

In the Beginning: Genesis
ReCatechism 8
Tim Prattas

Recently, Orthodox Christians celebrated the Great Feast of **Theophany**. More than a just the historical event of Christ's baptism by John the Baptist, it is a feast where all three Persons of the Holy Trinity were manifested to the world: the Father's voice was heard, the Son was physically present in the waters of the Jordan, and the Holy Spirit came in the form of a dove to rest on Jesus. This event – the manifestation of the Trinity – is just one example of how the New Testament reveals to us that which was in some measure 'hidden' (or, not completely manifested) in the Old Testament.

When Christians are ignorant of the Old Testament, it compares to someone placing a "blindfold" on our spiritual life. We will never know exactly what an evangelist, an author of the epistles or even our Lord Jesus Christ are *trying to say* if we do not know the God-inspired literature that we call *the Old Testament*.

In fact, we won't know *who Jesus Christ truly is* if we do not see Him present in the Old Testament – for, as Jesus Himself said, "before Abraham was even born, I AM." This verse, from John 8:58, shows that Jesus is God, as "I AM", or «O ΩΝ», is the Name of God in the Old Testament (cf. Exodus 3:14). Since Jesus as the Logos and Son of God did not exist – but rather *IS forever* – we see His Presence in the Old Testament right in front of us; yet, we are sometimes blinded to it, as the Apostles were at Emmaus after the Resurrection. From today until before Holy Week, we at Re-Catechism have the opportunity to discover Him *together*.

In our liturgical life, reading the Old Testament is somewhat restricted when compared to readings of the New Testament. Today, the most-read book of the Old Testament in the services is that of *Psalms* ("the Psalter"). At least one Psalm is said during every service we have. In terms of other books of the Old Testament, passages are read during Vespers services, the Divine Liturgy of St. James the Brother of the Lord and the Vesperal Liturgies of St. Basil the Great. Allusions to Old Testament verses are very common throughout worship. As Orthodox Christians, we read the *Septuagint* translation of the Old Testament (completed in the 3rd century B.C. for the Jews of Alexandria who knew Greek).

As with any topic, tonight we begin our journey of the Old Testament and seeing Christ in its pages at the beginning – the first book of the Pentateuch (or, "the Law"): **the Book of Genesis**. Literally meaning "origins", Genesis (just as all books of the Old Testament that we read in English) takes its name from the *Septuagint*. Hebrew titles of every book of the Old Testament are taken from the opening sentence of the book; in this case, the title for *Genesis* is "*in the beginning*".

Tradition states that the author of this book (along with the rest of the first five books of the Old Testament, called the Pentateuch – *Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy*) is the **Prophet Moses the God-Seer (ο Θεόπτης)**, although it is never mentioned in the text. Scholars say the book was written around 1445 B.C. (the year of the Exodus), but before 1405 B.C. (the year of the death of Moses). The main theme of the book is *beginnings*, as the book covers the longest time span of any book of the Bible (creation to the time of Joseph). In the liturgical life of the Church, the book of Genesis is read in its entirety throughout Great Lent during different services (such as Vespers and the Third-Sixth Hour, Τριθέκτη).

There are **three caveats** when it comes to *Genesis* (especially when it comes to “meeting Christ” in its pages):

i. Some parts of the book are **not meant to be taken literally!**

*Many Protestants like to point to the Creation story as a literal 7 days, even making “theme parks” to that effect. However, how can we be sure that it was indeed “seven days” as we know them today? The sun and moon were created on day 3! Books of the Bible are there to teach people **theological truths**, and not necessarily what happened historically. The same is true with icons. For example, although St. Paul was not at Pentecost, he is still depicted in the icon because he is just as much an apostle as any other of the 12. Having said this, it’s important to state that I don’t know if it took 7 days. If God wanted, He could have created everything in a millisecond. Yet, knowing how things were created does not affect our salvation. Knowing that He is the Creator of the Universe is definitely true. We Christians believing this is very important when it comes to our Faith, as its part of our Creed of Faith: “Creator of Heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.”*

ii. **Don’t expect people to obey the same laws as us**

*Especially when it comes to things such as **marriage**, the laws and expectations in Old Testament times are much different than in the New Testament. Monogamy was not practiced by many people, such as the Patriarchs. Remember: Genesis is a narrative that pre-dates the 10 Commandments and the laws in Deuteronomy. Also, just as a child matures and becomes a man or woman, so did humanity: in the beginning, humanity was an “immature child” and later developed.*

iii. **Jesus Christ is revealed – but you have to look hard to find Him!**

One can find Christ as the Logos of God in many places of in the Old Testament, since God is the Centre of the Old Testament. Yet, you cannot expect that Jesus will just “leap out of the pages” at you. The people at that time had broken their relationship with God and were slowly working to repair it. Thus, God reveals Himself to those who wish to have a relationship with Him – and, as the Old Testament lays emphasis on the Unity of the Trinity, He is revealed as “Father, Son and Holy Spirit”.

So, with all that said... we begin by summing up Genesis as A-B-C:

Adam and Eve

Best supporting characters

Characters also known as the Patriarchs

Adam and Eve

In the beginning, God created: the first words from the book of Genesis, we hear that God created everything *ex nihilo* ('out of nothing'). He created the universe out of His lovingkindness and goodness. The first "day of creation" began with God commanding, 'let there be light'. St. Athanasios the Great says that, "God the Father spoke to His Word and Only-Begotten Son, through whom He made the light." St. Peter reminds us of something important about the "days of creation" (and 'time' in general) when it comes to God: "With the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." (2 Peter 3:8) So, we shouldn't assume that "one day" in the creation narrative is a 24-hour cycle, as it is for us. This is one of those *pericopes* that needs to be seen as a 'teaching passage' rather than a 'literal passage'. How did creation exactly happen? We don't know. Did God create the world and was He the cause for its creation? Indeed, He was. This we see with His final creation: **humanity**.

The name **Adam** means "red" and "handsome", but also "man" and "mankind", with the noun *adamah* meaning "ground" or "earth". We commemorate our forefather Adam on the Sunday of the Forefathers (one Sunday before Christmas).

In the Genesis narrative, we see the **presence of God** with Adam from the beginning: «και ειπεν ο Θεός: ποιησωμεν ανθρωπον κατ'εικόνα ημετέραν και καθ'ομοίωσιν» (and God said, 'let Us make man in Our image and in Our likeness', Gen. 1:26). God the Father spoke to God the Son in this conversation, according to St. John Chrysostom. St. Hilary of Poitiers tells us that the Father uses "personal pronouns Us and Our" to show that God is Trinity, not merely God talking to Himself, while using the word "image" in the singular to show that the Trinity is one nature and undivided.

Defining "**image**" and "**likeness**" is not humanity "looking like" God. "In the image" is man's free will. A person exercising his free will correctly (i.e. not falling into sin, thus connected with God) is man attaining "the likeness" of God. The destiny of Adam was to be a man who was obedient to the will of God. As a human being, he was different than all of creation since God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life" (Gen. 2:7b). **Adam is depicted in iconography similarly to how Jesus Christ is depicted**, because Jesus is the New Adam. He succeeded where Adam failed: He obeyed the will of God, even unto the cross and death.

What does this mean for us? Panagiotis Nellas says in his book, *Deification of Christ*: The phrase "in the image" implies a gift within man but at the same time a goal set before him.... Having been made in the image of God, man has a theological structure. And to be a true man he must at every moment exist and live theocentrically [i.e. God being the centre of your life]. When he denies God, he denies himself and destroys himself. When he lives theocentrically, man realizes himself by reaching out into infinity; he attains his true fulfillment by extending into eternity.

This goal in life is extended to all of humanity, both to Adam and his wife **Eve** (whose name means “source of life” or “living one”). Both of them were called to obey the first command of God: “to not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil”, since disobedience meant death. Metropolitan Maximos (formerly of Pittsburgh) points out: Man's being in the image of God means that man has a spiritual soul reflecting God (the Father) as a person. Man is capable of knowing God and being in communion with God. Man belongs to God, for being God's child and image makes him God's relative.

Seeing **Christ in this part of Genesis** is also by realizing God is not a “force” or “energy”, but a Person. As George Cronk says in his book, “Messages of the Bible”: He is a personal being who wills the world and mankind to be, who structures the world according to his own design, who cares for the welfare of man. A person is a self-conscious, intelligent, free and creative being. And the God of Genesis is depicted in these terms. He is intimately and personally related to his creation, he is involved in it, he is concerned about it. (from www.holytrinitymission.org/books/english/bible_cronk_1.htm#_Toc526159497)

Even with their relationship with God, the **Fall of Adam and Eve**, or the “Original Sin”, follows the Creation account in Scripture. While some people equate the Fall of Adam and Eve to the First-Created (Πρωτόπλαστοι) ‘eating and apple’, we do not believe this as Orthodox Christians. Our tradition has no mention of ‘apples’ or any other specific fruit in the Garden of Eden. To quote Wikipedia, [Adam and Eve holding an apple] may have been the result of Renaissance painters adding elements of Greek mythology into biblical scenes. The unnamed fruit of Eden thus became an apple under the influence of the story of the golden apples in the Garden of Hesperides. As a result, the apple became a symbol for knowledge, immortality, temptation, the fall of man and sin. (from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apple_\(symbolism\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apple_(symbolism)))

The Fall of Man was because *both* Adam and Eve chose to not listen to God’s command and – worse still – not repent when given the opportunity. The consequences given by God are the same a parent would give to his or her child – to teach them ... *and not to hurt them*. Also important to stress is that there is **no guilt** associated with Original Sin or **total depravity** (something that Western confessions usually believe). Rather, Orthodox Christians believe that humanity began to inherit the *consequences of the Original Sin* from the moment of disobedience. That is, we live in a “fallen world” – one of disease, toil, suffering and death. St. Irenaeus of Lyons reminds us, though, that Adam was as an infant (νήπιος) who had to grow to adulthood – and any infant does not know good and evil unless they see it face to face and make a conscious decision.

*So, what happens from here? How can humanity be saved? Only **the Person of Jesus Christ** could save humanity. The Son of God is the One who is “true God of true God”, and only God can save. Yet, there needed to be a personal connection between humanity and God for salvation. No angel could save: how could it save a species that was not its own? Is one creation “greater” than another? The Logos became incarnate in order to save the very nature He took on.*

One of the most important biblical verses from the Old Testament is Genesis 3:15:
...God says to the serpent, "**I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.**" This verse has been understood by Orthodox theologians and other Christian scholars as a "shadow" of the gospel of Christ.... This is the first promise of a Redeemer.
(George Cronk)

So, we see Jesus Christ present so far in Genesis through *prophecy* (in the aforementioned verse), but also present *physically* as the Logos/Son of God in Creation. Every time we hear of God speaking, we should identify it with the Logos. As the Fathers point out, God the Father made heaven and earth *through* the Son and *in* the Holy Spirit. The Holy Trinity is present there – and continues to be present forever...even at a horrific event which followed the Fall of Adam and Eve.

Best supporting characters

The story of **Cain and Abel** is known to many people because of one thing: hatred, even amongst family, can reach unspeakable heights – to the point of murder. Cain was the first child of Adam and Eve, one who cultivated the land. His brother Abel was a shepherd. Both brothers offered sacrifice to God: Abel brought the first-born of his flock, while Cain brought from the fruits of the ground. Abel had a good and discerning heart, while Cain’s sacrifice was done without good intentions. God sees how we approach Him in prayer: does He accept our prayer if we are only just “saying the proper things” without meaning it? The prayer of Cain was not accepted because it wasn’t a prayer at all: it was merely “lip service”. Due to his arrogant worship (and then refusal to repent), Cain took his brother out into the field and murdered him. God spoke to Cain after the murder of Abel. In His voice, we can hear the voice of the Logos, Jesus Christ.

We then read the descendents of Adam in chapter 5. This is a first part of a greater list that traces the genealogy of Christ from Adam.

Noah comes into the picture in chapter 6, being a key figure in the first part of Genesis. While the world around him was sinful, Noah was righteous and God the Logos spoke to him. The Ark is built, the flood occurs, the flood ceases, the dove appears. Church Fathers give various meanings to these passages. Some include: the Ark signifies the Virgin Mary with Christ and the Church in her womb (from the Akathist Hymn), the dove is a foreshadowing of the Holy Spirit who caused the Theotokos to conceive in her womb, the olive leaf speaks of the Virgin Mary herself (from the Akathist Hymn) or even the Sacraments of the Church, which are services that help us reconcile and unite with God. It is also interesting that the flood is stopped by God at His command... the

same way all miracles (those that occurred on water and not) happened in the New Testament – *at the Lord's command*.

Finally (for this section), we see the Holy Trinity present in the **Tower of Babel**. Once again saying, “let Us”, the Trinity speaks saying the tongues (languages) of the people will be confused. The Lord is there to – once again – save humanity from *itself*. Without His help, all of mankind would be heading along the same path of spiritual destruction as their forebearers did. We see the Holy Spirit's presence in this passage when we relate it to its New Testament parallel, Pentecost (in Acts 2) – an event where humanity is called to unite with God once again through faith in the Risen Christ. (*As a side note, this is where we get the expression, 'You Nimrod', as the king of the citizens of Babel was named 'Nimrod'. His stupidity in not believing in the true God and making his people go away from him – and their 'tongues being confused' – is still remembered in this small saying.*)

The events of the Tower of Babel bring us to some of the most important characters of the book of *Genesis*.

Characters also known as the Patriarchs

The word “**Patriarch**” comes from two Greek words – *πάτερ*, meaning “father” and *άρχων*, meaning “he who exercises authority, chief, king or ruler”. The first Patriarch was the Forefather **Abraham**, first known as “Abram”. According to *Genesis*, God called him and his wife Sarai (later named **Sarah**) at 75 years of age to travel from their city, Haran, to the city of Shechem in Canaan. This fact alone shows the reader that no one is too old to have a relationship with God and to follow His commandments.

God's promise was that He would bless him, make his name great, and that he would be the “father of many nations”. The Old Testament says that **an Angel went and said these things to Abram**. As this Angel later is identified as “the Word of the Lord” (15:1), the Church Fathers maintained He was ‘the Angel of Great Counsel’ – another Name for Jesus Christ. Therefore, Abram conversed with the Son of God, not merely an angelic power from Heaven. Later on, we read of how Ishmael was born of Abram's servant girl Hagar, of the Lord visiting Abram himself, changing his name to “Abraham” and establishing a covenant with him and his descendents. A *sign* of this covenant (and not the covenant itself) was the *rite of circumcision* for all infant boys.

Taking a break from Abraham (before we get too deep in his spiritual journey in *Genesis*), we see the presence of Christ in the person of **Melchizedek**, King of Salem. Melchizedek is commemorated on the Sunday of the Forefathers and May 22nd. Sometimes depicted in the Altar on the ‘side chapel’ (as in our Church), he was a priest of the “God Most High”. He blessed Abram by bringing out bread and wine, a foreshadowing of **the Holy Eucharist**. In gratitude, Abram tithes him – a sign some scholars point to when saying the priesthood of Melchizedek is superior to that of Abram (and later on, of Aaron); otherwise, why would Abram tithe him?

In the New Testament, we hear of Jesus Christ being “a Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek”, showing us that **the Priesthood of Christ** replaces once and for all the priesthood of Aaron. Finally, Melchizedek is a King and Priest, another foreshadowing of Christ in the Old Testament (since Christ is the Priest-King-Prophet).

Returning to Abraham, we see the presence of Christ in his life (and the Trinity, of course) through the famous “Hospitality of Abraham”. The famous **icon of Rublev** shows the Trinity present, with Christ in the Centre (as the other two Persons create a type of chalice), while the Persons in the centre and to the right both look to the One on the left – the Unbegotten Father.

Having further researched this, I want to share with you the words of Fr. Vassilios Papavassiliou (www.pravmir.com/article_1224.html), which I found quite interesting: Genesis 18 describes the appearance of three men to Abraham by the plain of Mamre.... What is interesting [in the passage] is that Abraham addresses only one of the men as Lord. Clearly, ‘Lord’ here is not a mere address of respect, like ‘sir’, or otherwise he would have said ‘lords’, but it is recognition that one of them is greater than the others. And as we see in verse 22, two of the men depart and we are told that ‘Abraham stood yet before **the Lord**’ ... which means that Abraham is addressing only one of the men. What we have here is not a mere representation of the Trinity, but a **manifestation of the Word of God, accompanied by what are probably two angels**. This is certainly in keeping with the Orthodox exegesis that all manifestations of the deity in the Old Testament are of the Son and not of the Trinity in its fullness. This view is expressed by **St Justin Martyr** in the second century:

“Moses, therefore, that blessed and faithful servant of God, declares that the one who was seen by Abraham at the oak of Mamre was God, accompanied by two angels, who were sent, for the condemnation of Sodom, by another, namely by the One who always remains above the heavens, who has never been seen by any human being, and who of himself holds converse with none, whom we term the Creator of all things, and the Father”. [Dial. 56]...

The same is implied by **St Romanos the Melodist** in his Kontakion on the Holy Theophany: *“When God appeared to Abraham as he sat by the oak of Mambre, He was seen as a man but he did not know Him as he was, for he could not have borne it: but now for us it is not so, but in His own Person: for the Word has become flesh”.*

It would appear that the first to see a type of the Trinity in the narrative is **St Cyril of Alexandria**, who regarded the use of the singular as a reference to the oneness of the Trinity. But it seems that the earliest patristic commentaries see in the three men the Word of God accompanied by two angels.

During the “Hospitality of Abraham”, two great things were declared to Abraham: **Sarah would give birth to a son and the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah would be destroyed**. Both declarations became true, with Isaac born (to Abraham and an initially-unbelieving mother, Sarah) and only Lot and his daughters escaping Sodom and Gomorrah.

The story of **Lot** is one where the presence of Christ cannot be seen as much, because Lot is surrounded by those who espouse evil. Sodom and Gomorrah were cities whose citizens did not follow the true God and, consequently, ignored (or did not know of) His teachings. Some of these people fell into sins such as homosexuality (side note: it's even where the word *sodomy* comes from), fornication, unspeakable pride and arrogance (cf. Ezekiel 16:49-50). Lot was taken from this place when he was visited by angels (who appeared as men). As they sat with Lot, other men approached the house who wanted to “know” his guests – *in the biblical sense*. The angels made the men blind and informed Lot that he and his family needed to leave Sodom and Gomorrah, for God was going to destroy the two cities, *and not look back*. As they left, Lot's wife turned back to see the destruction (disobeying what the Angels had told them) and she turned into a pillar of salt.

Thinking that civilization was over and done with, Lot's daughters got him drunk and committed incest with him. Lot repented of his sin to his uncle Abraham (as it was at fault for getting drunk) and he was told to take the walking sticks of the Lord and the two angels from the “Hospitality” and water them from the River Jordan. The devil would trip him, so that water would keep on falling. Finally, after years of toil, Lot watered the sticks to form a beautiful tree. The walking sticks came from Paradise; therefore, it was a ‘heavenly tree’. There is a **Monastery** to this day **in the Holy Land** that has the exact place where the tree once was planted, **dedicated to the Holy Cross**. Why the Holy Cross? Well... wood from this tree was used when they crucified Jesus Christ. So, you could say that any person venerating Τίμιο Ξύλο (“the Holy Wood of the Cross”) is venerating a little piece of Paradise. We can see the Lord's presence in Lot's life because He forgave Lot of his sin – just as He forgives ours. Yet, we need to not only ask for forgiveness with our lips but with our actions. Lot did not give up until his penance was complete – we should do the same. The Lord forgave him, just as He will forgive us if we truly “change our mind” when it comes to sin.

When it comes to seeing Christ in the life of the Patriarch **Isaac**, the Lord's presence is unmistakable in “**The Sacrifice of Abraham**”, «Η Θυσία του Αβραάμ». St. Caesarius of Arles remarks that Abraham was just as God the Father was in the New Testament, while Isaac a type of Jesus Christ: Abraham sacrificed His “only” and “beloved” son in obedience to the command of God, while the Father sent His Only-Begotten Son to earth to be offered for the world's salvation upon the Cross. Abraham's faith was tested, and he obeyed the command of God. The sacrifice would have been a whole burnt offering – that is, Isaac would have been burned alive (just as animals were sacrificed to God). Of course, God did not want Isaac to die in this way: at the last moment, God provided a ram for the sacrifice and Abraham received Isaac back alive. This event prefigures the Resurrection of Christ from the dead.

St. John Chrysostom remarks that the “Sacrifice” was a “type of Cross”:

Hence Christ too said to the Jews, ‘Your father Abraham rejoiced in anticipation of seeing my day: he saw it and was delighted.’ How did he see it if he lived so long before? [Abraham saw it] in type, in shadow. Just as in our text the sheep was offered in place of Isaac, so here the rational Lamb was offered to the world.

We hear that **Isaac** saw the Lord twice: (a) during a famine in the land, when God said to Isaac not to leave and go to Egypt, but to remain there; and (b) at the Well of Oath (Gen. 26:24-25), as God once again emphasized His covenant with the People of God. During both times, Isaac obeyed the Lord. In the second instance, Isaac worshipped God at the altar he had built. Isaac was a child who followed God, while his son Esau did not.

Esau and Jacob were brothers, their father being Isaac. The birthright was sold to Isaac for a plate of food because he was “exhausted”. Esau did not care for the birthright, as he despised the faith of his father – the one that would save him from death. Jacob also received the blessing before their father’s death – with a little help from his mother Rebecca. Yet, this isn’t the event that we see the presence of Christ in the life of Jacob.

In almost every Great Vespers service in connection with the Virgin Mary, we read a prophecy from Genesis 28:10-17. The passage, *Jacob’s Ladder*, is where he falls asleep at a certain place and sees a ladder from the earth to heaven. The angels of God ascended and descended on it, with God saying, “I Am the Lord God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac, do not fear.” God then says that Jacob and his descendants will be blessed forever. The Fathers of the Church say that this Ladder prefigures the Theotokos who, through bearing the Son of God in the flesh, served as the “ladder” to connect Heaven and earth, making humanity again citizens of Paradise. The icon of the **Πλατυτέρα** reminds us of this in the apse of the Altar, as she connects the parishioners of the Church with those serving the Heavenly Liturgy before the Throne of God in Paradise.

After fleeing from his family, getting married and his wives Leah and Rachel having children, Jacob saw the Lord who commanded him, “Return to your father’s land and to your family, and I will be with you.” (Gen. 31:3) In chapter 32, we hear of Jacob “**wrestling with the Son of God**” from the night until daybreak. Christ appeared to Jacob as a “weak man”, as He would appear in His incarnation in the flesh: although Almighty, Christ would be hungry, thirsty, even suffer death for our salvation. In the end, Jacob asks for God’s blessing (during their wrestling match). The Lord then says, “Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but **Israel**; for you have prevailed with God and with men.” (Gen. 32:28) Israel means “God prevails”, and he acknowledges that God has given him all his possessions and blessings.

Jacob then saw the Lord again at Bethel (Gen. 35:1-15), who spoke to him and then ascended from him as He talked to him. This is a prefigurement of the Ascension of Christ.

Now, I’ve spoken a lot and have probably exhausted you all with the references. Personally, I didn’t think I would find so many to talk about in Genesis. It shows us all that the Logos of God, Jesus Christ, was and is present always with His creation, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Throughout the upcoming weeks, we’ll hear more about how Christ is present in the lives of people of the Old Testament. It’s up to

us to take their example – of repentance, of gratitude to the Lord, of **faith** – and to remember the words of St. Paul:

By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did.... By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that is in keeping with faith. By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. And by faith even Sarah, who was past childbearing age, was enabled to bear children because she considered him faithful who had made the promise. And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore. By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice.... Abraham reasoned that God could even raise the dead, and so in a manner of speaking he did receive Isaac back from death. By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to their future. By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons, and worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff.... These [people] were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect. (Heb. 11:4, 7-12, 17-19, 21, 39, 40)

Faith in God is a journey. Our journey about finding Christ in the Old Testament continues in two weeks with the Story of Joseph.... but for now, we'll hear your questions.