

Lesson: Genesis 34-36

Nations against nations... There have been conflict amongst peoples, tribes, religions, cultures etc. since the dawn of civilization. People who stand strong and proud in their heritage will take a stand to preserve it. Abraham and his descendants were entrusted to follow God in the midst of the pagan nations all around them, and as Abraham's lineage expanded, nations and tribes were formed from his line as well. And so, there were pagan nations with their beliefs, and followers of God, also with their core beliefs and values.

Time and time again, the followers of God are tempted to adopt the way of life of idolatry and are tested with hostility from pagan nations. When Jacob's daughter Dinah was defiled by Shechem the son of Hamor, a Hivite prince of the pagan country, Jacob's sons were furious and plotted to avenge their sister. Shechem's father Hamor tried to speak with Jacob and his sons to persuade them to give Dinah over to them, to live among them, and assimilate into their way of life. Jacob's sons instead took vengeance on behalf of their sister who was defiled, destroying Hamor and Shechem and the city (Genesis 34:7-29). After this conflict, God spoke to Jacob and directed him to move. So Jacob told his family to get rid of all their pagan idols, and purify themselves because they were moving to Bethel where God first answered Jacob's prayers when he was in distress (Genesis 35:2-3).

Bible Study

God saw that they were becoming too influenced by the pagans they were living amongst and created a way for them to leave. And even when leaving the country, while having to walk through the hostile nations on their path to Bethel, God protected them so no one attacked Jacob's family (Genesis 35:5).

When God renamed Jacob Israel, God said, “I am El-Shaddai- God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply. You will become a great nation, even many nations. Kings will be among your descendants! And I will give you the land I once gave to Abraham and Isaac. Yes, I will give it to you and your descendants after you” (Genesis 35: 11-12). Accordingly, many nations indeed arose from Jacob's descendants, as did the King of all Kings Jesus Christ. Jesus is our glorious inheritance, Emmanuel, God with us. Our identity in Christ and the truth of Jesus Christ is our heritage and in that we stand strong and proud. Our belief as followers of Christ is our nation, and we can feel safe and protected from the hostility, aggression, and fighting around us.

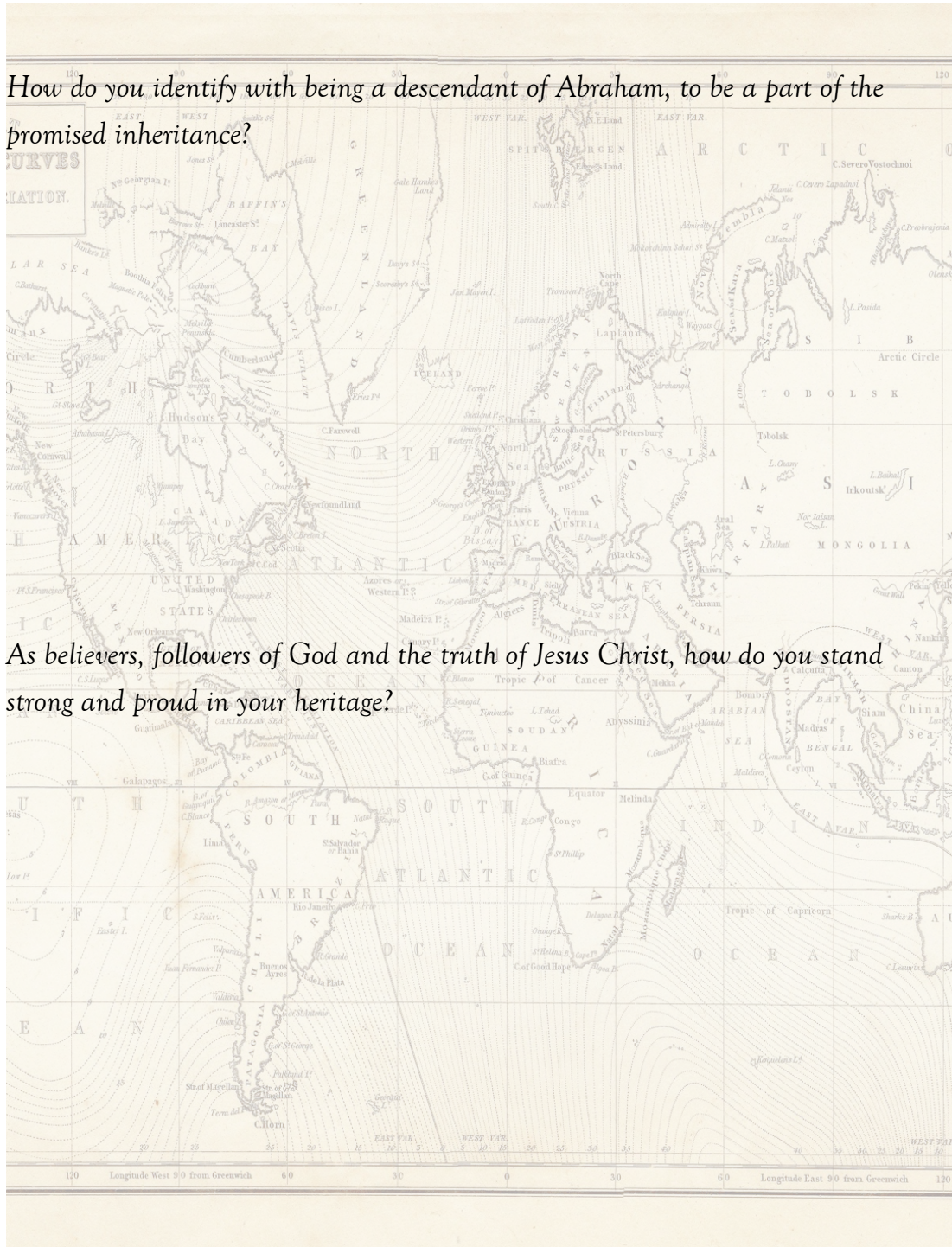
Take away: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are the fathers of many nations/ The followers of God have always faced the struggle of maintaining their faith among pagan influences and idol worshipping nations/ The different beliefs and values of many nations around the world have led to continuous conflicts/ Jesus Christ is our hope and shelter in the midst of these conflicts.

Devotional

Genesis 34-36

How do you identify with being a descendant of Abraham, to be a part of the promised inheritance?

As believers, followers of God and the truth of Jesus Christ, how do you stand strong and proud in your heritage?



Devotional

What are some difficulties you have experienced with following God and maintaining your faith among influences of non-believers?

How do you hold on to your belief and values when your faith is being attacked or tested?