden verses: Gen 36:6-7 Isa 55:1-3

A discussion on grasping the world and thirsting for the Lord's word – on one side it concerned Esau and his descendants who chased after the world and established their worldly kingdom and resulted in emptiness. On the other side it concerned God who called the people to thirst for the Lord's word, depart from sin and return to God, then they would be blessed and restored. God would make an everlasting covenant with them. Therefore we ought to abandon the secular and thirst to listen to the Lord's word. Then we would enjoy the abundant grace and remove our wickedness for God would greatly forgive. We would then rejoice and return to the beautiful land that God promised.

**A. Do not grasp the word but thirst to hear the Lord's word and enjoy His**

## **salvation**

Abandon the Lord (Gen 36:1-14) – Thirst for the Lord (Isa 55:1-5)

1. **【coveted the world】** 1 Though Esau and Jacob were both the sons of Isaac, God loved Jacob and hated Esau. (Mal 1:2-3) Jacob (grasp) was a quiet man, staying among the tents searching for the spiritual portion. While Esau (hairy) grasped the world ferociously hunting for wild game, only longing to fulfill the flesh of this life. He pursued trivial things, coveted the secular, neglected God's grace and did not pursue a spiritual life.  
※ **【Thirst to hear the Lord's word】** 1-2 God called all who were thirsty to come to the waters to thirst before the Lord. The Lord's word is the living water, the fountain of salvation and after drinking you will not thirst. We ought to draw water with joy from the wells of salvation. (Isa 12:3 Jn 4:13-14) The Lord's word is also like milk which is pure and abundant. The Lord's love is better than choice wine. How sweet it is! Who is willing to hear His calling and thirst to listen to His word? Esau coveted the satisfaction of the world. He did not grasp the origin and was not willing to listen to God's calling. God's grace does not need money to be bought; only if you will repent, trust, come to the Lord and listen to Him and eat what is good and your soul will delight in the richest of fare. No need to spend money on what is not bread like Esau hunting for delicacies but could not satisfy.
2. **【Godless】** 2-8 Esau was godless and indulge in lust. (Heb 12:16) Though he was born in a godly family, he was no different from the worldly people. He first took two Canaan women as wives and brought trouble to his parents. Thereafter he married the daughter of Ishmael – still taking a marriage with the world without setting apart for the Lord. His descendants were abhorred by God. Esau and Jacob separated and could not live together. The land of Canaan was given by God to the descendants of Jacob as an everlasting inheritance. Those belonging to the flesh could not inherit the kingdom of God. Light and darkness could not have fellowship; the sinful nature and the Spirit are forever in conflict with each other. (Gal 5:9-21)  
※ **【Come to enjoy salvation】** 3-4 God called man to come to Him, turn our ears to Him so we may enjoy everlasting life. Christ set the new covenant in His blood (Lk 22:20) which is an everlasting covenant and everlasting salvation. He is our King, our commander, leading us in triumphal procession in Him. (2 Cor 2:14) God has set Him as a witness for all peoples. We therefore ought to preach the witness of Christ to the ends of the earth! We need to have nothing to do with the godless and run a life that set apart for the Lord. (Jas 4:4) Do not let sin to be the king but let Christ to reign in our life. (Rom 5:17-21)

3. **【God is against who pleases his sinful nature】** 9-14 The descendants of Esau followed the lust. They were born of the flesh and were against God. (Jn 1:13, 3:6) They lived in Mount Seir and were enemies to God's children for generations. Our old self has been contending with the Holy Spirit. Eliphaz the son of Esau had a concubine and gave birth to Amalek (a people that licks up, warlike) – the family feud of Israel. Their flesh was without good, thus we ought to contend with them for generations. If we please the sinful nature as Esau, we cannot inherit the kingdom of God.
- ✧ **【Please the Holy Spirit and spread salvation】** 5 Salvation is for all nations. Christ was lifted up from the earth to draw all men to Him. (Jn 12:32) This is the work of the Holy Spirit. Esau sowed to please his sinful nature and reaped destruction. He himself and his descendants would be cursed. Therefore we ought to put to death the inner Esau and Amalekites by the Spirit and completely set apart for the Lord to inherit God's kingdom, (Rom 8:12-13 I Cor 6:9-10) and to sow to please the Spirit so all nations will have salvation.

**B. Turn from wickedness, return to God and exalt Him as King to receive true blessings and joy**

Against God (Gen 36:15-43) – Return to God (Isa 55:6-13)

1. **【Despised God's grace】**15-19 Esau pursued trivial things in his whole life. He did not seek God and treasured God's grace. For a bowl of lentil stew he sold his birthright. He only cared to satisfy his sinful desire and changed the grace of our God into a license for immorality. So he was finally rejected. His descendants as chiefs also pursued worldly power. They were illustrious but ultimately came to ruin.
- ✧ **【Sought God's grace】**6 We ought to grasp the chance to seek God's grace, lest we might lost the opportunity and be too late to repent. Now is the time of God's favor. Seek the Lord while He may be found; call on Him while He is near, lest we will be like Esau who lost the blessing of the firstborn. Though he sought with tears, he could not find any way. On one side was despising God's grace and lost the everlasting portion; while the other was seeking God's grace and gained everlasting blessing. This world (the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does) is like a bowl of lentil stew and cannot be compared to the everlasting salvation of God. We therefore ought to consider everything rubbish and gain Christ as the surpassing greatness!
2. **【Be an enemy of God】**20-30 The Edomites inclusive of the descendants of Seir and Esau had intermingled and became the latter Edomites. Though they had lots of chiefs, they belonged to the sinful nature and were enemies of God and did not submit to God's law. The sins of Edom were:- stifling all

compassion, harboring an ancient hostility, gloating over disaster, grabbing God's inheritance, bragging before God, envious and murder. (Jer 49:7-12 Oba 1) We ought to put to death our inner Edomite by the Holy Spirit.

- ※ **【Turn from wickedness and return to God】** 7-9 Our God is full of compassion and abounding in love. He is willing to forgive those who turn from evil. Those who truly return to God ought to forsake their way and thoughts, anything that belongs to Edom and consider God as their enemy. God's thoughts and ways are not our thoughts and ways. We ought to turn from evil and return to God. The door to salvation is still open for God will freely pardon. We ought to abandon everything and run toward the path to Zion!
3. **【Forever desolate】** 31-43 Edom was the first to set up kings. They were hegemonic for a time and full of ambition extending their power on the land. They were arrogant and self-deceiving, thus were finally convicted and became desolate never to be established. (Isa 34:10-12) Only the Lord reigns forever for His throne was established long ago and He is from all eternity. (Ps 93:1-2)
- ※ **【Bearing fruit among the land】** 10-13 The Lord's word is like the rain and the snow that come down from heaven and water our dried up hearts. So we may grow, bud and flourish (Mk 4:28) and will not return to Him empty! God's hope is on the restored people. We ought to suffer and be refined completely, exalt God as King and pursue our inner life. Then we will go out in joy and be led forth in peace, be restored to the good land and no longer desolate but bear fruit among the land. Pine tree and myrtle will grow instead of thorn bush and briers, (Mk 4:19), life is renewed and all nations sing to glorify God's name. Edom established their kings and prospered only for a while. But the chosen people were blessed forever. Deliverers will go up on Mount Zion to govern the mountains of Esau. And the kingdom will be the Lord's. (Oba 1:21)

**Ps 36 / Rev 12:6 Main theme: Do not deceive yourself and do wick; run away from sin, find refuge in the Lord and be filled with blessings and joy.**

**- Take refuge in the Lord / The desert**

Escape to the desert and there you will see no one except the Lord and hear the voice of God's beloved son. Then you may escape from the attack of the power of the worldly sin and your spirit will live. God's children ought to dwell in Him despite they are in the world.

- (1) **【Why is the wicked destroyed】** 1-4 His heart does not fear God. He boasts, flatters and deceives himself. His mouth utters evil words and is deceitful. He commits himself to a sinful course.
- (2) **【We ought to know God's love and find refuge in His shelter】** 5-7 God

does not wish the wicked to perish. He desires everyone to be delivered. Therefore we ought to find refuge in the wings of His love, so our sins will be forgiven and be redeemed to avoid the curse of the judgment in the last days and gain eternal life and blessing.

(3) **【The Lord's grace is abundant】** 8-9 We therefore ought to open wide our mouth to thirst for righteousness. The Lord's word is the bread of life and the river of delights so we may be filled by His word and filled by the Spirit to become an instrument which is holy and passes the light through.

(4) **【Know the Lord and overcome the enemy to save others by the Lord】**  
10-12 May the love of God uphold those who know Him and bear His mind to act boldly, so they will deny themselves to risk death, overcome the enemy and save others lest they will go down to the grave. (Jer 9:24 22:16)

**Central point of the wheels: Abandon the worldly thing, thirst for the Lord's word, take refuge in Him and enjoy salvation**

Dear Lord, May you make me be far away from the worldly things, thirst for your living water and the abundance of your house, find refuge in the shadow of your wings, be fruitful and glorify your name.

### **Gen 37 / Isa 56**

**Main theme: Recompensed for partiality, jealousy and hatred. Blessed for keeping the covenant and serving the Lord**

**- Unrighteous / Righteous**

Golden verses: Gen 37:7-9 Isa56:7

A discussion on unrighteousness and righteousness – on one side it concerned Jacob's family was full of ungodliness and unrighteousness, partiality and selfish love. Joseph was jealous and hated by his brothers and sold to a foreign land. On the other side it concerned the temple of the final days. Irrespective of Jews or Gentiles, they would be remembered by God and become a house of prayer for all nations, only if you would maintain justice and do what is right. This teaches us we ought to remove every ungodliness and unrighteousness, pursue righteousness and justice, unite with God, be godly and keep His covenant and lead all nations to be favored and know God.

**A. Be righteous and remove evil, be godly to keep the covenant and the Gentiles would be favored.**

Unrighteous (Gen 37:1-24) – Righteous (Isa 56:1-8)

1. **【Partial and jealous】** 1-11 The house of Jacob was chosen by God and lived in Hebron on the spiritual peak. However, they were filled with ungodliness and unrighteousness turning against God's desire. When Jacob was old he did not exalt God as holy. He was unjust and unrighteous. He loved Joseph partially and made a richly ornamented robe for him. This

created jealousy and contention between the brothers. They had no peace. Joseph always brought bad report of the brothers to their father. He had two dreams but did not hide them and easily exposed them and resulted in jealousy and hatred by his brothers.

- ※ **【Righteous and just】** 1-2 God promised His people to be restored and salvation was close at hand. We ought to maintain justice and do what is right and observe God's laws to be the people of the covenant. He encouraged them to keep His Sabbaths, honor God and love God (Isa 58:13-14), then they would be blessed. The house of Jacob did not pursue justice and righteousness but was filled with jealousy and partiality and thus without rest. Joseph had two consecutive dreams and he told his brothers and invited jealousy and hatred. He did not rest and wait for God. We ought to listen to the Lord's word and learn from the Lord and we will find rest.
- 2. **【Was victimized and abandoned】** 12-24 Joseph was sent by his father to Shechem to visit his brothers and greet them. However this trip was never returned. The ferocious brothers saw Joseph from afar and plotted together to put him to death. The hard-hearted brothers stripped him of his robe and threw him into the cistern. From then Joseph lost the doting of his father. He was abandoned and victimized.
- ※ **【The Gentiles were favored】** 3-8 The eunuchs and Gentiles were supposedly not allowed to enter the temple of the Lord and not given the chance to serve in the Holy temple.(Deu 23:1-6) But the prophet prophesied that if they would keep God's laws and command and truly return and trust in God, they might also worship in the Holy temple and enjoy the blessings of God. Though the sons of Jacob were blessed descendants, they did not observe God's word and were far inferior to the Gentiles. The brothers of Joseph laid their hands on him represented the Jews abandoned Christ resulting salvation came to the Gentiles. God would gather the Gentiles and exiles of Israel to enjoy the gladness together in His Kingdom.
- 3. **【The green tree dried up】** The house of Jacob was supposed to be like an olive tree planted in God's temple. (Ps 52:8) Now because of partiality, jealousy, ungodliness and unrighteousness, their lives were separated from God. They withered and were desolate and could not bear fruit to glorify God.
- ※ **【The dry tree flourished】** 3-5 The eunuchs were like dry trees and supposedly disgraceful. But they held fast to God's covenant, kept the Sabbaths and chose what pleased God. They would be remembered together with God's chosen people in His temple never to be cut off. They united with God and produced many fruits. But the house of Jacob



disconnected with God and let down their entrustment, wasted God's provision and took God's grace in vain.

4. **【The heart was like a robber's den】** 1-24 Jacob as the head of the family, did not unite with God, did not show a righteous example and was not alert to pray for the family. His spirit was desolate and his heart was like a robber's den. The brothers of Joseph did not humble to examine their own evil deeds. They were filled with jealousy and murder and their spirit was just the same.
- ※ **【Be a house of prayer】** 6-8 The heart of the house of Jacob was like a robber's den and became a desolate dwelling. Only by emptying the sin, be contrite and consecrating may we revive the godly service and be joyful in the house of God's prayer. God promised to those foreigners who united with God, feared Him and loved Him, held fast to His covenant, they would be together with His people and became a house of prayer for all nations. This was also God's hope in the house of Jacob.

#### **B. Harmed with cruelty and lied / Indulged and failed in duty**

Betrayed (Gen 37:26-36) – Failed in duty (Isa 56:9-12)

1. **【Betrayed the kindred】** 25-28 Poor Joseph was stripped of his ornamented robe by his heartless brothers and threw into the cistern. His suffering was beyond description and there was no one to help him when he pleaded. (Gen 42:21) But his brothers sat down to eat and drink without caring for their brother's death. Judah sold Joseph to the Ishmaelite merchants so as to avoid other brothers from killing him. So the greedy brothers betrayed him for twenty shekels of silver. Thus Joseph was forced to leave his fellow people, his hometown, and sold to Egypt as a slave.
- ※ **【Greedy and indulged】** 9-12 The prophet harshly rebuked the sinning leaders. They indulged, was greedy, be sated with food all day long, enjoyed high position and lived in ease and comfort. They only loved to sleep and dreamt, in orgies and drunkenness. They all turned to their own ways, each sought their own gain and would not care for the sufferings of their people. The brothers of Joseph were also like this that only cared for eating and drinking and disregarded their younger brother's plead (Gen 42:21) and heartlessly betrayed his kindred. God would raise the ferocious nations like wild animals to devour Judah, so they were captivated and recompensed. (Jer 12:8-9) The house of Jacob was also disciplined by God severely in famine.
2. **【The father was completely disheartened】** 29-36 After Joseph was sold, the brothers used deceptive ways to lie to the father. They slaughtered a goat and dipped the ornamented robe in the blood so Jacob falsely thought Joseph was torn and devoured by the ferocious animal. "Joseph was torn to

pieces"! Jacob's heart was also torn to pieces! Jacob lost his son in his old age. He mourned in desperation and was not comforted. The brothers deceived the father and heaped sin upon sin. Their sinful deed not only disheartened the father and even disheartened God!

- ※ **【Neglect one's duty before God】** 9-12 The prophet harshly rebuked the sinning leaders for indulging and failing in their duties. (Eze 34:1-6 Zec 11:4-17) They ought to have proclaimed God's intention and revelation to the people and teach them walk the right path. Instead they were blind and mute, complacent and fallen into deep sleep. They only knew to feed themselves and feared nothing. Joseph's brothers were also like them neglecting the father's entrustment, without caring for the younger brother, betrayed him, deceptively lied to the father and saddened God's heart. They also failed in their duty seriously.

**Ps 37 / Rev 12:7 Main theme: Depart from evil and do good by the Lord, the angels contented for me**

- Do good / God helped

How to overcome the enemy? By departing from evil and do good, pray and wait; God will send the angels from heaven to help us.

- (1) **【Do not fret and do good by God】** 1-10 The day of the disaster for the wicked is near. We therefore ought to do good by God and delight in the Lord. Through prayer we commit our way to the Lord, be still before Him and wait patiently for Him.
- (2) **【God sustains the righteous】** 11-40 The wicked plot against the righteous. But God will make those who harm others harm themselves. As God sustains the righteous, thus we must be far from the evil way, make every effort to do good, be gracious to others all day long, utter wisdom, lead man to righteousness and be a blameless man before God. Though we may suffer, God will help and deliver. The angels will contend for the righteous and the enemies will fall without getting up. The wicked though flourish up to the sky; they will turn to emptiness momentarily.

**Central point of the wheels: Turn against evil and do good, be righteous and just, and contend by God.**

Dear Lord, May you cleanse me, make me unite with you, let me become a house of prayer for all nations and triumph by you!

**Gen 38 / Isa 57**

**Main theme: Contrite, awake and sin no more, hurry to save the dying sheep**

- Contrite / Awake

Golden verses: Gen 38: 25-26 Isa 57:15

A discussion on contrite and awake – on one side it concerned Judah left his father and brothers and he sinned and degenerated. Due to the sacrifice of his daughter-in-law Tamar, he was contrite and awakened from sin. On the other side it concerned the people of Judah worshiped idols and committed adultery. They were deeply corrupted. We ought to humble and contrite, and then we will be awakened and healed.

**A. Indulged and degenerated, did evil and was punished. Be godly to avoid disasters**

Indulged (Gen 38:1-11) – Esteemed evil (Isa 57:1-8)

1. **【Dissolute and degenerated】** 1-5 The sons of Jacob were supposed to be godly descendants. But Reuben, Simeon and Levi had lost God's grace because they sinned and did evil. The fourth son Judah did not take them as warning and still dissolute in grace. He was not satisfied with serving God and left his father and brothers and turned to his own way. He indulged as he pleased and had fallen in the spirit. He married a foreign Canaan woman as wife and united with the world establishing a sinful family.  
✧ **【Be godly to avoid disasters】** 1-2 The house of Judah was filled with worship of evil. No one pondered when devout and righteous men were taken away. They were being fetched to God to enjoy everlasting rest. Though they were not remembered by men, they were fully comforted and rewarded by our Heavenly Father. Not only were they spared from evil and was also a warning to the ungodly. Judah as a descendant of Abraham, a godly offspring did not understand the example of his godly forefathers. He fell from grace and disgraced the name of God.
2. **【Did evil and was punished】** 6-11 Judah did not set apart for the Lord and married a foreign women. He bore seeds of sinfulness and not one was blessed. His firstborn Er was wicked in God's sight and was put to death. His second son Onan did not take warning. He was selfish and did not listen to the father. He was not willing to fulfill his duty for his brother to produce offspring for him. He was wicked in God's sight and also died. "He who sows wickedness reaps trouble." The righteous and jealous God would never relent. (Pro 22:8)  
✧ **【Esteemed evil and provoked God's anger】** 3-8 The house of Judah was rebellious and lying. They acted in many sorceries and became sons of a sorceress. They worshiped Baal and committed adultery and became offspring of adulterers and prostitutes. They acted corruptly in the ravines, under spreading trees, on the lofty hills and behind the doors. They sacrificed their children and offered to false gods. They were not contrite but even stick out their tongue to the prophet. How could God relent? Judah allowed his sons to do evil and so was punished and died. Similarly

offering the children to false god would also provoke God's anger.

**B. Contrite and awake, build up the road and give thanks in praises**

Contrite (Gen38:12-30) – Awake (Isa 57:9-21)

1. **【Disregarded God's grace】** 12-23 After Judah's wife died, he was more indulged. Tamar saw that Shelah had grown up but her father-in-law did not keep his promise and completely ignored the matter of having children to continue the line. She dressed herself like a prostitute and forced Judah to perform his responsibility to have children to continue the line. The dissipated Judah thought she was a prostitute and committed adultery with her. Tamar took the chance to have his seal, cord and staff as a pledge. These represented the memory and power of the family leader. But he easily disregarded God's grace and lost the three treasures!
- ※ **【Curried favor with the enemy and courted foreign help】** 9-13 The Judah King Ahaz sent his envoys with gifts, despite the long distance and degraded himself to court the help of Assyria (2 Ch 28:16-21) and the result was in vain. They did not fear God, or trusted in God but were afraid of the evil gods and the foreign nations. They thought themselves righteous. So, let the idols and foreign nations save them! On one side was Judah disregarded God's grace and was dissolute, so he lost the three treasures. The other side was the king of Judah did not trust in God but curried favor with the enemy and courted foreign help. Thus he lost all his wealth and treasures. God's anger would blow them all away; but the man who made Him his refuge would inherit the land.
2. **【Breached the gap】** 12-23 God chose Judah so a holy genealogy through him would be extended. But his spirit was fast asleep, dissolute, degenerated and disregarded the grace of selection. Though Tamar was a foreign woman, she was willing to sacrifice despite everything. She breached the gap for Judah and continued the line and accomplished the will of God's choice on Judah. Through him came the genealogy of Jesus Christ. (Mt 1:3)
- ※ **【Built up the road】** 14 God called on the rebellious people to build up the road, remove the sinful obstacles, confess and repent so they would be redeemed and restored. The admonition and exhortation of the prophet let the people build up the road. Tamar denied herself to breach the gap and also built up the road for Judah and removed his obstacles in his heart. Both breaching the gap and building up the road need to pay a price.
3. **【Contrite profoundly】** 24-26 Judah heard Tamar was guilty of prostitution and was then pregnant. So he was angry and assumed a righteous face and ordered to burn her to death. He was hypocritical and self-deceiving. He rebuked other but did not rebuke himself! When Tamar brought out the

pledge, Judah was rendered speechless and was put to shame and confusion! He finally acknowledged, “She is more righteous than I.” Judah deeply reproached himself, contrite in humility and was awakened.

- ※ **【Humbled and awoke】** 15-16 Though our God lives on the high and holy place, He is willing to live in whose heart is contrite and lowly! Judah had repeatedly sinned and was capricious. But God was tolerant and awaited for him to be contrite and awake! (Isa 66:1-2) God does not harbor his anger forever. He is compassionate to the man He created lest he grows faint. God also had compassion on Judah and made him deeply repent for his previous acts and depart from evil and turned to God. “The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.” (Ps 34:18) On one side was deep repentance before the daughter-in-law while the other was humbling and awaking before God. Both are the work of the Holy Spirit and the persuasion of God’s love.
- 4. **【Do not forget the breach】** 27-30 after Tamar gave birth to twin boys. Perez rushed to be the firstborn who had a share in the genealogy of Judah, being chosen to set apart for the Lord. Perez (breach) had a share in God’s plan, so Judah had nothing to boast of for his life but boast of his failure and God’s great love of redemption.
- ※ **【Praise of God’s grace】** 17-19 ten people were the same as Judah who no longer be willful and dissolute but humbled and repenting, dwelled with God and being healed by God. Their sorrow turned into joy. They expressed their praises and produced the fruit of lips (Heb 13:15) giving thanks and extolled God. On one side was the prodigal returned so do not forget the breach. While the other side was contrite and awoke, praise in thanksgiving. One side was grateful as he did not deserve to share in the genealogy of Christ; while the other was to give praises and extol that peace, peace to those far and near.
- 5. **【Did not sin again】** 26 he awoke and repented. He felt shameful and reproached himself. From then he completely broke off from sinning and was filled with joy and praises. Thereafter Judah bore the heart of his father in the house of Jacob and took up the responsibility of an elder brother and produced a fruit of repentance.
- ※ **【Still in sin】** 20-21 there is no peace for the wicked - those who are not willing to build up the road and remove the obstacles, not willing to humble and contrite. They are like the tossing sea which cast up mire and mud. Before when Judah did not confess and was bound by sin, he had no peace and did not praise. Only when he humbled and awoke, removed his obstacles and rose up from failure, he cast up joy and praises.

**Ps 38 / Rev 12:8 Main theme: Confess earnestly and seek good eagerly,**

**then the enemies cannot overcome me.**

**- Confess / The enemies retreat**

- (1) **【Grief due to sin and pray that God will stop His anger】** 1-10 Because of my sinful folly, I sinned and did evil and provoked God to anger. I will grieve for my sin and pray for the Lord's mercy.
- (2) **【Do not ask for men's help and do not as I please but trust only in the Lord】** 11-15 My companions and neighbors stay far away and the enemies set their traps to harm me all day long. But I am like a deaf and mute man; I pour out only to the Lord.
- (3) **【Confess and seek good】** 16-22 I am not afraid that the enemies are vigorous and numerous. Only if I confess my sins and repent, pursue what is good, pray and put hope in the Lord, He will answer me. He will come quickly to deliver and help me. The enemies would not overcome me.

**Central point of the wheels: Confess your sins and be contrite, awake and be blessed, then the enemies cannot triumph over us.**

Dear Lord, May You make my spirit awake, humble to be contrite and overcome the red dragon. I will praise you as my offering.

**Gen 39 / Isa 58**

**Main theme: Be far from sin and do good to be blessed; seek the Lord and do evil will be disfavored**

**- Overcome sin / Shine (Righteousness / mercy)**

Golden verses: Gen 39:20-21 Isa 58:11

A discussion on overcoming sin and to shine – on one side it concerned God was with Joseph in his distress. Thus he overcame trials and sins. On the other side it concerned God requested His people to forsake hypocrisy and wickedness, pursue a righteous, merciful and kind service. We ought to rely on the Holy Spirit to overcome trials and temptation to exhibit God's righteous and holy splendor.

**A. Honest service and hypocritical fasting**

Honest (Gen 39:1-6) – hypocritical (Isa 58:1-5)

1. **【A very strong evidence of crime】**1 Joseph was sold twice and suffered for no reason. He was first sold to the Ishmaelite merchants and again to Potiphar, the Pharaoh's official. Joseph was sold in the foreign land as a slave and witnessed his brothers' cruel act of sin to sell their kindred. It was an irrefutable evidence and they were without excuse. This also represented the Jews persecuted Christ and committed a monstrous crime.
- ※ **【Without excuse】** 1 Prophet Isaiah was commanded to rebuke the sin of the people severely, listing their wrongs which were very strong evidence of crime without excuse. This showed that God's mind has been waiting for

them to quickly wake up for their error. The prophet boldly and without hesitation shouted to God's people to accuse them of their sin. Joseph silently endured the hardship and patiently forgave the brothers' sin to wait for them to accept and acknowledge their sins. Only when they acknowledged and turned from sins, God's deliverance would come to them.

2. **【Served the Lord godly and God was with him】**2 Joseph was a slave in the house of his master and he was willing to be lowly. He worked hard and was not upset by criticism. He served faithfully. Though he was away from the father's house without any external worship, his heart was godly serving God. His service was not before men to curry others' favor but was from the heart before God. God was with him and gave him success.

※ **【Fasted hypocritically and God abhorred】** 2-4 The prophet rebuked the people's hypocrisy without reserve. They seemed to be a nation that did right and pretended to seek the Lord's word eagerly without departing from God's commands. They seemed eager to come near God to ask for His just decisions. They vainly had a godly appearance but were against the actual godliness. On their days of fasting, they exploited all their workers and greed for what pleased them. They struck each other with wicked fists and had a great contrast to the godly service of Joseph when he was a slave. Joseph pursued the inner honest and kindness and truly united with God, loving God and man, humble and diligent, denied himself to help others. God's people fasted hypocritically and God detested them. Joseph's godly service was acceptable to the Lord. Therefore God was with him.

3. **【Promoted to be in charge of the household】** 3-6 Joseph was faithful in his master's house. He was scrupulous about every detail and not at all lazy. God was with him and gave him success. Joseph was favored before his master and because of him, God also blessed the master's house. Thus the master put him in charge of everything. Joseph was promoted from a slave to a housekeeper and was a witness and glory to God.

※ **【How could they be accepted】** 5 The prophet rebuked the hypocritical people who put on sackcloth and ashes and bowing one's head like a reed. They took an outward fasting to replace a crushed spirit. (Ps 34:18) They persecuted their body in this way. Was this the kind of fasting God chose? They honored God with their lips, but their hearts were far from Him. (Isa 29:13) God who searched men's heart saw everything clearly! Joseph served his master with a heart like fearing God and all his hardship was remembered by God. He was favored before his master and was promoted as the housekeeper.

## **B. Was righteous and overcame sinfulness, removed evil and did good,**

## **shone and established**

Righteousness (Gen 39:6 latter -18) – Mercy (Isa 58:6-12)

1. **【Feared God and overcame trial】**6L-9 "Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him." (Jas 1:12) Joseph was young, well-built and handsome. The devil's test came to him. The wife of Potiphar took notice of him and induced him to sin. Joseph feared God from youth and was far from sin. He put on a stern countenance and rejected her. "How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?"
  - ※ **【Feared God and be compassionate to man】** 6-7 The kind of fasting that God chose was fasting in the spirit, pursuing righteousness and loosening the chains of injustice, untying man's burden in the spirit and removing the pointing finger and malicious talk of the accuser. The kind of mercy God required was: to understand and sympathise the hungry, the distressed and wanderers so they might be full and have freedom. Such acts of correcting evil and doing good were the kind of fasting acceptable to God. Joseph was faced with the test of lust. Though there was no external fasting, he beat his body to resist temptation and pursue the inner sanctification. Such acts of fearing God, be compassionate to man and trusting in Him would overcome.
2. **【A complete victory】** 10-12 The wife of the master was not aware of shame and still lingered on to Joseph. She did not give up when she still could not get him. Joseph was faced with a severe trial. Day after day the adulterous woman induced him and tried to be near him. He strongly resisted to three "No" and would not leave any leeway. He was always on the alert to avoid sexual immorality. Not only did he overcome in the beginning; he triumphed day after day. The devil was like a roaring lion and wanted to devour Joseph alive! One day he went into the house to attend to his duties, and only the adulteress woman was there. She took the chance and caught him by his cloak to force him to sin. Joseph envied evil as foe and jealous like a consuming fire. He rather left his cloak which was being tainted by lust and escaped out of the house. Joseph feared God and hated sin and rejected sinfulness. He triumphed completely by God! (Heb 12:4)
  - ※ **【Removed evil and shined】** 8-10 If God's people could obey, correct evil and follow good, pursue righteousness and mercy then they would shine like the gleam of dawn (Pro 4:18) and be cured. The glory of the Lord would be your rear guard. The heart of Joseph was holy and bright, so even under the adulterous threat of his mistress and the power of the flood and ferocious beast; he was able to overcome at the end by God. God answered his plea and delivered him from the trap of the adulterous woman. His light



shone in the dark. (Mt 13:43)

3. **【Be wronged and suffered injustice】** 13-18 The adulterous woman was not able to achieve her aim, so she was very angry and made a false countercharge. In front of her husband and her household servants she maliciously framed a case against Joseph that he made sport of her. She used the cloak which he left as a witness and set a charge against the innocent Joseph. However the light of Joseph could not be hid and his night would become like the noonday.

※ **【Being used by God mightily】** 11-12 The people who had corrected and followed good from the heart would be guided by the Lord always. Though they were in a sun-scorched land, they would be like a spring and God would be their satisfaction. Similarly, Joseph was hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; persecuted, but not abandoned. God was his support and would strengthen his frame and not be moved. He became a well-watered garden, with an abundant life and fruitful. He was later mightily used by God so the ancient ruins would be revived and raise up the broken foundations. There was no breach in Joseph's heart, so he was not afraid of being falsely accused. He finally became the repairer of broken walls for the house of Jacob and the restorer of streets.

### **C. Suffered and rested, exalted God as holy and God was their delight**

Suffered (Gen 39:19-23) – Rest (Isa 58:13-14)

1. **【Was accused and put to prison but God was with him】** 19-20 Potiphar listened to his wife's lies so he burned with anger and put Joseph in prison. Though Joseph was wronged and put in prison, he did not lose heart. He believed God would redress his injustice in time. So he kept silent and willingly endured the suffering of injustice. When he was sold as a slave God was with him; now he was accused and in prison, God was still with him. Only God was his only comfort. No matter men's abandonment, God was still with him.
- ※ **【Exalt God as holy and true rest】** 13-14 God's people solemnly kept the Sabbath which was mainly on the resting of the spirit, exalting God as holy, fearing and loving God, not doing as we please but delighting in God. It is not keeping the Sabbath in format but to believe and obey God and make every effort to enter Christ's rest. (Heb 4:10-11) Joseph was wrongly accused and put to prison. But because he trusted in God, he was able to rest in suffering with God's togetherness and delight in God. Those who enjoy true rest must remove three 'own': not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words. Through affliction God refined Joseph and he rested in wait for God to accomplish everything for him.
2. **【Was favored before the warden】** 21-23 "It is better, if it is God's will, to

suffer for doing good than for doing evil” (1 Pe 3:17) Joseph silently endured the accusation. Not only was God with him, He also granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden. So the warden put Joseph in charge of all those held in the prison. He humbled and served the prisoners unselfishly and became their comfort and the friend of sinners.

✂ **【Was blessed to ride on the heights of the land】** 14 The people followed their hearts to observe the Sabbath and listened to God’s command to remove all selfish desires. They did not go their own way, did as they pleased or spoke idle words and would be blessed to rise up and prosper. This was spoken by the mouth of the Lord. Whether in the city or in the fields, everything Joseph did was blessed by God. (Deut 28:3-8) This proves God’s promise is faithful. When he had endured and waited till God’s time, he finally came out to be the ruler. God caused him to ride on the heights of the land and enjoyed the blessing promised by God.

**Ps 39 / Rev 12:9 Main theme: Do not turn to illusory and pray to be freed from all sins. The enemies are being hurled down.**

**- Consecrate / Hurl down**

The enemy has a lot of names. He has a whole bag of tricks. Therefore we ought to discern them, lest we fall into the traps, commit sins and be disgraced.

(1) **【Watch my ways and tongue】** 1-2 The evil one roams through the land.

We ought to be careful and watchful, be steadfast in the truth by the Lord then we will see the enemy be hurled down.

(2) **【Truly knows that each man’s life is but a breath】** 3-5 If we know that our life is fleeting and men man’s life is but a breath. Then we will not be tempted by the enemy to commit sin and do evil.

(3) **【Pray to be saved from all transgressions】** 6-11 To avoid scorn and scourge, I will be silent to endure what you have done on me.

(4) **【Pray to recover the strength】** 12-13 Humbly plea to the Lord to look away from me because I have transgressions and fall. So I may stand up from my failure and weakness and recover my strength to fulfill your work on me.

**Central point of the wheels: Righteous and compassionate, endure hardship silently and overcome to the end**

Dear Lord, may you save me from illusory, overcome trials, pursue holiness, be righteous, godly and be with you forever!

**Gen 40 / Isa 59**

**Main theme: Turn from sin, seek righteousness and be exalted; knowing one’s transgression but will not turn away will be abandoned.**

**- Refine / Redeemed (change / shun evil)**

Golden verses: Gen 40: 7-8 Isa 59:19

A discussion on refinement and being redeemed – on one side it concerned Joseph suffered in prison. He ought to be refined completely and wait till the end to be delivered by God. On the other side it concerned God's people that any time they confessed, contrite and turned from transgressions, then they would be redeemed by God. We ought to turn from transgression and unite with God, take root in life, die completely to our old self and wait for God's arm to deliver and accomplish everything.

**A. Commit sin and be recompensed, interpret dreams by God and rebuke sin by God**

Interpret dreams (Gen 40:1-8) – Rebuke sin (Isa 59:1-8)

1. **【Were jailed due to sins】** 1-4 Two high officials of the Egyptian King Pharaoh, the cupbearer and the baker offended their master and were put in custody in the prison where Joseph was confined. The captain of the guard assigned them to Joseph and Joseph attended them humbly.
- ※ **【Were separated due to sins】** 1-2 Surely the arm of the Lord was not too short, nor his ear too dull. But the iniquities of the Israelites have separated them from God. God hid His face and did not hear them. The people suffered hardship and punishment and were only themselves to blame. Just like the two officials of Pharaoh who offended him angrily and were to be put to prison. Let alone we have offended the righteous God? When we commit sin, we will invite anger; when there is sin, it will separate with God. God loves righteousness and hates sin. How would God hear our prayer when there is sin? (Ps 66:18)
2. **【Interpret dreams by God】** 5-8 The two officials of Pharaoh who were being held in prison each had a dream and each dream had a meaning of its own, both from the will of God. (Job 33:14-18) When they woke up and no one was able to interpret them, they were dejected. Joseph though as a prisoner and had suffered much, was filled with joy. He could understand the sufferings of those in custody. So he said, “Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell me your dreams.” Joseph feared God, trusted in God and pursued the inner holiness and light. God was with him and he was filled with the discernment of the Holy Spirit. He interpreted the dreams. He witnessed humbly and exalted God's omnipotence before the two officials of Pharaoh.
- ※ **【Rebuke evil by God】** 3-8 The prophet took the order to rebuke the people's sins courageously. He pointed out their sins in detail. Their ethic was corrupted. Their hands, fingers, lips and tongues – not one was clean; all were lies. Even their inner thoughts were wicked like eggs of vipers and spider's web. All is wicked, violent and harming. They did not know the

way of peace but the crooked roads and ultimately to desolation and destruction. Joseph was far from evil in his suffering and God was with him, full of peace. God's arm stretched out for him and heard his prayer. He gave him wisdom to interpret dreams. Isaiah was open in the spirit and ear so he deeply understood God's will and proclaimed the transgressions of the house of Jacob.

**B. Wait and be refined, so life is changed to turn from sin and be redeemed**

Wait (Gen 40:9-23) – Redeemed (Isa 59:9-21)

1. **【Life changed and flourished】** 9-13 The cupbearer dreamt of seeing a vine with three branches budded, blossomed and its clusters ripened into grapes. He then took the grapes and squeezed them into Pharaoh's cup. Joseph's interpretation: In three days Pharaoh would lift up his head and restore him to his position. He would put Pharaoh's cup in his hand, just as he used to do. Through this dream God revealed to Joseph to obey God's will in hardship and experience the change of life after death, to unite with God, to take root deeply and finally be blessed and to ripen and bear fruit.
- ✧ **【Wither, desolate and in the dark】** 9-11 The prophet united with God and was able to see and confessed the sins of the people before God. Just like Joseph was discerned in the spirit and could interpret for the cupbearer. There was no righteousness and justice in the people. They were deeply in sin and their spirit was darkened like the blind groping. They grieved and moaned bitterly beyond description. This was all because their life was separated with God like branches separated from the tree; withered and desolate. Until they had earnestly turned from evil, abandoned darkness and came to light, with a change in life and then salvation would come upon them.
2. **【Exalting yourself would be chopped】** 16-19 The baker dreamt his head had three baskets of bread. In the top basket were all kinds of baked goods for Pharaoh and the birds ate the food in the basket. The interpretation of the dream was: within three days Pharaoh would lift off his head. His flesh would be eaten by the birds. Through the baker's dream God told Joseph: those who were arrogant and full of knowledge like a basket of bread, with a withered life, disconnected with God and knew nothing would eventually be devoured by the evil one. (1 Cor 8:1-2)
- ✧ **【Rebellious and was punished】** 12-15 The root of all the sins of the people was rebellion, turning their backs on God, then they oppressed and lied, without righteousness and justice. Whoever shunned evil became a prey. The baker though was responsible for an important position, as he offended Pharaoh, he was ultimately lifted off. The people was supposed to be God's

prince, originally had the authority to rule with God. But due to rebellion and sin were punished. This teaches us not to be arrogant, rebellious and run a deadly path but be humble and obedient to walk a road of life.

3. **【Restored to position and being hanged】**16-22 Joseph was able to interpret dreams because of God and in time would fulfill. On the third day, it was Pharaoh's birthday and he gave a feast for all his officials. He restored the chief cupbearer to his position and hanged the baker. Our old self should be nailed with Christ on the cross destroying the sinful body so we may experience the change in life and become a new creation. (Rom 6, 2 Cor 5:17)

※ **【Deliver and repay】** 15-19 Though the chosen people were rebellious and committed sin, God's prophecy on them would be fulfilled. Just like the two dreams which Joseph interpreted would fulfill in time. God was appalled that there was no one to intervene. So God personally repaid the people and delivered them showing only the Lord is the only God. Pharaoh set the judgment on the cupbearer and the baker according to what pleased himself. Only the Most High God put on righteousness as his breastplate, salvation as the helmet and vengeance as garments and zeal as a cloak and repaid the islands their due. (2 Th 2:8) His purpose was to deliver his people. So men would fear His name from the rising of the sun to the west and give glory to Him. Whether restoring to position or being hanged, deliver or repay, every authority is from God (Rom 13:1) so we cannot but tremble!

4. **【Wait and be refined】** 14-15 Joseph had long been under refinement so it was hard to avoid his anxiety. When he interpreted the dream for the cupbearer, he requested the cupbearer to remember him and mention him to Pharaoh. After the cupbearer had restored to his position, he had completely forgotten about Joseph. The time had not yet come and God had a better will so he might continue to wait in the prison to be refined by God, deeply take root, prosper in life and come out after two years to be a fruitful vine, (Gen 49:22) a granary of life and a blessing for all the earth.

※ **【Turn from sin and be redeemed】** 20-21 God is a God who keeps His covenant of love. The people of Zion were in hardship and whenever they repented of their sins, which would be the time they were redeemed by God. Similarly, whenever Joseph died completely to his environment while waiting and turned back thoroughly to God, that was the time His deliverance would come. God promised the Redeemer – Christ would come to Zion, to those who repented of their sins and establish the covenant and dwell in them forever. Man's covenant would change. After the cupbearer was released, he had forgotten Joseph. But God's covenant

would never change and never forget Joseph. Joseph and the people of Zion were chosen by God and being treasured. Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet God's unfailing love for you will not be shaken. God's Spirit and God's word would not depart from the mouth of the people of Zion for generations and generations until everlasting. Similarly, Joseph waited and came out after refinement and became the blessed spokesman of God exhibiting an abundant life providing bread to the world.

**Ps 40 / Rev 12:10 Main theme: Persistently and earnestly seek to be free from sin and proclaim salvation extensively and the power will come**

**- Seek / Salvation and power**

Do not be discouraged to cry out and do good by God for in time God's salvation will come

- (1) **【Waited patiently】**1-3 Pray for grace by faith and wait patiently. The Lord delivered me from the sinful slimy pit so I may obey His word and follow Him wholeheartedly and sing a new song. (Rev 14:1-5)
- (2) **【Obey the Lord's will to proclaim His word by Him】** 4-10 Trust in the Lord that I do not look to the proud or turn aside to false gods but press on toward the goal to listen to His command, obey His will and proclaim salvation widely.
- (3) **【Earnestly pray for God's protection】** 11-15 The more I love the Lord and proclaim His salvation, the more I face the enemy's hostility to take my life. Therefore I earnestly pray for the Lord's protection, deliverance and help.
- (4) **【Seek the Lord and He will help】** 16-17 May all who seek the Lord rejoice in Him. Only if I humble, exalt Him and cry to Him, He will deliver. His salvation, power, authority and glory will come all at once.

**Central point of the wheels: Refined and be redeemed, take delight to obey the Lord's will and overcome and triumph.**

Dear Lord, May you save me from the slimy pit of sin, let me be refined by You and take root in life to wait for your will to be accomplished!

**Gen 41 / Isa 60**

**Refine and keep the covenant, store up food ready for the famine to become the light of all nations.**

**- Store up the food / Shine (Ascend / Glorify God)**

Golden verses: Gen 41:52 Isa 60:19

A discussion on storing up food and shining – on one side it concerned Joseph did not only interpret dreams for Pharaoh after his release from the prison, he was also promoted to be the ruler of all Egypt and went throughout the cities to store up huge quantities of food for the coming famine. On the other side it

concerned Zion returned after captivity and became the light of the dark so all nations would be blessed. This teaches us to wait patiently till the end, refine our old self, get ready for ourselves to become the bread of life to shine and glorify God.

**A. Wait to be released from prison, rise up and shine and all nations will be blessed**

Wait (Gen 41:1-24) – Shine (Isa 60:1-9)

1. **【A time to be released from the prison】** 1-14 Pharaoh had two dreams accidentally after the cupbearer was restored to his position. When Joseph had been refined to obey completely, die thoroughly and rested to wait for God's timing, God started His action. God's time had come and He made Pharaoh dreamed which no one was able to interpret. The cupbearer then thought of his shortcomings. So he recommended to Pharaoh the Hebrew young man with whom he was imprisoned. Pharaoh immediately sent Joseph from the dungeon.
  - ※ **【A time to shine】** 1-3 "There is a time for everything." (Ecc 3:1) There is a time for God's people to be captivated and so does rising up and shine. When they were punished due to sin and after a long time of darkness and suffering, God's redemption came to Zion. Zion was restored to the Lord, so arose, shone and became the light of all nations. Similarly there was a time for Joseph to suffer in the prison and a time to be released and promoted. No one was able to interpret the dreams of Pharaoh and only Joseph who had suffered hardship and been filled of the spirit of God could interpret the dreams. This showed the brightness of the glory of God and kings would come to the brightness of His dawn. Zion was refined by God and became an instrument to reflect the light of God.
2. **【The interpretation of dream rests on God】** 14-24 Joseph did not suffer in vain. Though he was accused, God vindicated for him in time. He finally was able to take off the clothes of a prisoner and changed his clothes and came before Pharaoh. The long period of refinement from being sold as slave to captivity in prison, Joseph has learned to humble and conceal himself. When he met Pharaoh he exalted the power of God and gave glory to the Most High God. "I cannot do it, but God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires." Joseph had interpreted dreams for the cupbearer and the baker and they were fulfilled. This indicated he pursued holiness and brightness; honored God and shun evil from the start till the end. So God was near him and God's glory was totally reflected.
  - ※ **【Glory to God】** 4-9 The prophet prophesied Zion would be restored and glorified. The people returned, assembled from everywhere and came back with fruitful results to rebuild Zion to fulfill God's promise. (Rom 9:27-28)

By that time, their hearts throbbed and swelled with joy and radiance. Joseph could take off the prison clothes, change anew and come before Pharaoh to interpret dreams was all because of God's deed and shouted in rejoice. Christ will reign and Zion will become the center of worship of God for the earth, all nations will pay homage, offering treasures and also proclaim the praise of the Lord, full of glory. Joseph had been through hardship and became the temple of God. His release and arise greatly exhibited God's glory. The churches of the final days would also go through all sorts of refinement and become the radiant church which shine like stars (Eph 5:26-27 Php 2:15-16) and bring blessings to all nations.

**B. Refined and be promoted, store up food ready for the famine to show the glory and splendor of God**

Store up the food (Gen 41:25-57) – Show the light (Isa 60:10-22)

1. **【Discerned in the spirit】**25-36 Joseph had suffered much hardship and was advanced in the spirit. His life was abundant and been given wisdom to discern by God. He interpreted Pharaoh's dream as below: the two dreams referred to one thing. God had revealed to Pharaoh what he was about to do which related to God's will on all the land and the house of Jacob. Seven fat and sleek cows and seven full grains referred to seven abundant years. All of Egypt would have seven years of abundance. Seven lean cow and seven withered grains referred to seven famine years. God had firmly decided this and would do it soon. Then Joseph offered his tactics to Pharaoh. He suggested him to look for a discerning and wise man to put him in charge of the land to collect food ready for the famine.
- ※ **【With deep foresight】** Prophet Isaiah was like Joseph, discerned in the spirit, filled with foresight, understood the revelation and knew clearly the plan of God on the chosen people. The suffering of Israel would soon end; Zion would be greatly glorified and become the light of all nations. The full number of the Gentiles would come and the mystery of all Israel be saved would fulfill. (Rom 11:25-26) This also referred to the church would be filled with glorious revival, gospel would be preached throughout the land and nations be blessed. The revival of Zion would soon be accomplished.
2. **【Refined and be promoted】** 37-44 From seventeen years old Joseph was sold as slave and gone through thirteen years of refinement. He endured till the end and in time God promoted him after refinement. Pharaoh saw that the spirit of God was with Joseph and no one was like his wisdom. So he assigned Joseph to be the ruler of Egypt, placed his signet ring on Joseph's finger, put a gold chain on him with great authority and full of honor. Every place he went people shouted before him and knelt. Joseph was highly exalted and given wisdom and authority; thousands of people were given



food and blessed. (Jn 6:35)

- ※ **【Filled with God's glory】**10-18 Zion was revived. God would raise up the foreign kings to work for it and rebuild the holy temple and the holy city. Zion would turn from disgrace to glory and enjoy the abundance of the nations just like Joseph turned from a distressful environment. Those who had been persecuting God's people and oppressed Joseph would all kneel down. The gate of Zion would stand open to receive the returned people and the nations that worship God. Joseph and Zion though had been forsaken and hated, God would make them to be everlasting pride and the joy of all generations. Zion would be built to be a strong wall because of God's salvation, (Isa 26:1) and all those who came to observe the feasts would enter his gate in praise. God would make righteousness and peace to be their governor to rule Zion with no more violence, desolation and destruction just like Joseph was promoted to rule over all Egypt. Due to God's glory, Joseph and Zion would multiply in wealth and everything would be anew because the Lord is their Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob. (Gen 49:24)
- 3. **【Store up food ready for the famine】** 45-57 After Joseph became the ruler of Egypt, he patrolled around the land and stored the food produced in the years of abundance in the cities. Joseph stored food like sand and he himself was the bread of life. Pharaoh gave him a new name Zaphenath-Paneah (the savior of the world). He really was the savior in the famine and thousands of people received food from him and survived.
- ※ **【Penetration of God's glorious light】** 19-20 When Zion revived, the Lord would be her everlasting light and even the sun and the moon would become dim; just like the new Jerusalem would forever be in daytime without darkness and God be the glory of the city. (Rev 21:23-26) The people walked in the light of God penetrating His glorious dawn. Zion would prosper and flourish and her bitter days had ended. Likewise, Joseph was promoted to be the ruler of Egypt and became the bread of life and the light of life; his bitter days had ended. Christ is the bread of life, (Jn 6:35) the light of life (Jn 8:12) so the world is blessed. The church ought to be the bread of life and the light of salvation penetrating God's glorious light.
- 4. **【Suffered and became fruitful】** 45-57 Pharaoh gave Joseph Asenath daughter of Potiphera, preiast of On to be his wife which represented the Gentile church became the bride of Christ. Joseph had two sons Manasseh (forgetting) and Ephraim (fruitful). This showed God made him suffer and then ascend, forgetting the hardship of the past and was able to be fruitful in the place of hardship. He was favored, not only to his father's household but also to all the people, satisfying the hungry needs of the thousands.

✧ **【Became a thousand】** 21-22 Christ reigns and the people of Zion became righteous and took possession of the land forever; just like Joseph suffered and became fruitful. They were the shoot God planted, the work of God's hand which glorified Him. The least of Israel would become a thousand, the smallest a mighty nation. God made Joseph fruitful so as to deliver the house of Jacob not only to endure the famine and also to become a strong nation. Whatever Joseph and Isaiah prophesied, would in time be done swiftly. God's word stands firm in the heavens till forever and there is nothing too hard for the Lord!

**Ps 41 / Rev 12:11 Main theme: Consecrate by blood, deny your life to witness the word and God will bestow His blessings**

**- Compassionate / Deny your life**

Pledge one's life to obey the word by the blood of the Lamb and overcome everything, accomplish the commission to deliver which the Lord entrusted us.

- (1) **【Blessed is he who has regard for the weak】** 1-3 This is the Lord's desire. If you can deny yourselves to love others, when you are in trouble God will deliver you; when you are sickbed, God will sustain you and you will be blessed.
- (2) **【May the Lord have mercy】** 4 Put hope in the Lord for mercy and healing, be humble to confess and do not be self-righteous.
- (3) **【Do not listen to the enemy's word or be afraid of the friend's abandonment】** 5-12 Do not be afraid of the wickedness of the enemy to plot a plan to harm me, to whisper against me with evil words or even my close friend has lifted up his heel against me. But I pray for the Lord's mercy so I may rise. The Lord will sustain me because of my integrity.
- (4) **【Ought to praise God forever】** 13 Lead God's people to deny themselves, obey the word and save men; receive God's blessing and praise God together.

**Central point of the wheels: Keep the word till death, overcome and store up the food, shine and save man.**

Dear Lord, you are the light of my life, the bread of my life. May you make me abundant in life, take root and be fruitful and glorify your name.

**Gen 42 / Isa 61**

**Main theme: Humble to confess, keep the covenant in trembling and all nations be blessed**

**- Righteousness / salvation (Contrite / revive)**

Golden verses: Gen 42:18 Isa 61:10

A discussion on righteousness and salvation – on one side it concerned Joseph was the granary of life, providing food to all who are hungry. When his

brothers came to buy food, he used a stern and righteous attitude to force them to examine their old evil. On the other side it concerned Christ was anointed to bring God's salvation to the miserable people. God's manifestation of 'righteousness' and 'salvation' was His great love towards His people. Suffering forced them to humble and be contrite, so they would gain the bread of life, be blessed and praise God.

**A. Forced to come before the Lord, humble and be contrite, revive and return to the Lord**

Confess (Gen 42:1-25) – Revive (Isa 61:1-5)

1. **【Forced to come before the Lord】** 1-5 At that time famine was throughout the land, all the hungry people who went to Joseph had food for survival. (Jn 6:35) Joseph opened the granary of every place to sell grain to the people. There was famine in Canaan and when Jacob saw Egypt had food, he ordered his sons to buy grain. The house of Jacob was chosen and loved by God, but was filled with evil and unrighteousness, having famine in the flesh and in the spirit. Suffering was a blessing; through famine God forced them to examine themselves to confess and return to God. The sons of Jacob could no longer endure and wait, so they went down to Egypt to buy grain.  
 ※ **【Be blessed by salvation】** 1-2 Joseph was the savior in the famine and Christ is the savior of mankind. The Word became flesh and came to mankind. He was anointed by the Spirit of God and filled with the power of the Holy Spirit to proclaim the good news to all the poor and broken-hearted. (Ps 68:10) The hungry people who went to Joseph had the grain. Those bound by sickness and evil were comforted and healed by Christ. (Lk 4:18-19) The gospel of heaven is the bread of life which makes the humble and hungry satisfied. The house of Jacob was captivated by sin and could not be released. Famine forced them to come before Joseph to repent, be blessed and be released. Now is the time of God's favor, the year of favor for the foreign nation to return to the Lord and God will freely pardon! (2 Cor 6:2)
2. **【Confessed sins humbly】** 6-25 The brothers of Joseph came before Joseph and they bowed down to him with their faces to the ground. They would never expect the one who sold them the grain was Joseph whom they have persecuted. After separation for twenty years they could not recognize Joseph. But Joseph recognized them and remembered his dreams now fulfilled before his eyes. He pretended not to know them and spoke harshly. He compelled them to bring their younger brother to prove their honesty. Joseph also detained them for three days and through the three days of custody to press the brothers to confess their own evil. After three days'

custody they started to humble and examined themselves and admitted surely they were being punished because of their brother.

※ 【All the peoples returned to God】 2-3 Salvation was originally from the Jews and God could not abandon His people. Until the full number of the Gentiles has come in, that was the day for the people's vengeance when they would recompense the nations and deliver the captive people. On the day of Jacob's return, all the grievous would be comforted, rejoice and praise by God instead of grieving and despair. Within the three days of custody the brothers of Joseph also had the mercy of God and humbled to confess. Those who would contrite and confess would become oaks of righteousness planted by God for the display of His splendor. The brothers fell face down to confess represented the descendants of Jacob earnestly returned during their disaster; they would look on to the one they have pierced. (Zec 12:10)

3. 【Love in sternness】 6-25 Joseph purposely pretended not to know them and treated them with a stern attitude showing God's righteousness and forced them to examine and repent for their sin, then they would be given mercy by God. When Joseph heard the brothers privately confessing their sin, his kindred feeling could no longer be controlled and he went out and wept. So he retained Simeon in the prison as hostage. At the same he sent the other brothers away filled with grain to relieve the household. He also ordered to return each man's silver which showed Joseph's magnanimous love though he was stern.

※ 【Everlasting love】 4-5 Zion was abandoned because of sin and had been desolate for long which was God's punishment just like Joseph's righteousness attitude towards his brothers. God abandoned them only for a brief moment but with deep compassion He would bring them back. With everlasting kindness He would have compassion on them. (Isa 54:7-8) The restored people would rebuild the ancient ruins and renew the ruined cities. By then the aliens would no longer oppress them but work for them. Joseph's sternness and compassion toward the brothers was to rebuild their long ruined spirit so they might be completely blessed to stand firm.

**B. Righteousness is revived, keep the covenant in trembling and all nations will rejoice**

Righteous (Gen 42:26-38) – Praise (Isa 61:6-11)

1. 【Gained food for free】 26-35 The brothers were on their way back home. One of the men discovered his silver was in the mouth of his sack and their hearts sank and trembled. When they came to their father, they told him all that had happened to them and discovered each man's silver was in his sack. Jacob and his sons had the grain for free and grace fell upon them from

heaven. But they were afraid and thought disaster had come and the master of the land purposely wanted to harm them. They were unable to understand that Joseph had given much thought to this matter, so that they might confess and be contrite, remove the unrighteous to know the deep love of Joseph on them.

- ※ 【A double portion of grace】 6-9 The Lord loves justice and hates robbery and iniquity. After the restored people were contrite, they would be called priests of God and ministers of God and they would enjoy the wealth of nations. God would make a covenant with them and reward them. They would receive a double portion and a double portion in their land; rejoice instead of disgrace. God's hope in all the house of Jacob would be like this – through suffering to remove the shame of sin so they might have food for free, prosper and flourish and become a people the Lord has blessed and all nations would know them. Joseph had gone through long period of suffering and trials and had overcome till the end by God. He was given a double portion and inherited a double portion of land. (Jos 14:4, 1 Ch 5:1) Everlasting joy was on him.
2. 【Miserable spirit】 26-38 The sons of Jacob told the father that the man who was lord over the land harshly told them to bring the youngest brother to him. “Bring your youngest brother to me to prove you are honest men, and then Simeon will be released.” Since Joseph was gone, Benjamin became the idol of Jacob. Now God had put a heavy hand on him, so no matter what condition he would not allow his youngest son to go with the brothers. Despite Reuben had put his sons as a condition a life for a life, he was not able to persuade him. Jacob was afraid to lose his beloved and would go down to the grave in sorrow. It was hard to hand out his idol and his spirit was so miserable beyond description.
- ※ 【All nations rejoiced】 10-11 Jacob returned to the Lord and the holy city was revived. For the earth would be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters covered the sea. By that time righteousness and praise would spring up, all mouths would extol the Lord and all knees would prostrate before the Lord. The prophet was thus greatly delighted for God has clothed him with garments of salvation, arrayed with a robe of righteousness, adorned with ornaments and put on jewels. Christ is the Prince of Peace, all heavens will celebrate and all lips will praise. The old Jacob had to be dealt with by God to hand out Benjamin; then sorrow would turn to rejoice. All things would revive and all grains would flourish with no more famine.

**Psalms 42 / Revelation 12:12 Main theme: Do not be afraid of the enemy's fury. Put hope and sing to see God's glory.**

### **- Put hope / The enemy angers**

Woe to the earth, so dwell in the Lord and have joy and peace.

- (1) **【Do not be downcast but put hope in God】** 1-5 The enemy is furious and also because his final day is near. Do not be downcast but put hope in God for the help of His countenance. We are in the Lord and will have joy and peace.
- (2) **【Sing and put hope in God at night】** 6-11 The foes oppress, taunt and scorn. The environment is dark, so it is hard to avoid feeling downcast and disturbed. But I will put hope, sing praise and pray to God to reverse darkness to light. Great affliction will become the incentive to great prayer. With prayers, revival will come and the shame of God's children will turn to glory!

**Central point of the wheels: Contrite, revive and put hope for God will help the anointed and save people.**

Dear Lord, May you make me humble, contrite and return to you and bring the bread of life to thousands hungry men.

### **Gen 43 / Isa 62**

**Main theme: Call on day and night, bring out your beloved and become the bride of the Lord**

#### **- Sanctify / Establish**

Golden verses: Gen 43:23 Isa 62:6-7

A discussion on sanctification and establishment – on one side it concerned that Jacob, due to continuing famine, had ultimately handed out his beloved Benjamin and was blessed and sanctified. On the other side it concerned God called out to the watchmen of the holy city to call on without silence till the holy city is established. This teaches us that we ought to hand out our beloved 'idol', be sanctified by grace and then we can become a watchman so we and the church will be established and be the praise of the earth.

**A. To bear the burden to intercede, bring out the beloved and be blessed to establish**

Intercede (Gen 43:1-14) – establish (Isa 61:1-7)

1. **【Bear the burden of sin and be the guarantee】** 1-14 The famine in the land of Canaan was great. If the house of Jacob would not go to Egypt to buy grain, their life would be on the verge of death. The famine in Jacob was also becoming greater and greater. His heart was at war. He would not bring out Benjamin but complained that his sons brought him this trouble by telling the man they had another brother. Despite Reuben's guarantee and the exhortation of the other sons, he was not convinced. Now then Judah stood up and begged the father to send Benjamin with him. He willingly

guaranteed for his safety. He rather be held responsible personally if he could not bring him back. Judah was once been a prodigal and could best understand the mind of the father. In the most crucial moment he sacrificed himself. How commendable!

※ **【Call on with no rest】** 1-5 Zion was originally a faithful and righteous city but due to sin became dark without light. The house of Jacob was just the same, not only dim without light but also withered because of famine. God's servant was faithful to his commission and did not keep silent and stop calling for the holy city until the righteousness of the holy city shone and salvation came like shining light so all nations would see the righteousness and glory of God. Likewise, Judah was willing to sacrifice in the presence of the father to bear the burden of sin and be the guarantee so Jacob was willing to hand out his beloved and God's glory would shine. The people would be blessed with a new name that the mouth of the Lord would bestow. Jacob brought out his beloved and would be worthy of the name "Israel". Zion returned to be the crown in God's hand full of honor and no more named as desolate or deserted. The holy city would be revived. The whole house of Jacob would also revive and be blessed because Judah bore the burden of sin and guaranteed.

2. **【Hand out the beloved】** 11-14 God had a choice of plan on Jacob. Without any severe tackling and the pressure of suffering he still would not hand out his inner most idol and had no way to be blessed to be sanctified and revived. The critical facts forced him to make the ultimate choice. Finally because of Judah's plea to bear the burden of sin and to guarantee that touched him so he conclusively decided, "As for me, if I am bereaved, I am bereaved." He agreed to bring Benjamin to buy the grain and delayed no more. Therefore he ordered the sons to bring the native product of Canaan as gifts down to Egypt.

※ **【Establish the holy city】** 6-7 Prophet Isaiah cried out to the watchmen of the holy city to call on without rest and not to be silent day and night till the holy city was established and she became the praise of the earth. Jacob was supposed to be the faithful priest to watch and breach the gap for the whole family. Only by handing out the beloved might the watchmen be awakened. Through the great famine God forced the whole family of Jacob to pursue righteousness, hand out the beloved, humble to confess and be established to be the glory and praise of God. We ought to consecrate, abandon all idols, call out day and night and we will see the body of Christ be established and to accomplish the global gospel mission.

**B. Humble to offer and enjoy the rich feast, be redeemed and sanctified**

Humble (Gen 43:15-34) – Sanctify (Isa 62:8-12)

1. **【Prepare the rich feast】 15-25** The brothers of Joseph brought Benjamin, the gifts and double the amount of silver and went down to Egypt and stood trembling before Joseph. When Joseph saw the younger brother with them, he was greatly comforted and he ordered to set dinner so he might enjoy with them together. The brothers were brought to Joseph's house but they did not understand his great love and thought he was trying to attack them and overpower them. They were frightened and worried because of the silver that was put back into their sacks the first time so they quickly explained to the steward. The steward used every possible means to comfort and prepare them for the feast and enjoy greater grace.
  - ✘ **【Give praise for the rich grace】 8-9** God had sworn by his right hand and by his mighty arm - though the holy city would be trodden by their foe, they would flourish and prosper, the zeal of God would accomplish! The people would enjoy their harvest, those who gathered the grapes would praise the Lord in the courts of His sanctuary. The brothers of Joseph had for twice went down to buy grain and enjoyed Joseph's feast for free. But they were worried, frightened and did not give thanks to praise. The prophecy of the prophet and the comfort of the steward were to prepare them to enjoy a greater feast.
2. **【Humble to offer】 26-28** Once the brothers saw Joseph, they presented the gifts to him and bowed down before him. When Joseph asked them how their father was, they again bowed low to pay him honor. The continuous disaster and famine had forced them to be more and more humble before Joseph and the dream of Joseph of the year was played before their eyes! We ought to humble and bow down before the feet of Christ (Php 2:9-11) and offer all we have.
  - ✘ **【Build up the highway】 10** Christ would come down to deliver and we ought to prepare the way quickly to welcome His glorious coming.
    - (1) Pass through the gates – The Lord is the gate for the sheep (Jn 10:7-9) and the gate of salvation. We ought to humble and prostrate to accept our old evil.
    - (2) Remove the stones – Remove the stones in our heart, be contrite for our previous wickedness and press forward to the way of Zion.
    - (3) Raise a banner for the nations, the banner of truth and proclaim God's salvation to the ends of the earth.
3. **【Was loved to join the feast】 29-34** As Joseph looked about and saw his brother Benjamin, his own mother's son, he was deeply moved and could no longer endure. He hurried into his room and wept, showing God's compassion was aroused, desiring for more young brothers be brought before God. (Hos 11:8) Joseph and his younger brother joined the feast and



enjoyed God's abundance. (Rev 3:20) Little Benjamin though was away from the father by blood; he enjoyed the doting of Joseph and had five times the portion of abundance. God's mind is just the same. Joseph made them sit in the order of their ages to their astonishment. The feast of Joseph was a feast of love, kindred gathering united in love. This was a feast of sanctification, not only setting apart from the Egyptians but also through confession, humility and being sanctified. This was a feast of salvation because of Joseph's deliverance, they were filled in famine. How great is God's goodness and how great is His beauty! (Zec 9:17)

※ **【Was redeemed and rewarded】** 11-12 Christ came and He recompensed to the nations on one side and rewarded His people on the other. We ought to proclaim to the peoples and to the Daughter of Zion, 'your Savior came, His reward was with Him.' The time has come for rewarding those who reverence His name, both small and great, (Rev 11:18) and blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb! (Rev 19:9) They would be called the Holy People and the Redeemed. The feast of Joseph was also a rich feast of redemption so the brothers would be redeemed and sanctified. Zion would be called Sought After, the City No Longer Deserted and God's Name was glorified because of them.

**Ps 43 / Rev 12:13 Main theme: When we are persecuted, seek and put hope, and offer willingly to see God's glory**  
**- Seek / persecute**

The enemy was hurled down and unwilling, so he persecuted God's children.

- (1) **【May God vindicate against my foe】** 1 Do not turn to others, do not vindicate by ourselves but plead our case to the Lord to rescue us from deceitful and wicked foe.
- (2) **【Obey the Lord word and act by Him】** 2-4 By the Lord who gives me strength, so I may obey His truth (light) and walk, love Him above all else and willingly offer everything to keep His will.
- (3) **【Put hope in the Lord and gain glory】** 5 Do not be downcast and disturbed. When you encounter hardship, put hope in the Lord. Obey the Lord's will by Him and you will not be disgraced but filled with glory.

**Central point of the wheels: Hand out your beloved, call on to obey the word and be redeemed to establish**

O Lord, I wish to hand out my beloved completely, call on without ceasing, overcome the persecution, be sanctified and established and praise your Name!

**Gen 44 / Isa 63**

**Main theme: Bear the mind of the father, deny yourselves to take the blame and pray for the weak members.**

### **- Bear the burden of sin / Intercede**

Golden verses: Gen 44:32-33 Isa 63:9

A discussion on bearing the blame and intercession – on one side Judah was willing to sacrifice himself among the brothers and bore the blame for the younger brother and intercede. On the other side it concerned the prophet Isaiah bore the mind of God and interceded for the sinful people. This teaches us to bear the mind of God, keep our faith and love to bear the blame to satisfy the heart of God and stop His wrath.

#### **A. Be righteous to examine sin, recompense against the foe and be redeemed by God**

Examine sin (Gen 44:1-7) – Recompense (Isa 63:1-6)

1. **【Be righteous to examine sin】** 1-14 Joseph devised a plan to detain Benjamin to test if the brothers were contrite on their sins and had a compassionate heart for the younger brother. He ordered that the grain and silver be filled in the men's sacks and a silver cup be put in the sack of Benjamin and sent them away. They had not gone far from the city and Joseph purposely pursued them back and checked who had stolen the silver cup. The brothers were caught up and rejected definitely and allowed them to search in their sacks. However, the silver cup was found in the sack of Benjamin. They tore their clothes and went back to Joseph trembly, humbly bowed down to plead for a favor. Joseph's merciless investigation made them confessed deeply and self-examined their old evil how they had persecuted the brother. He also examined if they really bore the mind of the father.
- ※ **【God recompensed】** 1-6 The prophet prophesied Christ would come full of splendor like the warriors from the battle place. Edom and Bozrah represented all nations that were against God. Christ would tread the enemies like treading the grapes and blood would stain on the robe; (Rev 9:13-15) He alone would judge. It is time for judgment to begin with the family of God. (1 Pe 4:17) By the righteousness of God, Joseph investigated on the wickedness of his brothers. Edom was originally the elder brother of Jacob but he was merciless to his brother and harbored ancient hostility; he would be recompensed. The nations added to the calamity to the people and would also be recompensed. (Isa 34) Joseph investigated on the brothers so they might deeply understand their cruel nature of merciless toward their little brother and hate themselves bitterly.
2. **【Facing a test to love the brother】** 15-17 Joseph searched on the brothers and the result was the silver cup was found in the sack of Benjamin. Judah represented the brothers to confess before Joseph, "God has uncovered your servants' guilt. We are now my lord's slaves." Joseph definitely would not

agree, “Only the man who was found to have the cup will become my slave. The rest of you, go back to your father in peace.” The brothers were faced with the test of who loved the younger brother, who was ready to be the slave for him and let him go back to the father peacefully.

- ※ **【Showing everlasting unfailing kindness to the chosen people】** 4-5 God’s anger towards His chosen people lasts only a moment but His favor lasts a lifetime! (Ps 30:5) On one hand God recompensed to the enemy while the other He used His arm to show His unfailing kindness to the chosen people. “The year of my redemption has come.” God has loved His people with an everlasting love. “This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.” (1 Jn 3:16) Joseph’s investigation was to test who had the love of denial for the younger brother. We ought to love thousands of younger brothers with the love of Christ who loved us.

**B. Bear the mind of God, take the blame and confess our sin and to intercede with love**

Love (Gen 44:18-34) – Intercede (Isa 63:7-19)

1. **【Bear the heart of the father】** 18-34 Judah was once a prodigal and deeply understood the father’s love. How could he mercilessly leave the little brother as slave and let the father experience the sorrow of the lost of a son again. Now Judah could no longer stop his worry and urgency, so he went near to Joseph to urge him earnestly not to be angry and emphasized: “My father’s life is closely bound up with the boy’s life. My father’s heart cannot leave our youngest brother.” He also said he had guaranteed the boy’s safety. If he did not bring him back to the father, he would bear the blame. Therefore he urged Joseph to let him remain to replace his youngest brother as slave so his youngest brother could go back together with the brothers. Judah understood the love of the father for the youngest son was so distinct! The sacrifice of Judah had satisfied the righteous requirement of Joseph and also bore the compassionate heart of the father.

- ※ **【Confess our sins and intercede】** 7-14 The prophet bore the heart of God and interceded before Him like Judah. He stated the kindnesses and deeds of God and the good things and compassion done to the chosen people. In God’s redemption, He named them as sons who would not be false to Him. When they were young, God lifted them and carried them. Little Benjamin was also doted before the father with close association. The prophet then continued to acknowledge the people rebelled against God, grieved the Holy Spirit, provoked God to anger and turned to become His enemy. The prophet recollected God saved the people from the land of slavery and led them through the desert for forty years. Though they rebelled many times,

they were brought to the place of rest. We ought to imitate the prophet Isaiah and Judah to bear the mind of the Father to bear the blame and intercede.

2. **【Bear the blame and intercede】** 18-34 Judah was different from the other brothers. He was not satisfied with much grain and silver or go back home in peace and let the younger brother be left behind as slave. He pleaded unceasingly before Joseph and preferred to take the place of the little brother as slave so he might return to the father. Judah was like a big brother among the brothers, willing to sacrifice, denying himself to bear the blame and intercede. So he greatly moved Joseph who could no longer control himself and made himself known to his brothers. Though Judah was not the firstborn, after confession he was like the firstborn, the strongest of his brothers. (1 Ch 5:2) Christ too came from him. How blessed!

※ **【Intercede fervently】** 15-19 The prophet then continued to plead God to look down from heaven and see His possession and not to remember their sins. On one side the prophet grieved that God withheld His compassion because the chosen people sinned. Where was His zeal and might? On the other side he grabbed onto God and firmly believed God is forever their Father and their Savior. Therefore he begged for God's mercy and would not allow the people to be headstrong and wander from His ways. Judah also pleaded the same before Joseph and retrieved his heart and stopped his anger exhibiting the effect of bearing the blame and intercession. The intercession of Judah and Isaiah was filled with the love and the heart of God which bore the mind of God and took up the weakness of the younger brother. Just like the Apostle Paul who had great sorrow and unceasing anguish in his heart and preferred to be cursed and cut off from Christ for his brothers. (Rom 9:1-3) These are the examples for the watchmen.

**Ps 44 / Rev 12:14 Main theme: Read the Bible and pray, escape to the desert to avoid death and be fruitful**

**- Listen and pray / Two wings**

We ought to use the two wings which God gives us – Listen to the Lord's word, plea for God's word and fly to the desert to escape the evil one's temptation and harm.

- (1) **【Listen to the Lord's word】** 1-3 From the Bible we heard our fathers trusted in God and overcame to take possession of the land.
- (2) **【Believe in the Lord's word】** 4-8 And trusted in God's name (word) to subdue the enemies.
- (3) **【The condition of now】** 9-16 Failure and disgraced, scattered and nearly be devoured.
- (4) **【We had not turned back or was false to the covenant】** 17-22 Nor have we

strayed from the Lord's path and spread out our hands to a foreign god.

- (5) **【Pray for revival】** 23-26 The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. (Jas 5:16) May God rise up and help us and redeem us so we may revive!

**Central point of the wheels: Escape and hide in the Lord, intercede with love and overcome the enemies by God**

Dear Lord, May you let me fly to the desert and see your face, overcome the persecution, bear the heart of the Father to love and intercede.

**Gen 45 / Isa 64**

**Main theme: Bear the blame and plead God to rend the heavens and come down to gain great revival**

**- Appear / tremble (obey the will quickly / strives to plea)**

Golden verses: Gen 45:7 Isa 64:4

A discussion on appearance and trembling – on one side it concerned Judah denied himself to bear the blame and interceded which greatly moved Joseph's heart so that he could no longer control himself and made himself known to his brothers; just like the love of God suddenly appeared. On the other side it concerned the prophet Isaiah's plea was answered so that God rent the heavens and came down to recompense the enemies and deliver the people. Both exhibited the effect of intercession of love and the might of the Holy Spirit who acts on behalf of those who wait for Him.

**A. Appeared in love, confessed and self-examined to obey God's will quickly**

Made known (Gen 45:1-15) – Appeared (Isa 64:1-5)

1. **【The effect of intercession】** At the critical moment Judah bore the heart of the father and brought out the love for the younger brother to intercede by denying himself. He willingly sacrificed himself and took the decision to be detained for him which deeply moved the heart of Joseph and relieved his anger so his compassion was aroused.
- ※ **【The power to move on intercession】** The prophet Isaiah bore the mind of God and was personally on the scene to confess and intercede to satisfy God's heart so that God recompensed on the nations and vindicated for the people. The intercession of Judah and Isaiah aimed at God's heart was full of God's love which was accepted by God and had wonderful effect.
2. **【The appearance of love】** 1-8 As Judah bore the mind of the father and his persistence to plead without stop, Joseph could no longer control his kindred love and he wept loudly before his brothers. Joseph made himself known to his brothers in love and told them he was the one whom they had sold to Egypt. The brothers were greatly surprised and in unbearable

shamefulness. Joseph quickly comforted them so they would not be distressed and be angry with themselves. It was God's good pleasure to send him ahead of them to Egypt to save their lives by a great deliverance. Not only Joseph did not remember the previous evil, he made every effort to comfort them exhibiting the great love of Christ on the cross on the Mount of Calvary! The more the brothers rebuked themselves which was touching and beyond words because of Joseph's love and they awakened to confess.

※ **【Rend the heavens and come down】** 1-2 The prophet cried out to God to deliver the people and rend the heavens and come down which showed great splendor and recompensed to the enemies. God appeared to reward the good and punish the wicked. He would use the devouring fire to burn away all the enemies and caused the nations to tremble and quake. Joseph made known to his brothers and was an appearance of love and like God who rent the heavens and came down. The hearts of the brothers were also greatly trembled so they hated themselves bitterly and were burned by the righteous Holy Spirit. (Isa 4:3-4) The churches need the trembling and burning work of the Holy Spirit to be revived.

3. **【Things that we did not expect】** 9-15 Joseph had long been refined and deeply understood God's will. So now he took up the responsibility of the firstborn and hurried the brothers to go back home to report to the father that the lost Joseph had become the ruler of Egypt. He also ordered them to tell the father all the honor accorded to him in Egypt, that it was he who was speaking to them so the father would come down quickly. Joseph wanted to provide for the father in the abundant land of Egypt so the whole family would be able to sustain through the famine years and enjoy the richness of Joseph. After speaking, he threw his arms around his younger brother and wept and embraced his brothers and wept over them. The love of Joseph had moved the hearts of the brothers.

※ **【Waited for God to accomplish】** 3-5 In the prayer of the prophet, he recollected the deeds of the Lord and how He did awesome things that they did not expect like the mountains trembled and the fire set the twigs ablaze. Now God would still act awesome things which no one expect on behalf of those who waited for Him; to deliver the Israelites from the captive land like those who gladly did right and who remembered His ways. God would accomplish everything for those who wait for Him. Joseph made himself known to his brothers was an appearance of love and also something they did not expect. The whole house of Jacob pursued righteousness during the long term waiting and refinement. Their portion of blessing was also eyes that had not seen, ears that had not heard and no mind had conceived. (1 Cor 2:9)

**B. Continue to intercede, the king will work for the good to awake and be blessed**

Awake (Gen 45:16-28) – Confess (Isa 64:5-12)

1. **【Obeyed the will and the king worked for the good of it】** 16-20 The house of Jacob went down to Egypt to live through the famine years. This was the will of God and King Pharaoh worked for the good of it because of Joseph. He invited the father of Joseph and his family to Egypt to enjoy the abundance. He also ordered to send some carts to get their household.  
✘ **【Sinned and God hid His face】** 5-7 The prophet sighed that God was angry with the people because they continued to sin and did not repent, no one called on His name or strived to lay hold of God. Due to this He hid His face from them. Therefore the prophet wept bitterly and confessed – all of us had become like one who was unclean and all our righteous acts were like filthy rags. The house of Jacob was contrite and returned because they saw Joseph. So God no longer hid His face and moved Pharaoh to work for them. The people did not confess their sin and examine themselves. Thus they would ultimately waste away because of their sins. The churches of the final age are filled with sins and filth; we ought to learn from the prophet to strive to intercede and confess. When God orders, the filthy rags will be removed and clothed with rich garments. (Zec 3:1-5) We would see everything works for the good of it and the churches will revive.
2. **【The heart was stunned】** 21-28 God's mind was on Jacob as he would bring the whole family to live as alien in Egypt to accomplish God's good will. But as he had long been suffering and in weakness, he had become indifferent, slow to react and disbelieve to God's will. When he heard the sons said that Joseph was still alive and became the ruler of Egypt and carts were sent to carry him back, he was stunned and could not believe it.  
✘ **【A scene of desolation】** 8-12 How was God's desire for Jacob was the same for the chosen people which was to make the holy city prosper again and revive to serve in the temple. The prophet continued to call on to God praying that He would look upon them! The holy city had become a desolation. The holy and glorious temple was burnt with fire and how could God keep silent? He pleaded God not to be angry or remember their sins forever. Jacob's heart was also desolate. When he heard Joseph became the ruler and sent carts to carry him, he was stunned. But time had come, God was no more silent and His will must be accomplished. He was no more stunned and the holy city was no more desolate.
3. **【Awake and be blessed】** 21-28 Joseph had for long suffered and paid the price, thus he would not fail. When Jacob heard from his sons about what Joseph said and saw the carts sent to carry him was by the door, he suddenly

awoke. The love of burning coal from God made his freezing heart rekindle again. So he decided to see Joseph for once before he might die.

- ※ **【Surrender and be blessed】** 8-12 The prophet paid the price to pray before God and was not in vain. God would have regard for Zion and it would no longer be desolate but revived. “Yet, O Lord, you are our Father!” Though the people sinned and abandoned God, He had not forsaken them. We ought to acknowledge “we are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand.” This is the prayer of surrendering before God and a prayer of awakening! God’s work on Jacob was just the same, so he might understand himself was as low as the clay with nothing to boast; completely surrendered to let God’s will be accomplished on him. Thus he awoke and was blessed and from then ended his suffering and moaning days. The price of love of Joseph and Isaiah was effective.

**Ps 45 / Rev 12:5 Main theme: Love righteousness and hate wickedness, press on toward the goal to avoid being harmed.**

**- Forward / avoid harm**

We cannot look back but run up the hill lest we will be spewed with filthy water by the evil one like the wife of Lot who became a pillar of salt.

- (1) **【Imitate the Lord to love righteousness and hate wickedness】** 1-9 Our Lord is the most excellent of men, full of gracious speech and save men without stopping. He is equipped in full and advance according to the Spirit victoriously. He loves righteousness and hates wickedness. His scepter of justice will last for ever and ever. The royal bride and overflowing joy is with Him. We ought to imitate the Lord and be blessed by His grace.
- (2) **【Forget what is behind and press forward】** 10-17 Also be the bride of the Lamb and pay attention to the Lord’s word. Forget what is behind and strain toward what is ahead so we will not be spewed by the filthy water from the serpent behind. Be wholehearted to the Lord and press near before Him to lead others to the Lord completely and be fruitful and remembered by Him.

**Central point of the wheels: Be appeared and awaken, press on toward the goal to avoid being harmed.**

Dear Lord, May You rend the heavens and come down so I may be melted by your love, awake and be blessed, press on toward the goal and overcome the plot of the evil one.

**Gen 46 / Isa 65**

**Main theme: Seek the Lord and remove the evil, obey the word and be blessed; turn from Him and wail**

**- Seek / Rebel**



Golden verses: 46:3-4 Isa 65:1-2

A discussion on seeking and rebellion – on one side it concerned Jacob sought and obeyed the will of God and brought the whole house to Egypt to live as alien and was blessed. On the other side it concerned the rebellious people abandoned God and spread a table for Fortune and was punished and disgraced. This teaches us not to be rebellious and self-deceiving. We ought to seek and obey God's will, move forward and lead others to run a blessed path that set apart for the Lord.

**A. Do not be rebellious but seek God's will to go to the abundant land**

Seek (Gen 46:1-27) – Rebel (Isa 65:1-16)

1. **【Sought and was guided】** 1-4 Jacob saw the carts sent by Joseph and he was like being awakened from the dream. His long period of suffering and freezing spirit was healed by the great love of God. So Jacob set out with his whole family and all that was his to Beersheba where God appeared to his father Isaac. He offered sacrifices and sought after God. God appeared to him in a vision and told him not to be afraid and go down to Egypt for He would be with him. God also promised his descendants would become a great nation there. He would surely bring him back again and Joseph's own hand would close his eyes. Jacob sought humbly and was guided by God and the whole family was blessed.
- ✖ **【Rebellion provoked God's anger】** 1-5 God called on to those who did not ask for Him, to a nation that did not call on His name. They would be blessed because they sought after God, let alone the people of God? Jacob had gone through long period of refinement and now returned to seek and God appeared to him. All day long God had held out His hands to an obstinate people, who walked in ways not good, pursuing their own imaginations without seeking God. They offered sacrifices to the idols and had fellowship with the dead, imitating the detestable things of the foreign nations and provoked God to anger. They were also hypocritical and self-deceiving, thinking themselves more sacred than others and no one could go near them!
2. **【Obeyed the will and was blessed】** 5-7 Jacob was sure of God's will and obeyed without doubt. So he brought the whole family and set out from Beersheba. God's love was wonderful and unpredictable! Jacob and his household set on the carts sent by Pharaoh to avoid the difficult road. Thus Jacob took the whole family and the children, their livestock and possessions to Egypt and lived through the famine years in peace with Joseph. Jacob was blessed in God's will! This fulfilled the promise that Abraham's descendants would be strangers in a country not their own. (Gen 15:13) Thereafter the offspring of Jacob became a great nation as expected

and Joseph's own hand had closed his eyes and God's promises were fulfilled.

- ※ **【Did evil and would be paid back】** 6-7 Jacob obeyed the will to go down to Egypt when he was old and he ran an obedient and blessed path. But his rebellious offspring provoked God to anger and would be measured into their laps the full payment for their former deeds because they had violated the righteous laws of God.
- 3. **【Into abundance】** 8-27 The whole family of Jacob of seventy persons went down to Egypt – the wife of Jacob Leah and her offspring had 33 persons, Zilpah and her offspring had 16 persons, Rachel and her offspring had 14 persons and Bilhah and her offspring had 7 persons. They were all remembered and Joseph was with them. During the famine years they enjoyed God's abundant grace. How wide and long, and high and deep is the love of Christ!
- ※ **【Possess the holy mountain】** 8-16 God's judgment is righteous and just. The prophet prophesied those remnants who did righteously, that was those servants who sought me like the grapes that still had juice would not be destroyed. The descendants of Jacob would still be upheld and blessed to inherit the holy mountain. Though most of the house of Jacob was corrupt, they were finally led by God to enter the land of abundance. God's promise and prophecy on Jacob and his blessed descendants would ultimately be fulfilled.
- 4. **【The result of doing evil】** 8-27 Judah originally had five sons namely Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez and Zerah. However only three went down to Egypt with Jacob. The firstborn of Judah Er and the second son Enan died in Canaan because they did evil (Gen 38:7-10) so this was the result of their evil.
- ※ **【The result of forsaking God】** 11-16 God would destine those people who forsook and rebelled against Him, who forgot His holy mountain for seeking fortune to worship the false gods for the sword. God called and they did not answer and they did evil in His sight, like the two sons of Judah. Forsaking God and doing evil would be punished! Therefore, when God's servants ate and drank and enjoyed in songs, they would go thirsty and be put to shame. They would be in anguish and wail. Their result would become the wording of the cursed in future. Only by seeking blessing from the true God will there be true blessing. Judah had gone through failure and deep confession, and then he gave birth to Perez and was chosen to become a blessed descendant to share in the genealogy of Christ.

**B. See God's face and enjoy abundance, set apart and renew to serve the**

## Lord

Set apart (Gen 46:28-34) – Renew (Isa 65:17-25)

1. **【Be satisfied】** 28-30 Jacob obeyed God's will and went down to Egypt through a long and arduous journey and ultimately reached Egypt happily. Joseph had his chariot made ready and went to Goshen to meet his old and long separated father. They met after a long separation and there were thousands and thousands of words which they did not know where to start. Joseph embraced his father and wept for a long time. After Israel had seen Joseph for himself, he was gratified beyond description. He excitedly said to Joseph, "Now I am ready to die, since I have seen for myself that you are still alive!" Jacob was satisfied while he was still alive and could often see Joseph.

※ **【Everything is renewed】** 17-24 God will create new heavens and a new earth. The old heaven and old earth filled with evil and tribulations would be through. He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" (Rev 21:5) The redeemed new people will be in the new Jerusalem and enjoy eternal pleasures. Everything will be renewed there. God will dwell with men without curse, weeping and crying. Their prayers will be answered and become blessed descendants of God. In the aged days of Jacob he dwelt with Joseph and often saw him, never with sorrow and anguish. Living in the land of Goshen was like a new heaven and earth filled with gladness!

2. **【Set apart for the Lord】** 31-34 Then Joseph enjoined the brothers to witness to Pharaoh that from their forefathers till now they have tended livestock leading a life of offering and serving so they might set apart for the Lord to live in the land of Goshen separated from the Egyptians for all shepherds are detestable to the Egyptians. The whole house of Jacob lived in the land of Goshen which was dwelling in the abundance of God and in the will of God, setting apart from the world and living through the famine years in peace.

※ **【Peace and harmony】** 25 In the new order of God's creation, all creations will return to harmony. They will no longer groan and travail but be brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. (Rom 8:20-23) The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The original nature like wolf and ferocious lion will change in Christ. They will neither harm nor destroy on the holy mountains. The family of Jacob lived in the land of Goshen which was the holy mountain, full of peace and harmony reviving the good life of dwelling with God in the joyful garden. Today the church ought to set apart for the Lord, living a holy, loving and harmonious life.

**Ps 46 / Rev 12:16 Main theme: Take refuge in the Lord and rest, God is with us and heaven and earth work for the good of it**

**- Rest / God helps**

Everything will work for the good for those who obey the word and love God.

- (1) **【God is our help】** 1-3 Only by taking refuge in God and drawing from Him the unlimited resurrecting power, then we will not be afraid of the turning upside down of heaven and earth for in Him, there is peace which cannot be taken away.
- (2) **【With the river of life God is with us】** 4-7 In the holy city there is a river of the water of life. (Rev 22:1) With God's word in our heart, God is with us and in time He will help the saints.
- (3) **【Rest and watch God accomplishes】** 8-11 Obey the word by the Lord and all we do is rest, like Joseph waited in rest and God worked wonder and new things for him. Daniel trusted in God and he would rather be placed in the lions' den but would not stop praying. God shut the mouths of the lions so His name was exalted in all the land. Moses was attacked by Korah and his followers and God made the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them. With God's help, the heaven and earth work for the good of it.

**Central point of the wheels: Do not rebel and do not be afraid but seek and obey His will and receive His help.**

Dear Lord, may you remove the rebellion and self-deception in my heart so I may seek and obey your will, take possession of the land in rejoice and have peace and joy.

**Gen 47 / Isa 66**

**Main theme: Tremble to obey the commands then take possession of the land and provide food; violating the commands will be punished**

**- Obey the command / faithful (save man / proclaim the word)**

Golden verses: Gen 47:29-30 Isa 66:1-2

A discussion on obeying the command and be faithful – on one side it concerned the house of Jacob set apart for the Lord and lived in the land of Goshen. They obeyed the command and were blessed. On the other side it concerned God valued those who are inwardly faithful and worship honestly. We ought to be humble and contrite, set apart for the Lord and be faithful to obey the command by providing the hungry and inflicted with the bread of life and to be ready to be sent to all the land to proclaim God's glory.

**A. Set apart to be holy and faithful to be blessed and revive; doing wicked will be repaid**

Set apart to be holy (Gen 47:1-23, 27) – faithful (Isa 66:1-17)

1. **【Obey the command and set apart to be holy】** 1-4 Joseph was chosen by

God with the authority of the firstborn to lead the brothers. He brought five brothers to see King Pharaoh to witness their forefathers had been shepherds and serving the Lord. They went there to live as alien because of the famine. They requested Pharaoh to let them settle in Goshen separated from the Egyptians. This was according to what Joseph enjoined them so this would maintain their purity in ethic and belief lest they might be defiled by false doctrine, the secular and wickedness. Living in the land of Goshen was living in the abundance of Joseph and enjoy to be with him. Therefore we ought to set apart for the Lord and no longer act in futility.

- ※ **【Faithful worship】** 1-2 Heaven is God's throne, and the earth is His footstool. Where was the house we would build for Him to be His resting place? The kind of faithfulness which God accepts is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at His word. The whole house of Jacob was blessed in the famine years and the abundance of Joseph which was the result of going through contrite in spirit and confessing their sins. Now then they trembled in every act and stroke and worshiped God in honesty. They also observed the command of Joseph and witnessed before Pharaoh.
- 2. **【Was blessed before the king】** 5-6 The whole family of Jacob set apart for the Lord and worshiped faithfully. They were blessed by God and favored before Pharaoh. God made Pharaoh worked for the good of God's will (Rom 8:28) and Pharaoh richly favored the house of Jacob and promised they might live in the best place in the land. The whole family of Jacob lived in the best place; there the Lord bestowed His blessing, even life forevermore.
- ※ **【Detested before God】** 3, 17 The prophet earnestly rebuked the hypocritical and detestable sins: killing, presenting pig's blood and worshiping idols. Before the house of Jacob confessed, their worship was also pretending and hypocritical. They were not blessed before God or before men. Now they had returned and corrected so God let them be greatly favored before Pharaoh.
- 3. **【Blessing】** 7-10 Joseph brought his father to Pharaoh and Jacob blessed Pharaoh. The life of Jacob had mostly been in refinement and weather-beaten. In his old age he reached the peak of perfection full of spiritual life. He witnessed before Pharaoh that he had led a life as alien and blessed him. Jacob blessed Pharaoh that was to bless Egypt and also to his descendants. God's promise to Abraham and all nations that their descendants are blessed would be fulfilled. (Gen 15:13-14, 22:18)
- ※ **【Judgment】** 4-6, 15-16 The prophet was discerned in the spirit, jealous of evil and proclaimed God's judgment. Jacob was abundant in the spirit, full of God's love and blessed Pharaoh again and again. He became the

spokesman of God's will to fulfill the mission of the age. God repaid for all the faithful and being persecuted so those who drove away the brothers and who were full of hypocrisy and self-deception would be put to shame. The brothers of Joseph had hated Joseph and drove him out. Afterwards they returned and rejected hypocrisy so they were blessed before God and men. Christ came to judge the nations and repaid all power of evil and anti-God and the chosen people who were wayward. When Jacob was old he abandoned the idols and turned to God wholeheartedly so he and his family were blessed and Pharaoh and Egypt were also blessed because of him.

4. **【Was blessed in hardship】** 11-12 Joseph gave the best land of Egypt as directed by Pharaoh that was the land of Goshen in the district of Rameses of River Nile to his father and brothers so they might enjoy the abundant grace in the famine years. Everywhere was famine and people of the land fainted because of famine. Nevertheless the whole family of Jacob was able to live in full granary, not only through the famine but in prosperity. According to the promise of God they grew in numbers and bought new possession and became a great nation.

※ **【Refined and revived】** 6-14 The prophesied Zion would appear with a reviving scene – before she went into labor, she gave birth. The church (Ac 2) will also have a share in the glorious kingdom of Christ. Zion labored and was born in a day and the chosen people had gone through great trouble (Jer 30:7) and the remnants were refined and returned and became a beloved new people in a moment. Similarly, due to Joseph's labor, the whole family of Jacob turned from hunger and suffering to an abundant granary in a moment returning to Joseph and was favored in trouble and enjoyed the gladness together. As the chosen people returned and revived, Zion also enjoyed abundance, gladness and peace.

## **B. Provide food for the world, proclaim the word to the nations and enjoy everlasting blessings**

Provide food (Gen 47:13-31) – Proclaim the word (Isa 66:18-24)

1. **【Provide food for the world】** 13-26 At that time because the famine was severe, there was no food in the whole region and people wasted away. Joseph was full of God's love, wisdom and power; he applied the plan to save the hunger and ruled the whole land. All the people of Egypt and Canaan came to Joseph for food and he had exchanged the grain for a lot of silver, livestock and land and brought them to Pharaoh. Joseph himself was an abundant granary like a living scroll so the hungry and hopeless people of the world would be delivered. This represented Christ is the living bread so men will gain life because of him and are satisfied. Christ is the Savior of mankind who saves us from death to life.

※ **【Proclaim the word to the nations】**18-21 When God set His judgment and after displaying his splendor among the nations, He sent some of those who survived to the nations and to the distant islands to proclaim the glory of God. This was to lead many blessed to the holy mountain to be priests and Levites. Even the Gentiles would set apart for the Lord and shared in the priesthood. The good promise of God would be fulfilled on those who fear Him. Let the word of Christ dwell in our hearts richly and wait to be sent to bring the bread of life to the people of the land and to proclaim God's glory and that by believing men have life in His name. (Jn 20:31)

2. **【A better country】** 28-31 Jacob was blessed and ended his long period of living of hardship. He enjoyed living together with Joseph in peace and joy in his old age. Before he closed his eyes, he summoned Joseph and left a will. His eyes of faith were focused on the land of Canaan. He instructed Joseph to swear an oath to bury him in the promise land of the forefathers. He believed God would bestow the land of Canaan to his descendants as their inheritance. The beautiful land of Canaan which Jacob admired represented the better country in heaven and the everlasting place of blessing. (Heb 11:13-16)

※ **【The new heavens and the new earth】** 22-24 In the new heavens and the new earth, God's children will forever enjoy to be with God and his glory. The sighing and labor of the old heaven and earth will end. God will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain (Rev 21:3-4) and those who are wayward will forever be punished. We ought to see the everlasting beautiful land in heaven with the eyes of faith so those who are blessed will inherit the everlasting possession with us.

**Ps 47 / Rev 12:17 Main theme: God is the Most High, obey and witness His word and overcome by faith**

**- Obey the word / Overcome**

Those who obey God's commandments and witness for the Lord are the target of attack of the enemies.

- (1) **【Overcome by faith】** 1-4 Do not be afraid of the enemy's anger but keep and witness the word, obey and walk the Lord's way. Let our foundation be stand on the Rock and the enemy cannot harm us. Further we ought to overcome by faith because God is the Most High. Through us God will let all nations surrender and return to the Lord so they will become our inheritance and glory.
- (2) **【Shout and praise by faith】** 5-9 Like marching around Jericho, shout by faith and the strong city will fall. When we fight, we ought to consecrate and praise and God will make all nations surrender and become God's

people because God is the Most High.

**Central point of the wheels: Be faithful and list to the command, keep and proclaim the word and all people will return to the Lord.**

Dear Lord, may you make me holy and faithful to become the granary of life so the hungry people will be satisfied.

### **Gen 48 / Jer 1**

**Main theme: Listen quietly to the Lord's word, see accurately and listen clearly to proclaim God's word boldly.**

**- See accurately / proclaim boldly**

Golden verses: Gen 48:11 Jer 1:7-8

A discussion on seeing accurately and proclaiming boldly – on one side it concerned Jacob's life was abundant when his end was near and he saw accurately in the spirit. When he blessed Joseph he prophesied Ephraim the second son of Joseph would be above the firstborn Manasseh. On the other side it concerned Jeremiah was called to be a prophet and God was with him so he boldly proclaimed His word. This teaches us to see accurately in the spirit and understand God's will deeply to proclaim it boldly without fear.

**A. Called to be sent, understand the will without fear and be faithful in the commission and grasp the grace**

Understand the will (Gen 48:1-11) – be sent (Jer 1:1-10)

1. **【Was chosen in the womb】** When Jacob was still in the womb he was chosen by God to be the firstborn to inherit the promised blessing bestowed to Abraham. Though Jacob and Esau were twins, God loved Jacob but hated Esau. (Mal 1:2-3) God had His will on Jacob. Therefore since Jacob was born, God formed him, helped him and strengthened him till his old age and gray hairs; God still carried and sustained him.
- ※ **【Carried the yoke since youth】** 1-10 Jeremiah was born in a priesthood family and like Jacob he was being chosen by God in his mother's womb to set apart for the Lord and sent to be the prophet of the nations. He carried the yoke since youth though he thought himself unworthy, God was with him. Jeremiah and Jacob both lived in God's will and promise all their life.
2. **【Grabbed the promise all his life】** 1-11 Jacob (grab) grabbed the promise of God for all his life. Even when his end was near he still grabbed without release. Joseph brought his sons Manasseh and Ephraim to see him. Once Jacob spoke, he grabbed the promise which God appeared to him in Bethel and took the sons of Joseph to be his. This showed that though Jacob was old, he understood God's will deeply and was faithful to God's commission till death. When Israel saw the two sons of Joseph, he embraced them and kissed them. He recollected the past and thought about now, he had never



ending words of thanks for God.

- ※ **【Proclaimed God's will all his life】**1-10 Jeremiah (exalted) was chosen by God as a prophet since the year of Josiah, king of Judah to the ending of king Zedekiah. God's words came to him unceasingly. He exalted God as holy all his life and was faithful to proclaim His will even through suffering. When Jacob was old he deeply understood God's will and irrespective of anything he obeyed till the end. Jeremiah was sent to be the prophet of the nations. On one hand he did the work of uprooting and tearing down while the other he built and planted. God tore down the corrupting character of Jacob to the utmost and then God planted and built him to a godly and perfect stage and in his old age he was greatly blessed. The aged Jacob and young Jeremiah became the spokesmen of God's will and were faithful in their commission.

**B. See accurately in the spirit without following any personal intention and attack sin boldly**

See accurately (Gen 48:12-20) – Attack sin (Jer 1:11-19)

1. **【See accurately】** 12-16 Joseph brought his two sons to see his father. Though Jacob's eyes were failing, his spirit was bright. During the blessing, Jacob purposely put his right hand on the head of Ephraim, the second son of Joseph and the left hand on the head of Manasseh. Jacob set Ephraim as the firstborn and prophesied his descendants would be greater than his brother. Thereafter it fulfilled as expected. The horns of Joseph represented the ten thousands of Ephraim and thousands of Manasseh. (Deu 33:17)  
Jacob saw accurately and was discerned in the spirit.
- ※ **【Realize】** 11-16 Prophet Jeremiah saw two visions before he was entrusted to spread the message:
  - (1) He saw the branch of an almond tree representing revival would come soon. God watched to see that His word would be fulfilled.
  - (2) He saw a boiling pot, tilting away from the north representing the attack of Babylon would come from the north. Through Babylon God punished Judah. The reason of Judah's subjugation and was taken captive because they had abandoned God and burnt incense to other gods and worshiped what they their hands had made. The prophet had pronounced the judgment to attack them. The aged Jacob saw accurately in the spirit and deeply understood God's will and did not allow any confusion. Jeremiah also was able to realize the vision in the spirit and understood God's will deeply.
2. **【Do not compromise】**17-20 Joseph did not delight when he saw that Jacob was different from usual. He thought that his father had become befuddled and misunderstood due to old age, so he raised his father's hand from the

hand of Ephraim and placed to the head of Manasseh. Jacob knew clearly God's will and refused man's desire but obeyed only His will, thus he said to Joseph, "I know, my sons, I know." The will of God did not allow any confusion and man's desire could not replace God's desire. Jacob did not compromise before Joseph even though he loved him. He might be rated as God's faithful servant who only delighted in God and obeyed His will!

- ※ **【Do not surrender】**17-19 Again God commanded Jeremiah to get ready to attack sin boldly and proclaim God's word to the people, to be a fortified city, an iron pillar and a bronze wall to stand against the evil power of the whole land. Jeremiah was able not to surrender because God was with him, strengthened him and delivered him. Jacob was able to stand firm to obey God's will without giving up because of the God whom he had served all his life was with him, shepherded him and redeemed him till today.

### **C. Inherit the good land because of faith but abandon God will lose the good land**

Believe in God (Gen 48:21-22) – Abandon God (Jer 1:14-16)

1. **【Inherit the good land】** 21 When Jacob's end was near he bore in mind constantly too remind his offspring to inherit the promised good land by faith. He left a will to Joseph and re-instated God's will on the Israelites. He deeply believed after he died, God would be with them and lead them back to their forefather's place.
- ※ **【Lose the good land】** 14-16 In the vision of the prophet Jeremiah, there would be disaster from the north and Babylon would come to attack Judah and banish them from the good land which was God's severe punishment. After they had entered the good land, they turned away from God and imitated the foreign nations and went after other gods which provoked Him to anger. When Jacob was near the end, he was full of faith and strongly enjoined his descendants to inherit the good land promised by God. If we listen to God, we will receive the good land while abandoning God will lose the good land! May God sustain us always in His love without losing our footing and sustain us that we do not lose what we have worked for, but that we may be rewarded fully. (2 Jn 1:8)
2. **【Receive a double portion of the land】** 21 Jacob gave Shechem to Joseph more than other brothers by a portion. Joseph had feared God all his life and in his suffering and trials he overcame by God and became the firstborn having doubled the portion of inheritance with blessings upon blessings.
- ※ **【Receive double for all her sins】** 14-16 Israel was God's firstborn full of the honor and power of a prince of God and enjoyed the land of milk and honey given by God. For the sake of David, God promised that He would maintain an everlasting lamp on his throne. But they had rejected God and

imitated all the detestable things of the other nations. Thus the country was ruined and they had received from the Lord's hand double for all their sins. (Isa 40:2) Joseph was originally not the firstborn but he inherited the name of the firstborn and had double the inheritance and blessings! (1 Ch 5:1)

**Ps 48 / Rev 13:1 Main theme: Consider well and view, obey completely and tell the Lord's word extensively, then all the enemies will run away**

**- Obey the word / the enemies escape**

- (1) **【All the enemies run away in fear】**1-6 Do not be afraid of the allied attack of the strong enemies. If we will trust in the blood and by the Spirit in the Lord, God is with us and all the enemies will run away in fear.
- (2) **【God will strengthen】** 7-8 If we will truly obey the Lord's word as expected, He will exhibit His power as promised and secure us forever.
- (3) **【We will delight because of God】**9-10 Like Joseph and Daniel who firmly obeyed the Lord's word and were in Him, they had joy because of God's unfailing love and righteousness.
- (4) **【We ought to consider, view and tell】**12-14 We ought to consider well the inside and outside of the holy city and build with perfection according to the instruction of the Lord so as to tell of them to the next generation.

**Central point of the wheels: See accurately and proclaim the word boldly, secure and pray watchfully to overcome the beast.**

Dear Lord, may you make me obey your will firmly, see accurately in the spirit, overcome the power of the beast and give thanks and praises all my life!

**Gen 49 / Jer 2**

**Main theme:Shun evil, obey the word and be blessed while abandoning the Lord and backsliding will be put to shame**

**- Obey the word / wayward (be blessed / be disgraced)**

Golden verses: Gen 49:10 Jer 2:3

A discussion on obeying the word and backsliding – on one side it concerned the blessing and prophecy of Jacob to his sons before his death. He pointed out a path of obeying the command by God and would be blessed. On the other side it concerned the house of Judah abandoned God and followed the foreign gods of other nations. They were stubborn and backsliding and would be put to shame and punished.

**A. Contrite, obey the commands and be blessed; forsaking God and breaking the covenant will be punished**

Return to God (Gen 49:1-17) – Forsake God (Jer 2:1-19)

1. **【Propesying the future】** 1-2In the last breath of Jacob he accomplished his commission from God – that was to gather his sons and give them blessings and tell them what would happen to them in future. Jacob stood

on the peak of his spirit and prophesied in faith. He encouraged and warned his sons and called them to listen to the precepts.

- ※ **【Recalling God's love】** 1-3 Prophet Jeremiah was full of God's love and righteousness. He bore the mind of God and proclaimed God's message toward the people of Jerusalem. The prophet reminded the people they ought to recall their devotion to God and not to forget how God set the covenant (Exo 24:1-8, Hos 2:19) with them in Mount of Sinai after they were brought out of Egypt. God never forgot this covenant and would not allow the foreign nations to devour them. Jacob had experienced God's never changing covenant all his life. Therefore in his last breath, he earnestly instructed his sons to observe the covenant and to keep themselves in God's love!
- 2. **【Indulge in grace】** 3-7 Reuben as the firstborn was supposed to have the honor and authority above all. But he indulged in lust and lost his birthright and no longer was the first. (1 Ch 5:1) Simeon and Levi were violent and cruel. They killed in fury and caused unbearable sorrow to the father. Their descendants were dispersed in Israel. Due to the jealousy to attack sin, the tribe of Levi smashed the gold calf and was chosen to set apart for the Lord to serve God. (Exo 32:25-29 Num 18:20) The tribe of Simeon lived within the territory of Judah. (Jos 19:9) Reuben, Levi and Simeon all indulged in grace and became our warning.
- ※ **【Forsake God and degenerate】** 4-8 God compared Israel as a beloved bride but they had forsaken God and followed worthless idols. Thus God sighed deeply for them! Their leaders were the head of backsliding and evil doing, and indulged in grace just like Reuben, Levi and Simeon. They were supposed to be the firstfruit and holy to the Lord to enter the good land. But they did detestable things and defiled God's inheritance and profaned God's name like Reuben was the first to indulge and defiled his honor as a firstborn and disgraced God's name.
- 3. **【Abandon sin and enjoy abundance】** 8-12 Judah had taken a foreign woman as wife as he pleased and brought wickedness and trouble to himself and his sons. Thereafter he repented and shunned evil thoroughly and was blessed when he returned. Jacob prophesied Judah would be the leader of the brothers and enjoy the honor of the firstborn. His brothers would praise him. He would be full of power and courageous like a lion. The King (Christ) would come from him. (1 Ch 5:2 Rev 5:5) The scepter and staff would not depart from him until Shiloh (the one who gives peace) comes. Christ reigns and all people will come over and pledge allegiance. There would be living water flowing from the land of Judah and everywhere would be peace, quiet and prosperous scene.

- ※ **【Forsake God will become withered】** 9-13 The backsliding of Israel was far beyond the foreign nations. There had never been anything like this from the nations of Kittim (the west) to Kedar (the east). They had changed from worshiping a true God to kneeling before false gods. The prophet was appalled at this. Therefore God would bring charges against them. They had committed two sins: forsaken God – the spring of living water and digging broken cisterns that could not hold water (worshiping idols and committing adultery). Judah had once indulged like a broken cistern and a dried up life. Thereafter he was contrite, rejected evil and was blessed to enjoy abundance.
- 4. **【Harming oneself and others】** 13-17 After Jacob had blessed Zebulun and Issachar, he prophesied Dan would turn against God and be a serpent by the roadside, a viper along the path harming himself and others, and finally the whole tribe was cursed because they worshiped idols. The name of Dan was removed from 144,000 among Israel who were sustained and set apart for the Lord/ )Rev 7:1-8) This is our warning.
- ※ **【Take refuge in foreign nations】** 14-19 Israel was supposed to be the inheritance of God but they had forsaken God and sought help from the foreign nations. As a result they became the plunder of the enemy. Lions (Assyria) had roared. (2 Ki 18) Then they insisted to ally with Egypt. Not only did they provoke God to anger, they suffered a great loss. The prophet warned them if they continued to rebel and go down to Egypt or take refuge in Assyria, they would be put to shame and suffer like the result of the tribe of Dan rejecting God and worshiping idols. All these came upon them because they brought this on themselves.

**B. Suffered, triumphed and was blessed; worshiping other gods would be put to shame**

Blessed (Gen 49:18-33) – Put to shame (Jer 2:20-37)

- 1. **【Look for deliverance】** 18-21 "I look for your deliverance, O Lord." Jacob concluded himself was unbearably corrupt all his life. He was chosen and delivered with nothing to boast but boast of God's deliverance and looked for His deliverance.
- ※ **【Spurn away God's grace】** 20-22 The prophet used different metaphor to rebuke the adultery and evil deeds of the people. Jacob relied on God's deliverance all his life and in his old age he was blessed in the spirit full of witness to glorify God's name. However his descendants spurned away God's salvation and despised His orders like beasts trying to throw off the master's yoke willing to be slaves of sin. Their hearts were led astray close to the idols and were faithless to God. They fell from grace and became wild grapes. Their trace of guilt was hard to be removed. Their action ran

counter to their forefather Jacob completely.

2. **【Overcame and was blessed】**22-26 Joseph had a distinct spirit and was far different from his brothers. Under long period of suffering and trials he feared God and shunned evil and overcame till the end so he had the best blessing from the father. Joseph suffered a lot but was greatly blessed. He became a fruitful vine near a spring. His descendants were thousands and ten thousands like branches climbed over a wall. (Deu 33:17) The devil was like an archer attacked him but was not able to overcome him because the God of his father and the Shepherd of Israel was his Rock. Jacob poured all the blessings on Joseph.  
※ **【Indulged and was disgraced】** 23-25 The people of God imitated the foreigners and worshiped idols. They committed adultery blindly like the she-camel running here and there in the valley. (2 Ki 23:10, Jer 7:31-32) They were also like wild donkey going after foreign gods making themselves exhausted and in vain and greatly disgraced. But Joseph was able to unite with God in trouble and was fruitful. Though he had been in trials, he took refuge in God wholeheartedly and overcame to glorify Him.
3. **【Fierce, lustful and repulsive】**27 Finally Jacob prophesied Benjamin was a ravenous wolf hungry for prey and robbed, unaware of shame. In the ages of the judges the people of Gibeah of the tribe of Benjamin acted a shocking, fierce, lustful and repulsive play. (Ju 19-20)  
※ **【Overflowing with evil】** 26-28 The whole nation of Judah from top to bottom were seriously filled with the custom of idol worshiping just like the people of Gibeah of the Benjamin tribe. Their ethics was corrupt and adultery was all around the place. The evil gods and idols of Judah were found in every corner of the nation. They were foolish and ignorant, taking wood and stones as their gods. They indulged in the spiritual adultery and when trouble came; their call for help was not answered. Their kings and their officials secretly worshiped evil like a thief being caught full of shame. Like the people of Benjamin acting fierce and lustful ugly deeds, they would be finally punished.
4. **【Returned to the heavenly home in glory】** 29-33 Jacob had finished his blessing and left in order for his burial so they would bury him in the place of his forefathers which was Hebron in Canaan which his grandfather Abraham bought from the Hittite. He confirmed that the land of Canaan was given by God to him and his descendants as an everlasting inheritance. He valued God's grace and did not forget till death of the inheritance promised by God. He also led his descendants not to forget to take possession of it. He accomplished God's will and returned to his home in heaven in glory enjoying the everlasting blessing!

※ **【Returned in embarrassment】** 29-37 The house of Judah did all kinds of evil but was not willing to take discipline under God's punishment. They were ungrateful and killed the prophets. Though Jacob experienced a lot of hardship all his life, God's grace on him was great which made him unforgettable. He acknowledged God's grace and gave thanks. How could a maiden and a bride forget her jewelry and wedding ornaments? God's people had forgotten Him. They followed Baal like a woman who did not know how to blush. They relied on the worldly power and God would judge. Jacob had finished his path and rested in the will of God returning the heavenly home in glory. The sinful people would be disgraced because they relied on Egypt. They would place their hands on their head and return in embarrassment.

**Ps 49 / Rev 13:2 Main theme: The worldly splendor is empty; awake and save man to gain eternal life.**

**- Eternal life / worldly splendor**

- (1) **【All peoples ought to listen to the Lord's word】** 1-4 We ought to listen carefully to the words of wisdom of the Holy Spirit.
- (2) **【The worldly honor cannot be long】** 5-14 We gain everything but go down to the grave and we cannot endure without dying. No one can save oneself or others, or be freed from the power of sin and punishment.
- (3) **【True blessing is redemption】** 15-19 Only by believing in the Lord may we be redeemed from the power of sin, avoid the grave and gain everlasting blessing.
- (4) **【We should not receive God's grace in vain】** 20 We ought to awake and do good, deny ourselves to save others; lest we will be like the beast who has great splendor but harm others to benefit itself and press forward to the grave.

**Central point of the wheels: Be redeemed by God, awake to save other people, triumph and be blessed.**

Dear Lord, I am willing to take your salvation as my source of living water, not going astray, backsliding but fear you to overcome the evil and be blessed to bear fruit.

**Gen 50 / Jer 3**

**Main theme: Do not pretend but return to the Lord truly and swear an oath to return to the promised land**

**- Sincerity / pretense**

Golden verses: Gen 50:20 Jer 3:12

A discussion on sincerity and pretense – on one side it concerned the last words of Jacob and Joseph when their end was near. They were not willing to be

buried in Egypt. They feared God all their life and value to the death the good land promised by God and they swore to return to the good land. On the other side it teaches us do not be like the backsliding Israelites who pretended to return to God and defiled the promised good land and were punished. God repeatedly called His people, "Return, faithless Israel!" This showed God's heart of mercy and tolerance towards His people and He is waiting for their true return.

**A. Do not pretend but truly return to the Lord and value the good land**

Sincerity (Gen 50: 1-14) – Pretense (Jer 3:1-11)

1. **【Truly return to the Lord】** 1-14 For all his life Jacob (grab) firmly grabbed the promise of the land of Canaan as the inheritance given to him and his descendant by God and he swore to value the good land. His heart truly returned to God. He was physically in Egypt but his heart was in the good land. Besides he yearned for returning to the burial place of his forefathers after he died. He enjoined repeatedly to bury him in the good land and this was an important reminder to his offspring.

※ **【Pretend to repent】** 1-5 God compared Israel as His beloved wife. According to the law when a wife leaves the husband and becomes the wife of another man, the first husband is not allowed to return to her again. (Deu 24:1-4) However, God's love is beyond the law. Though they had lived as a prostitute with many lovers, He still waits for them to return to Him. God's heart is on Israel and will never forsake them. Jeremiah sighed the pretending repentance of the house of Judah and was not willing to be true to return to God. Until the last moment of Jacob's life, he was sincere to God. They repented on the lips and still continued to commit sin. Therefore the showers and spring rains had been withheld. Though Jacob could not return to the promise land while he was alive, he swore to be buried in the good land and satisfied God's heart! But the rebellious descendants indulged and degenerated in the good land and grieved the heart of God completely!

2. **【A glorious witness】** 1-14 After Jacob had gathered to his forefathers, Joseph grieved and wept for his father. He directed to embalm his father for forty days. The Egyptians mourned for Jacob seventy days and this fully indicated that Jacob had honor and good witness in his old age when he lived as an alien in Egypt dispersing the pleasing aroma of God. So Joseph and his brothers plus all Pharaoh's officials went up to bury his father. They lamented loudly and bitterly in the threshing floor of Atad and his death was considered as a great sorrow of Egypt – a generation of forefathers of the Israelites had passed away. Jacob was refined and brought the blessing of God to Egypt and also to his descendants. He left a glorious witness before



the Egyptians and Pharaoh. (Php 1:20)

- ※ 【A warning taken from the overturned cart ahead】 6-11 The prophet admonished Judah was more deceitful and more degenerated than Israel. Though there was the lesson from Israel was ruined, they still did not take the warning and was not willing to repent truly. Further they said one thing and meant another. They continued to commit adultery with the idols and pretended to return to God bringing crime after crime. They were not like the forefather Jacob who was godly and loved God with the goodness of glorifying God and benefiting man. On one side was Jacob's glorious witness while the other side was the previous warning of the subjugation of Israel which we ought to remember firmly. Jacob had rested from his labor, for his deeds would follow him, (Rev 14:13) to compel the people to long for a better country. (Heb 11:16)

**B. Do not be afraid, do not backslide and repent truly will revive**

Comfort (Gen 50:15-21) – Revive (Jer 3:12-22)

1. 【Doubt with little faith】 15-21 After they had returned to Egypt, the brothers were afraid that as their father died Joseph might pay them back for the previous wrong. They sent words to Joseph to remind him of the father's instructions before he died to forgive them without remembering their wrong. Their doubt and little faith did not make them understand the love and leniency of Joseph nor did they understand the everlasting great love of God.
- ※ 【Honest and repent】 12-13 The prophet was ordered to cry out to the backsliding Israel to be honest and repent. God would frown on them no longer. God is merciful and will not be angry forever. The leniency of Joseph towards his brother also showed the love of God would never change. So why should they doubt and fear? Only if God's people be contrite earnestly and no more backsliding following other gods, God would still be their God.
2. 【The merciful comfort】 15-21 Due to their doubt and fear Joseph wept. So he repeatedly comforted them not to be afraid:
  - (1) "Am I in the place of God?" Only God is the righteous judge.
  - (2) The brothers' harm instead accomplished God's good intent.
  - (3) He overcame evil with good to his brothers and promised to provide for them and their household. Joseph feared God all his life and triumphed over evil. He did not count their previous wrong but return good for evil full of God's mercy and a heart of tolerance. After the father died, he still cared for the brothers representing how wide, and long, and high and deep is the love of Christ. Only if the brothers had truly returned to God, there was no fear to rely on Joseph.

※ **【The revival promise】** 14-18 God promised the remnants would return to Zion and Israel and Judah would unite together. God would raise a shepherd who is after His own heart to shepherd them with knowledge and wisdom so they would increase in number. God called, “Return, faithless people!” Joseph was the shepherd God raised who was after His own heart. Not only did he rule the land of Egypt with wisdom and knowledge; he also well treated his brothers with the tolerance of God. God’s love for Israel is an everlasting love. Jerusalem would be named the throne of the Lord. (Eze 48:35) The people returned and served the Lord in one. Revival came and all nations came to worship. The descendants of Jacob lived as alien in Egypt and the promise that they would become a great nation was also fulfilled. (Gen 46:3)

**C. Do not turn to the idols but put hope in God’s help and will enjoy the good blessing.**

God helped (Gen 50:22-26) – In vain (Jer 3:23-25)

1. **【Was blessed and prospered】** 22-26 Joseph had experienced a lot of hardship and refinement all his life and God was his help and deliverance. God was with him and became his comfort and strength all his life. Now he was blessed to enjoy a peaceful and happy old age and see the third generation of Ephraim’s children and the fourth generation of Manasseh. It was hard to count the grace of God and God’s goodness and love followed him all his life.

※ **【Labored in vain】** 23-25 After Israel returned, they knew that the idolatrous on the hills and mountains was a deception. Joseph had for his whole life followed the merciful and faithful God. Though the path was rough and frustrating, he finally received the help and guidance of God and in his old age he enjoyed the good blessing. Surely in the Lord our God was the salvation of Israel. From youth they strayed toward the shameful gods. In their labor, the flocks and herds, their sons and daughters were consumed. Joseph feared God all his life. He suffered but was blessed! He suffered but was not in vain and the whole family of Jacob was blessed in the famine years because of him. All the hungry people of the land might live because of him.

2. **【Value the promise land】** 22-26 When Joseph was near his end, he knew clearly the Israelites would exit Egypt and by faith he gave instructions about his bones. (Heb 11:22) He ordered to move his bones to the promise land of God. He imitated the faith of the forefathers of the three generations and valued the promised inheritance of God. After the Israelites had entered the land of Canaan, his bones were finally buried in Shechem and that place became the inheritance of his descendants. (Exo 13:19 Jos24:32)

※ **【Repent and take possession of the good land】** 19-22 God promised to give the good land to the returned people to become the rich inheritance of the nations and the condition for revival was confession and repentance. Joseph cherished the memory and the faith on the good land set a good example for his descendants. While the people had been unfaithful to God like a wife was unfaithful to her husband. Therefore the prophet called, “Return, faithless people!” Only by repenting, God would cure them of backsliding.

**Ps 50 / Rev 13:3 Main theme: The whole world followed the beast. Listen to the Lord and observe the covenant to give thanks and honor God.**

**- Honor God / Follow the beast**

We ought to be careful to guard against our inward and outward enemies. They seemed to have had a fatal wound but had been healed and the authority was greater than before. Thus we ought to be always alert.

- (1) **【God will come to judge the whole world】** 1-6 Do not follow the beast for God cannot be mocked. We ought to serve God with a faithful and fearful heart.
- (2) **【Listen to His commands, give thanks and honor God】** 7-15 Be strengthened by God to uphold the truth. To obey is better than sacrifice and to fulfill your vow with a thankful heart, exalt salvation and honor God.
- (3) **【God rebukes the wicked】** 16-21 If we cast the Lord’s words behind us and are full of evil, deceit and slander, how can we recite His words?
- (4) **【Warning and encouragement】** 22-23 We will be torn by God in wrath if we commit sin, do wicked and do not repent. We will receive the greatest salvation promised by God if we give thanks to honor Him, and walk according to the right path and good way.

**Central point of the wheels: Do not backslide and truly return to the Lord, give thanks, repay His kindness and honor Him**

Dear Lord, may you make me not to worship the beast and thoroughly reject hypocrisy and wickedness, sacrifice thank offerings to honor You!