
Genesis

Part 2:

Genesis 25:19-50:26

The Jacob and Joseph Narratives

By Jeremy Sweets

Genesis, Part 2

Introduction for Genesis 25-50

The Structure of Genesis

The book of Genesis has an internal structure arranged around genealogical markers, which normally take the simple form, “These are the generations of ____.” The statements are often referenced as *toledot* sayings, the Hebrew word for generations.

The narrative of the patriarchs (Gen. 12-50) contains the last five generation statements, alternating between genealogy and narrative and between elect and non-elect individuals of the primary promises given to Abraham. The genealogies of Ishmael and Esau are provided as a terminal statement of their line, whereas the narrative continues the genealogy of the chosen line.

| Num. | Toledot (Generations) | Scripture Introduced | Type of Literature | Type of Election |
|------|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| 6 | The Toledot of Terah (11:27) | 11:27-25:11 | Narrative | Elect |
| 7 | The Toledot of Ishmael (25:12) | 25:12-18 | Genealogy | Non-Elect |
| 8 | The Toledot of Isaac (25:19) | 25:19-35:29 | Narrative | Elect |
| 9 | The Toledot of Esau (36:1,9) | 36:1-37:1 | Genealogy | Non-Elect |
| 10 | The Toledot of Jacob (37:2) | 37:2-50:26 | Narrative | Elect |

The Jacob Narrative

The Jacob Narrative comes under the heading of the genealogy of Isaac. The narrative focuses on Jacob as the main character while including his interactions with other family members.

His father Isaac, his brother Esau, and his father-in-law Laban are key characters in the story of Jacob. Mentions of Isaac function to continue the line of the patriarchs from Abraham to his descendants.

The first half of the Jacob story moves from

Canaan to central Mesopotamia while depicting Jacob as an immature and deceptive man. Jacob’s growth as an individual accompanies his journey back to Canaan as the narrative climaxes with a wrestling match and Jacob’s growing dependence upon God.

Chiastic Structure of the Jacob Narrative (Genesis 25:19-35:29)

- A. First encounters of Jacob and Esau (25:19-34)
- B. Isaac and the Philistines (26:1-33)
- C. Jacob cheats Esau of his blessing (26:34-28:9)
- D. Jacob meets God at Bethel (28:10-22)
- E. Jacob arrives at Laban’s house (29:1-14)
- F. Jacob marries Leah and Rachel (29:15-30)
- G. Birth of Jacob’s sons (29:31-30:24)
- F’. Jacob outwits Laban (30:25-31:1)
- E’. Jacob leaves Laban (31:2-32:1)
- D’. Jacob meets angels of God at Mahanaim (32:2-3)
- C’. Jacob returns Esau’s blessings (32:4-33:20)
- B’. Dinah and the Hivites (34:1-31)
- A’. Journey’s end for Jacob and Isaac (35:1-29)

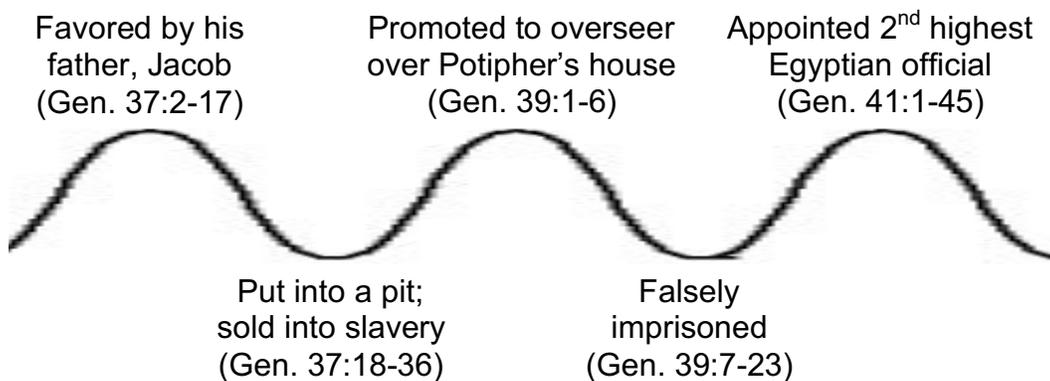
See Wenham, Genesis, WBC, p. 169

Just like the story of Abraham, their progeny plays a major role in the account. The central element of the chiasm on Jacob reveals the birth of his children, the namesakes for the twelve tribes of the Israelite nation.

The Joseph Narrative

The final narrative of Genesis reveals a gripping tale of a son of favor who gets lost in a foreign land of slavery. The story takes the reader on a roller coaster ride filled with highs and lows. Joseph, one of the twelve sons of Jacob, goes from the favorite son of his father to the house of slavery and prison before ascending to the heights of Egyptian royalty. Despite his difficult circumstances, he puts his faith in the Lord. In turn, God is with Joseph and causes his way to prosper.

The Ups and Downs of Joseph's Life



The structure of the narrative includes introductory material of Joseph's early home life as the favored son and resented brother. He is sold into slavery in Egypt, the setting for the rest of the book. In Egypt, the narrative follows two cycles, which contains Joseph's ascendancy to Egyptian royalty and the revelation of Joseph's identity to his brothers. The book closes with the last days of Jacob and Joseph, including Jacob's blessings for his sons before his death. The family's settlement in Egypt sets the stage their population growth and subjugation in the book of Exodus.

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| Joseph sold into Egypt (37:2-36) Tamar and Judah (38:1-30) | |
| A. Joseph and Potiphar (39:1-20) | A'. First visit of Joseph's Family to Egypt (42:1-38) |
| B. Joseph in Prison (39:21-40:23) | B'. Second visit of Joseph's Family to Egypt (43:1-45:28) |
| C. Joseph in the Palace (41:1-57) | C'. Third visit of Joseph's Family to Egypt (46:1-47:31) |
| The Last Days of Jacob and Joseph (48:1-50:26) | |

Themes

- **Human Efforts to Control, Manipulate and Deceive.** Deception plays a prominent role in the second half of Genesis. Isaac continues the deception he learned from his father, and Jacob proves particularly adept at the skill before passing it on to his children as a character trait. The latter part of Genesis contains a continuing string of deceptions. In each subsequent account, the deceiver switches roles and becomes the deceived. This reversal of fortunes reveals a sense of just recompense for the deceiver. In the Jacob narrative, wives play an important role as pawns, brokers and confidants of the deceptions. In the Joseph narrative, wives are largely absent and the deception is carried out by the sons of Jacob.

The Chain of Deception in Genesis

Pharaoh Deceived by Abraham (Gen. 12)

Abimelech Deceived by Abraham (Gen. 20)

Abimelech Deceived by Isaac (Gen. 26)

Isaac Deceived by Jacob (Gen. 27)

Jacob Deceived by Laban (Gen. 28)

Laban Deceived by Jacob (Gen. 30)

Jacob Deceived by his Sons/Judah (Gen. 37)

Judah Deceived by Tamar (Gen. 38)

Sons Deceived by Joseph (Gen. 42-44)

- **God's Sovereignty.** Despite man's efforts for independence and control, God is the real one in control. God directs the story from beginning to end, and nothing happens apart from his Sovereign rule. Joseph sums up the direction and futility of human efforts in the face of God's greater power and control; "...you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good... (Gen. 50:20)."
- **God's Covenant and Promises.** God's promises to Abraham are repeated and enhanced to his descendants Isaac, Jacob and his sons. God makes it clear that his promises will not die with Abraham. God would remember his promise to the first patriarch and persist in keeping his word.
- **Trust in God.** Human control proves futile before God and must give way to trust and reliance upon God. Jacob grows in his trust in God with a turning point occurring when he wrestles with an angel of God and prevails. Joseph's trust is tested in difficult circumstances, but he persists to put his faith in God, and he ultimately sees the evidence of God's activity.

Genesis, Part 2

Outline:

- I. The Birth of Jacob and Esau (25:19-26)
- II. Esau Sells His Birthright (25:27-34)
- III. Isaac and Abimelech (26:1-35)

The Birth of Jacob and Esau

“These are the generations of Isaac, Abraham’s son...” (Gen. 25:19)

The opening sections of the account of the “generations of Isaac” tells the story of Isaac and his family with a special emphasis upon his son Jacob.

Isaac’s story serves as a continuation of the story of Abraham, intentionally replicating his lifestyle choices and interaction with the Lord’s promises. The statement of “generations” details the birth of the patriarchs, followed by their marriage, and the barrenness of their wives. Through God’s provision, both men will ultimately father two sons, with the younger becoming the more prominent son and the channel for God’s promised line of descendants.

| | Abraham | Isaac |
|-----------------------------|----------|----------|
| “Generations” | 11:27 | 25:19 |
| Genealogy | 11:27 | 25:19 |
| Marriage | 11:29 | 25:20 |
| Barren Wife | 11:30 | 25:21 |
| Journey | 11:31 | 25:22 |
| “The Lord said” | 12:1 | 25:23 |
| Command/Promise | 12:1-3 | 25:23 |
| 1 st Fulfillment | 12:4 | 25:24-26 |
| Age of Patriarch | 12:4 | 25:26 |
| 2 nd Fulfillment | 12:5-9 | 25:27-34 |
| Wife/Sister Story | 12:10-20 | 26:1-11 |

See Wenham, Genesis WBC, p. 173.

Abraham’s narrative was dominated by the opening command and promises (12:1-3). The rest of the account on his life is an unraveling of these promises. Likewise, the story about Jacob will be largely dominated by God’s promise delivered while he is in the womb with his twin brother Esau.

Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you shall be divided; the one shall be stronger than the other, the older shall serve the younger” (25:23).

- How did Rebekah become pregnant after being barren?
- How did Esau look when he was born?
- What was Jacob doing when he was born?

“Older Shall Serve the Younger”

Although society and culture favored the oldest child, Genesis often reverses that order and shows a favored younger child. Notice the siblings below with the younger and more prominent child mentioned first:

- Abel and Cain
- Isaac and Ishmael
- Rachel and Leah
- Jacob and Esau
- Joseph and Brothers
- Ephraim and Manasseh

Contention Between Jacob and Esau

The truthfulness of the Lord's prophecy will be demonstrated in the first encounters of Jacob and Esau. The parents' favoritism (25:27-28) and the exchange of the birthright (25:29-34) both look back to the prophecy of contention while foreshadowing the deception of chapter 27 and its fallout.

Jacob and Esau join a host of other competing brothers in Genesis. Their contention finds its beginning place within their own family. Esau was a skillful hunter and favored by his father, Isaac. Jacob, on the other hand, worked inside in a quieter fashion, and he was favored by his mother Rebekah.

Their different inclinations play a role in the concluding episode of chapter 25. Esau had been hunting when he returned home to find Jacob cooking a stew. When he asks for some food to eat, Jacob demands Esau's birthright in exchange for the soup. The shock of Jacob's high demand is matched only by the response of Esau, who agrees to sell his birthright in exchange for a bowl of soup.

- What was the birthright? Who normally received it?
- What does this early encounter reveal about the characters of Jacob and Esau?

Isaac in Gerar and Beersheba

Genesis 26 is the only chapter devoted entirely to Isaac. The chapter seems to be out of place chronologically (Rebekah likely did not have children when she was before Abimelech), and it interrupts the flow between chapters 25 and 27. The text primarily functions to show a detailed correspondence between Isaac and his father. Gen. 12 and 26 open with the identical wording and scenario of a famine, and Abraham's name will be referenced six times in the chapter (26:1, 3, 5, 15, 18, 24). Additionally, the chapter connects Isaac as deceiver (ch. 26) and deceived (ch. 27).

| Account | Beginning of Abraham's Life (Gen. 12) | Close of Abraham's Life (Gen. 20) | Isaac's Life (Gen. 26) |
|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| Famine in the land | 12:10 | | 26:1 |
| Sojourn in land God would show | 12:1 | | 26:2 |
| Promises about descendants, land and blessings | 12:1-3 | | 26:3-5 |
| Patriarch's wife presented as sister | 12:10-20 | 20:1-18 | 26:6-11 |
| Patriarch's wealth | 13:2 | 20:14-16 | 26:12-13 |
| Dispute between servants | 13:3-10 | 21:25 | 26:14-22 |
| Dispute over wells | | 21:25 | 26:19-21 |
| Divine promise of descendants | 13:14-17 | | 26:24 |
| Called on name of Lord | 13:4 | 21:33 | 26:25 |
| Altar and encampment | 13:18 | | 26:25 |
| Patriarch blessed by foreign ruler | 14:19-20 | | 26:29 |
| Abimelech and Phicol make an oath | | 21:22-23 | 26:26-28 |

(chart continued from previous page)

| Account | Abraham (Gen. 12) | Abraham (Gen. 20) | Isaac (Gen. 26) |
|------------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Covenant between Patriarch and Abimelech | | 21:24-31 | 26:30-31 |
| Well of Beersheba named | | 21:31 | 26:32-33 |

The story of Isaac in Genesis 26 occurs in Gerar and Beersheba, and it can be divided into three main parts:

- Isaac's Deception of Abimelech [in Gerar] (26:1-11)
- Dispute with the Philistines [in Gerar] (26:12-22)
- Treaty with Abimelech & Phicol [in Beersheba] (26:23-33)

A similar pattern can be found in each location and includes divine promises, Isaac's interaction with Abimelech and mention of wells.

| | Gerar | Beersheba |
|----------------------------|---------------|------------------|
| Promises | v 1-6 | v 23-25 |
| Isaac and Abimelech | v 7-11, 12-17 | v 26-31 |
| Wells | v 18-22 | v 32-33 |

God's Promises

God's words to Isaac alternate between the past and future, looking back to God's original promises to Abraham and ahead to the fulfillment of the promises (v 3a – future; v. 3b – past; v. 4 – future; v. 5 – past). God gives the familiar promises of his presence, numerous descendants, the land, and blessings.

Isaac's Deception

The story of Isaac's deception of Abimelech is a familiar one. Isaac can be seen imitating the behavior of his father Abraham, who made a practice of lying about his wife's marital status to ensure his own safety (chapters 20 and 26; esp. 20:10-13). Isaac was discovered when Abimelech saw him caressing his wife (26:8; same word as 'laughing' that is the basis of Isaac's name and can be found through the Abraham narrative; 17:17; 18:12-15; 19:14; 21:6, 9; 26:8). Abimelech was astonished by Isaac's actions and commanded the people of the land to refrain from touching his wife.

Isaac's Prosperity

Like his father, Isaac was blessed by the Lord and prospered materially. The text states, "and the man became rich, and gained more and more until he became very wealthy" (26:13). Initially, Isaac's prosperity led to problems of envy, banishment, and struggle over wells (26:12-22). Eventually, the Philistine leaders recognized that God was with Isaac, and they made a covenant with him.

- How did Isaac respond to the second giving of promises by God (v. 25)?
- How many times are God's blessings or provisions mentioned in this chapter?
- Whom did Esau marry, and how did his parents view his marriages?

Genesis, Part 2

Outline:

- I. Isaac Blesses Jacob (27:1-46)
- II. Jacob and Esau Seek a Wife (28:1-9)
- III. Jacob's Encounter with God (28:10-22)

The Deception of Isaac

In the previous chapter, Isaac deceived King Abimelech concerning his wife, Rebekah. Now, Isaac will be deceived with his wife playing a prominent role in the deception. The earlier prophecy and statement on family dynamics sets the stage for the deception of chapter 27.

| | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Isaac the Deceiver (Gen. 26) | Isaac the Deceived (Gen. 27) |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|

"Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you shall be divided; the one shall be stronger than the other, the older shall serve the younger" (25:23).

"When the boys grew up, Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field, while Jacob was a quiet man, dwelling in tents. Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob" (25:27-28).

Chapter 27 follows a basic chiasmic pattern, revealing each parent's plan for blessing, followed by the actual blessing received. The family's dysfunction will be on full display as the parents seek the blessing for their favorite child. The resulting strife and friction between the brothers will play a major role in the coming chapters of the book.

- A. Isaac's Plan for Esau's Blessing (27:1-4)
- B. Rebekah's Plan for Jacob's Blessing (27:5-10)
- B'. Jacob Receives his blessing (27:11-29)
- A'. Esau receives his blessing (27:30-40)

- | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prepare Food (v 9, 11-17) - Serve Isaac (v. 10a, 18-26) - Receive Blessing (v. 10b, 27-29) |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

- Identify the plans of each parent for blessing.

| | |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| <u>Isaac's Plan for Esau's Blessing</u> | <u>Rebekah's Plan for Jacob's Blessing</u> |
| | |

- When Jacob gave his blessings (Gen. 49), he provided a blessing for all his children on his deathbed. How does Isaac's intention to bless differ?
- Do Esau's actions contradict the earlier prophecy about Jacob and Esau? Whose plans will ultimately come to fruition?

- What potential problem with his mother’s plan does Jacob mention?

Esau lost his birthright to a savory dish, and now Isaac’s blessing and ultimate deception would depend upon some “delicious food.” The word for “delicious food” or “delicacies” is found 6 times in this chapter (27:4, 7, 9, 14, 17, 31) with the only other occurrences in Scripture coming in Proverbs 23:3, 6.

- What instruction is provided in Proverbs about “delicious food”?
- How did Jacob respond when he was asked how the food was prepared so quickly?

Rebekah’s plan for deception worked. After questioning Jacob and feeling his hands, he accepted him as Esau, and he ate the prepared food. Then Esau blessed Jacob. When Esau came to his father with food, he discovered that Jacob had deceived their father and received the blessing. Esau wept bitterly and begged for a blessing. Upon his son’s insistence, he provided a less-than-ideal blessing for Esau.

- How binding was the blessing that Isaac gave?
- Summarize the main points of each blessing:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <u>Jacob’s Blessing (27:26b-29)</u> | <u>Esau’s “Blessing” (27:39-40)</u> |
| | |

Jacob the Deceiver. When Esau learned that he had been deceived he stated, *“Is he not rightly named Jacob? For he has cheated me these two times. He took away my birthright, and behold, now he has taken away my blessing”* (27:36). Esau is making a wordplay on Jacob’s name (ya’akov) and the Hebrew word that means “to supplant or cheat” (‘-k-v). He also plays on “birthright” (bekhorah) and “blessing” (berakhah) when he references the two times Jacob had “cheated” him. Deception will follow Jacob through the rest of his life and play a pivotal role in the rest of Genesis.

A Second Deception of Isaac

Once again after overhearing the plans of her family, Rebekah stepped in to take action, acting on behalf of her son Jacob at the expense of her son Esau while using Isaac as a pawn in her plan.

Esau’s anger over his stolen blessing led him to want to kill his brother. When Rebekah hears of Esau’s intentions, she sends him away to her brother Laban. She misdirects Isaac over her true intentions.

Rebekah’s Plans

- **Blessing (27:1-40).** Secure the blessing for Jacob from Esau by deceiving Isaac over identity of her sons. Isaac blesses Jacob.
- **Safety (27:41-28:9).** Secure safety for Jacob from Esau by deceiving Isaac over her true intentions. Isaac blesses Jacob and sends him to Paddam-aram to get a wife.

- Why does Esau delay before trying to kill Jacob? What is he waiting for?
- What does Rebekah tell Isaac to get him to send Jacob away?

For a second time Isaac will give Jacob a blessing. This time the blessing will come as he sends his son to his relatives in Paddan-aram to secure a wife. This commission to find a wife among his relatives closely resembles Isaac's own search for a wife (Gen. 24). When Esau sees what his father has done, he searches for a wife among his relatives, going to the family of Ishmael. The wives of Jacob and Esau will cement their place as favored and unfavored sons, recalling and imitating the status of Isaac and Ishmael.

- What elements are contained in Isaac's second blessing (28:3-4)? What connections are made with previous promises made to the patriarchs?
- Describe Esau's character from the accounts so far.

Jacob's Dream

Along the way as Jacob traveled to Haran, he stopped one night to rest, using a rock as a pillow. On this night, God visited Jacob in a dream. As he left on his trip, Isaac called upon God to bless Jacob. Now, God will bless Jacob himself in this dream.

When Jacob awoke, he marveled that God had visited him. He called the place awesome, the house of God and the gate of heaven. He took his stone pillow and made an altar to the Lord there, and called the place Bethel (which means "House of God" in Hebrew).

God's Promises to Jacob (Genesis 28:13-15)

- **Land** would be given to Jacob and descendants
- **Descendants** shall be numerous and spread out
- **Families of Earth Blessed** through Jacob and his descendants
- **God would be with Jacob** and bring him back to the Promised Land

- What image does Jacob see in his dream?
- Jn. 1:51 appears to reference this dream. How is Jesus described there?

After making the altar, Jacob made a vow to the Lord. His vow takes a conditional form (if God does..., then I will...). The conditions of Jacob's vow recall the promises that God has just made. The phrase, "The Lord shall be my God" stands out as an important phrase in the vow. Most translations include this statement in the "then" part of the vow (i.e. If God does his part, then he will be the God of Jacob). Grammatically, this phrase could be listed in the "if" part of the vow, listing it alongside God's other actions.

- What promises of God does Jacob recount in his vow? What does he vow in return?
- Does the placement of the Lord as Jacob's God make a difference in the gist of the vow? Which option seems correct?

Genesis, Part 2

Outline:

- I. Jacob Marries Leah and Rachel (29:1-30)
- II. The Birth of Jacob's Children (29:31-30:24)
- III. Jacob's Wages and Wealth (30:25-43)

Jacob's Marriages

Having fled for his life, Jacob journeyed eastward, where he would also look for a wife. The discovery of his future wife is described in a series of meetings:

- Jacob meets the shepherds of Haran (29:1-9)
- Jacob meets Rachel (29:10-12)
- Jacob meets Laban (29:13-14)

The shepherds inform Jacob of Laban and his family. Rachel rejoices when she meets him, and Laban welcomes him as family.

Similarities with Isaac's Search for a Wife

- Journey to family in East
- Meeting at a well
- Maiden approaches doing chores
- Water provided for animals
- Young woman runs home to tell of suitor
- Laban "negotiates" for marriage

- Who waters the animals and why? How does this differ from Isaac/Rebekah story?
- What did Jacob do when he approached Rachel?

| | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Jacob the Deceiver (Gen. 27) | Jacob the Deceived (Gen. 29) |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|

Having deceived his father over the blessing, Jacob will now be deceived while on the run from the consequences of his own deception. Laban asked Jacob to set the terms of his employment (29:15). Jacob loved Rachel, and he responded

that he would serve seven years for her hand in marriage, to which Laban agreed. After seven years, they threw a wedding, but Laban switched out his older daughter for his younger, and Jacob unwittingly married Leah. The text brings out the surprise of Jacob's discovery. "And in the morning, behold, it was Leah!" Jacob's response highlights the key word of the story. "What is this you have done to me? Did I not serve with you for Rachel? Why then have you deceived me?" (29:25).

"What is this you have done to me?" (29:25). Jacob's statement of surprise was also uttered by Pharaoh and Abimelech when they were deceived about a potential wife (12:18; 26:10).

- How does the text describe difference between Leah and Rachel? How does this story fit within the theme of the older and younger child in Genesis?
- How does Laban explain his deception? What further deal was made?

The concluding statement of the marriage account says that “[Jacob] loved Rachel more than Leah” (29:30). The rivalry between Rachel and Leah was established in Laban’s deceit and Jacob’s preference for one over the other. Favoritism and family dysfunction would come into a second generation.

- Why is favoritism so harmful within a family unit? How does it affect the favored and the unfavored child?

Jacob’s Children

The account of the birth of Jacob’s children is a pivotal section within his narrative, repeating and continuing previously established themes in the book. The section is bracketed by the Lord’s intervention and favor, first by opening Leah’s womb (29:31) and finally by opening Rachel’s womb (30:22). Over the course of the account, tension builds over Rachel’s barrenness, a theme that frequently appears in Genesis. The early exchange between Jacob and Rachel recalls a similar exchange between Abraham and Sarah, as the wife’s frustration grows over infertility and a handmaid is offered as a remedy. The Jacob narrative also mimics Noah’s story, where the chiasmic structure pivots and hinges on God’s remembering and merciful acting (8:1; 30:22).

Barren Women in the Bible. Barrenness was a devastating condition for a woman in the Ancient Near East, and it often included social stigma, emotional distress, and potential economic instability. There are six women who are identified as “barren” in the Bible with half of them found in three successive generations in Genesis. On each occasion, the woman becomes pregnant and bears a child of prominence by the intervention of the Lord. God’s provision and mercy is the key point when barrenness is identified in Scripture.

- Sarah, mother of Isaac (Gen. 11:30)
- Rebekah, mother of Jacob & Esau (Gen. 25:21)
- Rachel, mother of Joseph & Benjamin (Gen. 29:31)
- Wife of Manoah, mother of Samson (Judges 13:2-3)
- Hannah, mother of Samuel (1 Sam. 1:2)
- Elizabeth, mother of John (Luke 1:7)

The account of the birth of Jacob’s children was a back-and-forth affair between his two wives, growing out of and intensifying their rivalry. The account includes the following sections:

- The Lord opens **Leah’s** womb and she bears **4 sons** (29:31-35).
- Rachel is barren and becomes jealous of her sister. She gives her handmaid **Bilhah** to Jacob, and she bears **2 sons** (30:1-8).
- Leah stops bearing children and gives her handmaid **Zilpah** to Jacob, and she bears **2 sons** (30:9-13).
- Rachel barter’s Jacob’s sexual relationship with her sister for some mandrakes. **Leah** bears **2 more sons** to Jacob (30:14-21).
- God remembered **Rachel**, and opened her womb. She finally bears children to Jacob, having **2 sons** with some separation between them (30:22-24; 35:16-18).

- Identify any meaning or associations with the names of Jacob’s children.

| Birth Order | Passage | Child’s Name | Mother’s Name | Meaning/Association of Name |
|-------------|----------|--------------|---------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 | 29:32 | Reuben | Leah | |
| 2 | 29:33 | Simeon | Leah | |
| 3 | 29:34 | Levi | Leah | |
| 4 | 29:35 | Judah | Leah | |
| 5 | 30:4-6 | Dan | Bilhah | |
| 6 | 30:7-8 | Naphtali | Bilhah | |
| 7 | 30:9-11 | Gad | Zilpah | |
| 8 | 30:12-13 | Asher | Zilpah | |
| 9 | 30:14-18 | Issachar | Leah | |
| 10 | 30:19-20 | Zebulun | Leah | |
| 11 | 30:22-24 | Joseph | Rachel | |
| 12 | 35:16-18 | Benjamin | Rachel | |

Collecting

“Name your wages, and I will give it” (30:28)

| | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Laban the Deceiver (Gen. 29) | Laban the Deceived (Gen. 30) |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|

Upon their first meeting, Laban asked Jacob to name his wages (29:15). Jacob wanted Rachel’s hand in marriage in exchange for seven years of service, but he was deceived by Laban into an additional seven years of work for an additional wife he did not want. Having completed his years of service and the time for his wives to bear children, he wanted to gather his “wages” (wives and children) from Laban and leave (30:26). Laban acknowledged his prosperity, and he tells Jacob to name his wages (30:28). In the second collection of wages, Laban again attempted to deceive his son-in-law, but the tables would turn and Laban would be short-changed and deceived.

- How was Laban able to prosper (30:27, 30)? Note the associated promises in Gen. 27:29 and 28:14.

“So my honesty will answer for me later, when you come to look into my wages with you” (30:33).

Jacob proposed the terms of his wages. He would take the speckled, spotted and black lambs and goats from the flock, and Laban could have the rest. Laban agreed to these terms. Both men try to maximize their profits in the deal, but in the end, Jacob would receive the stronger animals. Like his father and grandfather, Jacob would gain great wealth.

- Why does Laban separate the speckled, spotted and black animals from the rest? What is he trying to do?
- What does Jacob do in the breeding of the animals?

Genesis, Part 2

Outline:

- I. Jacob Departs from Laban (31:1-55)
- II. Jacob Prepares to Meet Esau (32:1-21)
- III. Jacob Wrestles at Peniel (32:22-32)
- IV. Jacob Meets with Esau (33:1-20)

Conflict & Resolution with Laban

| Jacob Reconciles | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| With Laban (ch. 31) | With Esau (ch. 33) |

The next two episodes in the life of Jacob deal with reconciliations. The turmoil of deceptions will give way to peace. The first one occurs in Genesis 31 with the continuing story of Jacob trying to recover his wages from Laban and return home. Jacob had previously requested leave from Laban, but this time he will leave without warning. This chapter can be divided into the following sections:

- Jacob Determines to Leave Laban (31:1-16)
- Jacob Departs and Laban Pursues (31:17-24)
- Laban Overtakes Jacob (31:25-35)
- Jacob Expresses his Grievance (31:36-42)
- Jacob and Laban Reconcile (31:43-55)

The first several verses of the chapter highlight the differences that had developed between Jacob and Laban. God’s words and actions are contrasted with the words of Laban’s sons (v. 1-3) and Laban’s deeds (v. 4-7). Identity them below.

| The Words of Laban’s Sons | The Words of God |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| | |

| The Actions of Laban | The Actions of God |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| | |

- From what we know today, is it scientifically possible for diet to determine physical characteristics in breeding? How was this possible for Jacob?

Jacob explained his reasons for leaving to his wives, and they agreed to leave with him. The departure will reveal two items that further the divide between Jacob and Laban:

- *Rachel stole the household idols of her father (31:19), and*
- *Jacob “tricked” or “deceived” Laban by leaving in secret (31:20).*

When Laban learned of the deception, he pursued Jacob and overtook him after a week. He questioned Jacob on the two items mentioned, wanting to know why he left in secret and why he stole his idols. Jacob stated that he was afraid that Laban would prevent him from leaving, but neither Jacob nor Laban knew about Rachel's theft.

- How did Laban accuse Jacob of treating his daughters (v. 26)? How had his daughters considered Laban's treatment of them (v. 14-15)?
- Why do you think that Rachel stole her father's idols? How did Rachel hide them from Laban?
- What ways had God been with Jacob in this chapter? See 31:6-16, 29, 42-43

When Laban was unable to find the household idols, Jacob expressed his frustrations over how he had been treated by Laban (v. 36-42). Laban responded by suggesting a covenant between them. They took stones and made a pillar as a witness of their agreement. After the covenant, Jacob sacrificed and they all shared a meal. The next day, Laban was able to say goodbye to his family and bless them before parting ways.

- What were the conditions of the covenant as set out by Laban?

Conflict & Resolution with Esau

The presentation of Jacob's final meeting with Esau mimics his last encounter with Laban. Both episodes include preparations, a journey, conflict followed by reconciliation and a cordial parting. The accounts are further connected by Jacob's journey to his homeland, a destination directed by God. This same trip that takes Jacob away from Laban will take him to Esau. The central corresponding element for each story is the account of Jacob's struggle. With Laban, the struggle is with idols, which are desecrated by Rachel sitting on them. With Esau, Jacob struggles with God, representing a turning point in his life and the narrative.

“Favor” is a prominent word in the text appearing 6 times in Genesis 31-33. While Jacob lost favor with his father-in-law (31:2, 5), he earnestly seeks his brother's favor (32:5; 33:8, 10, 15).

| Laban (Genesis 31) | Esau (Genesis 32-33) |
|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Preparations to Depart (31:1-16) | Preparations for Meeting (32:3-21) |
| Departure, Crossing Euphrates (31:17-21) | Crossing Jabbok (32:22-23) |
| Struggle over Idols (31:22-42) | Struggle with God/Angel (32:24-32) |
| Reconciliation (31:43-54) | Reconciliation (33:1-15) |
| Cordial Parting (31:55) | Cordial Parting (33:16-20) |
| Further Travels, Named Place (32:1-2) | Further Travels, Named Place (33:18-20) |

The opening verses of chapter 32 show Jacob expectantly meeting angels as he departed from Laban. The meeting harkens back to the dream of the angels upon the stairway as he journeyed to meet Laban (28:10-22) with both accounts serving as bookends for his time in Paddan-aram.

- What name does Jacob give to the place where he met the angels?

As Jacob traveled home he remembered his brother's anger and the reason for his departure in the first place. Having repaired the broken relationship with his father-in-law, Jacob next sought peace with his brother Esau. Jacob sent messengers to his brother to announce his return and find favor in his sight. The messengers returned and reported that Esau was coming to meet him accompanied by 400 men. Jacob's response dictate his actions in this section: *"Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed"* (32:7). In his fear, Jacob took action to alleviate the perceived threat from his brother. Three items are mentioned, with his personal initiatives sandwiched around a prayer to God for deliverance.

| Jacob's Preparations to Meet Esau |
|------------------------------------------|
| Jacob divides into two camps (32:7-8) |
| Jacob prays for deliverance (32:9-12) |
| Jacob prepares gifts for Esau (32:13-21) |

- The text provides Jacob's thoughts or reasons for his actions.
 - Why did Jacob divide his party into two camps?
 - Why did Jacob send a gift with the first party?
- How does Jacob describe himself in his prayer to God?
- On what basis does he call upon God to act?

The Wrestling Match at Peniel

A frightened and restless Jacob woke up in the middle of the night and decided to move his family across the river Jabbok. Once he had moved his party across the river, he found himself alone and in a wrestling match with an unknown assailant. The text includes a word play on Jacob's name in Hebrew [Jacob (ya'aqob), Jabbok (yabboq), wrestle (abaq)] and consists of a description of the fight (v. 24-25), a dialogue (v. 26-30) and departure with concluding remarks (v. 31-32).

The men wrestled all night until daybreak without a clear winner. With neither man able to prevail, they began to negotiate a conclusion. The conversation started with Jacob refusing to relent unless his combatant blessed him. This refusal was followed by two inquiries and changes of a name (v. 27-30).

| Question | Response | Name Change |
|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Man:</i> "What is your name?" | <i>Jacob:</i> "Jacob" | <i>Man:</i> "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed" (32:28) |
| <i>Jacob:</i> "Please tell me your name" | <i>Man:</i> "Why is it that you ask my name?" | "Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, saying, 'For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life has been delivered'" (32:30). |

- Who was Jacob's wrestling opponent? How is he identified in Hosea 12:4-5?
- What dietary practice in Israel was practiced because of this incident?

Jacob → Israel Jacob's transformation to Israel represents a turning point in the life of the patriarch. Jacob's name derives from the Hebrew word for "heel" because he held onto the heel of his brother. This birth posture defined much of Jacob's life as he took his brother's blessing through deception and then fled from his anger. Jacob's new name Israel was also defined as he held onto another. As Jacob wrestled with God (through his representative), he was given the new name Israel, which is related to the word "struggle" or "strive." His name change is accompanied by a divine blessing.

- How had Jacob striven "with God and with men" and prevailed? How has Jacob changed from the beginning?

Jacob's Meeting with Esau

As Esau approached with his 400 men, Jacob executed his plan by sending his party by way of three different groups with their respective children (servants, Leah, Rachel and Jacob). Esau surprised Jacob however. Instead of displaying anger and seeking revenge, Esau ran to him and embraced him as a brother. Esau then met Jacob's family and received a gift from him. Esau offered to travel together, but Jacob declined so that he would not hold up his brother.

Their reconciliation provides a satisfying resolution to the conflict created when Jacob cheated Esau of his blessing (Gen. 27). Jacob attempted to offer back in some small way what he had taken from him.

| Jacob's Original Deception | Jacob's Reconciliation with Esau |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| "Let peoples serve you... Be lord over your brothers, ... (27:29) | How does Jacob address himself and his brother (32:4; 33:5, 14-15)? |
| "And nations* bow down to you... and may your mother's sons bow down to you" (27:29). | What did Jacob's wives/concubines do when they approached Esau (33:6)? * Consider also Jacob's name change and the name of the nation to descend from him. |
| Isaac: "Your brother came deceitfully, and he has taken away your blessing" (27:35). Esau: "For [Jacob] has cheated me... [and] ...has taken away my blessing" (27:36). | What word does Jacob use when offering his gift (33:11; see ESV or NKJV)? |

- How does Jacob liken seeing the face of Esau? How does this relate to Jacob's wrestling match?
- Where did Esau and Jacob go when they departed from one another?

The account concludes with Jacob purchasing land in Canaan (like his grandfather before him, Gen. 23). Jacob built an altar there and called it, "the God of Israel" (33:20). The land and its sellers also provide a transition to the next story about Dinah.

Genesis, Part 2

Outline:

- I. The Violation of Dinah (34:1-31)
 - II. Jacob Worships at Bethel (35:1-15)
 - III. Family Matters (35:16-29)
 - IV. The Genealogy of Esau (36:1-37:1)
-

The Violation of Dinah

Genesis 34 tells the story of Shechem's violation of Dinah, the sole daughter of Jacob. The chapter contains the following 3 main sections:

Shechem Violates Dinah and Seeks to Marry Her (34:1-4). Shechem was the prince of the land. After taking Dinah by force, he remained attracted to her. He spoke kind words to Dinah and demanded that his father get her for him as a wife.

Hamor Negotiates for the Marriage of Shechem and Dinah (34:5-24). Hamor obeyed the demand of his son and went to Jacob to negotiate for the marriage of Shechem and Dinah. When Jacob's sons heard about what happened, they were angry, but Hamor said that intermarriage would be beneficial for commerce and peace within the land. Shechem added that he would pay whatever bridal price was asked. Jacob's sons requested that the men of the town become like them and be circumcised.

Simeon and Levi Murder Hamor and his Family (35:25-31). The request for the men of the town to be circumcised was a ruse to incapacitate them. On the third day, Simeon and Levi came and killed all the men of the town and looted their belongings.

- What kind of character did Shechem have?
- What kind of parent was Hamor?
- Why was circumcision given to Abraham? How did sons of Jacob use it?
- What does Genesis have to say about intermarriage with the Canaanites?
- Did Jacob's sons act in a just manner? Why or why not?
- What was Jacob distressed about after hearing about the actions of his sons?

Descriptions of Gross Immorality

The Rape of Dinah

- "defiled" (34:5, 27)
- "...he had done a disgraceful thing..., for such a thing ought not to be done" (34:7)
- "Should he treat our sister as a harlot?" (34:13)

The Betrayal and Murder of Shechem and Family

- "deceit" (34:13)
- "killed" (34:25-26); "slain" (34:27)
- "captured" and "plundered" (34:27-29)

Moral Decline Among Jacob's Family

- Simeon and Levi murder Hamor and his family (34:25-31)
- Reuben lays with his father's concubine (35:22)
- Joseph's brothers sell him into slavery and deceive their father (ch. 37)
- Judah violates Tamar (ch. 38)

The story of Dinah is truly one of the saddest and most disturbing accounts in Scripture. The chapter portrays gross immorality as evil is heaped upon evil. The chapter begins with Shechem violating an innocent woman through physical force, and it will end with Jacob's sons slaying Shechem and innocent bystanders. This chapter shows the beginning of moral decline in the family of Jacob as many of his children commit disgraceful acts. These sons will serve as a contrast with Joseph, who proves to be righteous in the midst of difficult circumstances.

Jacob Travels to Bethel

Jacob's first stay in Canaan at Shechem was troublesome for him and his family. Chapter 35 turns the page on that difficult episode as God directed Jacob to return to Bethel, the place where God had appeared to him as he fled from Esau to Paddan-aram. Jacob's actions show an effort to leave behind the evil and Shechem and pursue God in Bethel.

- What instruction did Jacob give his family? What accumulated items from Shechem were left behind?
- Why would the inhabitants of the land want to pursue Jacob? Why didn't they?

God Almighty (El-Shaddai in Hebrew) is attributed as a name for God on three occasions in Genesis.

- God begins with "I am El-Shaddai" as he speaks of his promises and covenant with Abraham (Gen. 17:1).
- Isaac blessed Jacob by asking El-Shaddai to be with him as he left his homeland (Gen. 28:3).
- God states "I am God Almighty" in the midst of his promises to Jacob upon his return to his homeland (Gen. 35:11).

- What did God instruct Jacob to do in Bethel? Did he obey him?

God's first appearance at Bethel included divine promises and Jacob's vow of allegiance and worship at Bethel (28:10-22). God brought Jacob back a second time as a reminder of both the promises and the vow. Name changes function to show the importance of each party's commitments.

| New Name | Significance |
|----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Israel (35:10) | God's Promises to Jacob of numerous descendants, a mighty nation and the land of Canaan (35:11-12) |
| Bethel (35:15) | Jacob's Promise to Worship God by building an altar and pillar and sacrificing to God (35:7, 14) |

- How does God describe the descendants that would come from Jacob?

Family Matters

Family matters conclude the Jacob narrative. Just as the section on Abraham concluded with a genealogy and his death and burial by his two sons, so does this section. There are also several links and a transition to the Joseph narrative, the last major section in the book. Besides the genealogy, the other stories would have all been painful experiences for Jacob, transitioning to the great sorrow he would experience over the perceived loss of Joseph and potential loss of Benjamin. Reuben's actions illustrate a moral decline among his family, which will continue as his sons sell Joseph into slavery and deceive their father about his disappearance.

Family Events Found in Genesis 35:16-29

- Rachel dies after giving birth to Benjamin (35:16-20)
- Reuben lays with Bilhah, his father's concubine (35:21-22a)
- A listing of the sons of Jacob (35:22b-26)
- Jacob's father, Isaac, dies (35:27-29)

- What was Jacob's last son named by Rachel? By Jacob?
- How did Jacob commemorate his wife's grave?

The Genealogy of Esau

| Generation Statement | Scripture | Material Introduced |
|------------------------------------|-------------|----------------------|
| The Generations of Terah (11:27) | 11:27-25:11 | Narrative of Abraham |
| The Generations of Ishmael (25:12) | 25:12-18 | Genealogy of Ishmael |
| The Generations of Isaac (25:19) | 25:19-35:29 | Narrative of Jacob |
| The Generations of Esau (36:1,9) | 36:1-37:1 | Genealogy of Esau |
| The Generations of Jacob (37:2) | 37:2-50:26 | Narrative of Joseph |

Genesis 36 contains "the generations of Esau," the ninth of ten such structural indicators in the book. What is surprising about Esau's "generations" is its level of detail and that it uniquely contains two generation statements (36:1, 9). The first statement covers a basic genealogy (36:2-5) and narrative about Esau's settlement (36:6-8) with Jacob's settlement continuing the flow of thought in 37:1. The second "generations" statement seems to be an expansion upon the narrative, focusing on Esau as an inhabitant of Seir and father of the Edomites. Esau, Seir and Edom are all associations mentioned earlier in Genesis [25:30; 27:11, 23 (hairy; Hebrew Sa'ir); 32:3].

1st "Generations" Section (36:1)

- Esau's Genealogy (36:2-5)
- Narrative of Esau's Settlement (36:6-8)

2nd "Generations" Statement (36:9)

- Esau's Descendants and Chiefs (36:9-14, 15-19)
- Seir's Descendants and Chiefs (36:20-28, 29-30)
- Edomite Kings and Chiefs (36:31-39)

Genesis, Part 2

Outline:

- I. Joseph's Favored Status (37:2-11)
 - II. The Brothers' Plot Against Joseph (37:12-24)
 - III. Joseph Sold and Jacob Deceived (37:25-36)
-

"These are the generations of Jacob" (Gen. 37:2)

Genesis 37:1 states that Jacob settled in Canaan, concluding the Esau narrative by connecting the settlements of each brother (36:8; 37:1). The elect son Jacob settled in the land of promise while his non-elect brother departed from the Promised Land and settled in Seir. The next verse provides Jacob's "generation" statement, which is the final one in Genesis and introduces the narrative about Joseph.

Joseph's Favored Status

The first section of the story of Joseph sets the stage by showing Joseph's status as the favored son, and the resulting resentment from his brothers. Jacob continued the practice of favoritism as seen in his parents with equally disastrous results.

Reasons for Resentment:

- Joseph brought a bad report of his brothers to their father (37:2)
- Jacob loved Joseph more than his brothers (37:3-4)
- Jacob gave a special gift of a coat to Joseph (37:3)
- Joseph revealed his dreams of his family bowing down to him (37:5-11)

The text underscores their resentment with repeated statements of the brother's hatred and jealousy of Jacob. First, "they hated him" because of their father's favoritism and special treatment of Joseph (37:4). "They hated him even more" because of his dreams that they would bow down to him. The statements of resentment surround each dream: hatred (37:5), 1st dream (37:6-8a), hatred (37:8b), 2nd dream (37:9-10), jealousy (37:11).

God often communicated in dreams, and that appears to be the case here. Each one of the three major narratives about the patriarchs begin with a divine message that establishes the major plot of the story. Joseph's two dreams in his youth will also preview the two dreams of Pharaoh in Egypt (Gen. 41).

| Narrative | Divine Message |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Abraham (Gen. 12-25) | Promise of Land & Descendants |
| Jacob (Gen. 25-35) | Older Shall Serve Younger |
| Joseph (Gen. 37-50) | Brothers Would Bow Down |

- How old was Joseph at this time?
- Why was Joseph chosen as the favorite son?

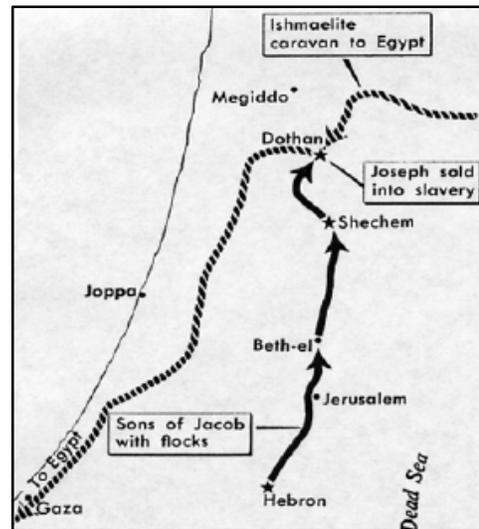
- Provide a description of each dream.
 - 1st Dream (37:5-8)
 - 2nd Dream (37:9-11)
- How did Joseph's brothers and father respond to his dreams?

Joseph Sold and Jacob Deceived

When the brothers left Hebron and went to pasture their flocks near Shechem, Jacob sent Joseph to inquire about their welfare. As Joseph was looking in Shechem a man informed him that they were in Dothan.

As Joseph approached, the brothers were reminded of the reasons they resented him.

- He was coming to make a report while they were shepherding (37:14).
- He was wearing the special coat of privilege (see 37:31).
- They remarked, "Here comes this dreamer" (37:19).



<https://bible.org/assets/pagegraphics/shechem-6.gif>

The hatred of the brothers boiled over and they decided to take action. The fate of Joseph falls upon three successive alternative plans, which ultimately concludes with Joseph being sold to a passing caravan of traders.

- How far did Joseph travel to find his brothers?
- Why would Jacob send Joseph to his brothers? Do you think he aware of their feelings toward him?
- Fill out the chart about each plan below.

| Order | Who Devised Plan | Plan | Motivation for Plan | Was the Plan Successful? |
|---------------------------------|------------------|------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Original Plan (37:18-20) | | | | |
| 2 nd Plan (37:21-24) | | | | |
| 3 rd Plan (37:25-28) | | | | |

- Who was Joseph sold to? What was the price received from him?
- Where were they headed?

The Deception of Jacob

The revelation of Joseph's sale would lead to two bouts of mourning. The first would come from the oldest brother when he found out the truth of what happened and the second came from the boys' father when he was deceived about what happened.

When Reuben found that Joseph had been sold he tore his clothes as a sign of great mourning.

The text then immediately turns its attention to Jacob. The brothers took Joseph's special robe and dipped it in the blood of a slaughtered goat. They then sent the bloodied garment to their father and asked him to identify it. Jacob drew his own conclusion, figuring that Joseph had been killed by a wild beast. Jacob then greatly mourned and was inconsolable by his family.

- What question does Reuben ask his brothers? What does he mean by this question?
- To what degree does Jacob mourn? What did he do in his mourning?
- How do you think the sons felt about Jacob's mourning?
- What happened to Joseph after he was sold?

Jacob the
Deceiver
(Gen. 30)

Jacob the
Deceived
(Gen. 37)

Connecting Jacob's Deceptions

There are several connections made between Jacob's deception to receive the birthright (Gen. 27) and the deception perpetrated against him about Joseph's condition (Gen. 37).

- **Fathers deceived by their children** (27:19; 37:2)
 - The family relationship is heightened by the repeated use of "my son."
 - Isaac calls Jacob "my son" several times in the exchange for the blessing (27:18, 20, 21, 24).
 - Jacob mourns over losing "my son" (37:35).
- **Favorite son hated by slighted son(s)**
 - Esau hated Jacob after deception (27:41)
 - Joseph's brothers hated him because of his favored status (37:4-5, 8)
- **Garments play a role in the deception**
 - Jacob wore Esau's garment (27:15).
 - The sons give Jacob the bloodied garment of Joseph (37:31).
- **A sacrificed goat was used in the deception**
 - The hair of a goat was added to Jacob's skin to make him appear hairy like Esau (27:9, 16).
 - The blood from a goat was applied to Joseph's coat to make him appear (37:31).

Genesis, Part 2

Outline:

- I. Judah and Tamar (38:1-30)
- II. Joseph in Potiphar's House (39:1-23)

Judah and Tamar

The story of Judah and Tamar interrupts the main storyline of Joseph, building suspense and creating an aside with parallel events and themes. The story sets the stage with a genealogy of Judah, including his marriage and the birth of his three sons: Er, Onan and Shelah. When the children grew up, Judah took a wife named Tamar for his firstborn son Er. The rest of the chapter tells about the plight of Tamar, which stems from the actions and non-actions of Judah and his sons (38:6-11).

Poignant Placement. The story of Judah and Tamar provides a correspondence and preview with the story of Joseph.

- Like Joseph her plight came through harsh treatment by her family.
- Like Joseph she had been wronged by Judah.
- Like Joseph she would be considered "righteous" in her dealings.
- Like Joseph she would conceal her identity from her perpetrator.
- Like Joseph the revelation of her identity would show the guilt of those deceived.
- Like Joseph she would ultimately find success.

- Identify the actions of Judah and his sons along with the result.

| | Judah's Actions | Son's Actions | Result |
|--------|-----------------|---------------|--------|
| Er | | | |
| Onan | | | |
| Shelah | | -- | |

The next statement in the text indicates that Judah's wife had died, leaving both Judah and Tamar widowed and in a state of neediness. When Tamar saw that Judah did not keep his word about Shelah, she took matters into her own hands. She covered herself with a veil and waited for Judah as he traveled to Timnah. Judah mistook her as a prostitute and propositioned her, giving her a pledge for payment. Then Judah laid with Tamar, never recognizing her true identity, and he impregnated her. Tamar was with child, which is something that Er and Onan could not provide and Judah had withheld.

Tamar's hidden identity would ultimately reveal Judah's true character. She was accused of immorality, but when she produced the pledge for payment, the situation became clear and Judah declared her innocence and his guilt, saying "*She is more righteous than I, since I did not give her to my son Shelah*" (38:26). She would go on to bear twin boys named Perez and Zerah.

- How did Abraham and Isaac feel about Canaanite marriages?
- How does this story continue the theme of older/younger siblings?
- What items did Judah give as a pledge to Tamar?
- What happened when Judah tried to pay the “prostitute”?
- What other pregnancies/deliveries looked similar to Tamar’s in Genesis?
- Who else has concealed identities in Genesis?
- In whose genealogy can Tamar be found? See Matthew 1:2-17, esp. v. 3.

Joseph in Potiphar’s House

Chapter 39 resumes the story about Joseph, connected by statements that Joseph was taken to Egypt and sold to Potiphar (37:36; 39:1). The events in Potiphar’s service (chapter 39) mimic his ordeal with his brothers

| Genesis 37 | Genesis 39 |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Favored Son | Favored Servant |
| Plot of Joseph’s Brothers | Plot of Potiphar’s Wife |
| Thrown into Pit | Deception of Potiphar |
| Deception of Jacob | Thrown into Prison |
| Prosperity in Service | Prosperity in Service |

(chapter 37) as Joseph begins with a favored status but loses it through deceit committed against him. His fall from grace was tragic considering his innocence in both cases and his great integrity in Potiphar’s house.

Joseph’s Success (39:1-6). Joseph’s time in Egypt started in Potiphar’s house, who had bought him from the traveling Ishmaelites. The text repeatedly emphasizes Joseph’s success as it shows his rise to power in the following manner:

1. The Lord was with Joseph and blessed him.
2. Potiphar could see that the Lord was with Joseph.
3. Potiphar made Joseph overseer of his house.
4. The Lord blessed Potiphar because of Joseph.

- What words are used to describe Joseph’s success in Gen. 39:2-6?
- What charge did Potiphar give to Joseph?
- Is there any doubt in the text about why Joseph was successful? How many times is the Lord’s name mentioned in this passage?

Joseph’s Temptation and Integrity (39:7-18). Joseph’s success was noticed by Potiphar, and his handsome appearance was noticed by Potiphar’s wife. She lusted after Joseph and attempted to get him to lie with her. The text shows Joseph’s repeated refusal to succumb to temptation.

- Identify Joseph’s response to the temptations of Potiphar’s wife.

| Temptation | Joseph’s Response |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Initial Request (39:7) | |
| Daily Request (39:10) | |
| Final Request (39:11-12) | |

- If Joseph had sinned, who would he have committed his sin against? Is the same true today?
- What lie did Potiphar’s wife make up about Joseph?
- What can we learn about the tactics of Satan from this story?
- What can we learn about the appropriate response to temptation?

The story of Tamar and Joseph at Potiphar’s house are placed side-by-side, providing an intentional comparison and contrast between the two brothers and the foreign women who commit deceptions.

| Deceptions by Foreign Women | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Tamar (Gen. 38) | Potiphar’s Wife (Gen. 39) |

- How are Judah and Joseph contrasted in the stories?
- How are Tamar and Potiphar’s wife contrasted?
- How does Tamar resemble Joseph?

Joseph’s Fall from Favor (39:19-23). When Potiphar heard the accusations of his wife, he became angry and threw Joseph into prison. Just as God had been with Joseph when he served in Potiphar’s house, God was with Joseph in the prison. A similar pattern of Joseph’s success is used.

1. The Lord was with Joseph and blessed him.
2. The Lord gave Joseph favor in sight of the keeper of the prison.
3. Prison guard gave Joseph authority over everything.
4. Everything that Joseph did was successful.

Similar language is used in each situation to show the Lord’s blessing of Joseph.

| Joseph’s Success | Potiphar’s House | Prison |
|--------------------------------------------|------------------|--------|
| The Lord “was with Joseph” | 39:2 | 39:21 |
| The Lord caused Joseph to “succeed” | 39:3 | 39:23 |
| Joseph found “favor” in his master’s sight | 39:4 | 39:21 |
| The master put him “in charge” of all | 39:4-5 | 39:22 |
| The master had “no concern about anything” | 39:6 | 39:23 |

Genesis, Part 2

Outline:

- I. Joseph Interprets Dreams in Prison (40:1-23)
- II. Joseph Interprets Dreams in the Palace (41:1-57)

Joseph in Prison

Despite Joseph's wrongful imprisonment, the Lord continued to be with him (39:19-23). He was elevated as the principle steward of the prison, and when two Egyptian officials were imprisoned for offenses against the king, they were put under his care (40:1-8). The remainder of the chapter recounts the dreams and interpretations of both the cupbearer (40:9-15) and the baker (40:16-23).

- Identify the content, interpretations and results of the prisoners' dreams.

| The Cupbearer | The Baker |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| Dream: | Dream: |
| Interpretation: | Interpretation: |
| Result: | Result: |

A Divinely-Given Dream and Interpretation

Pharaoh's Officers: *"We have had dreams, and there is no one to interpret them"*

Joseph: *"Do not interpretations belong to God? Please tell them to me."*

The pivotal point of the story comes when the imprisoned officials look downcast before Joseph, stating that no one can interpret their dreams. It was true that no man *alone* could interpret dreams. God had given the dreams to the men, and God was needed for their interpretation. Joseph recognized that God would use him to interpret the dreams.

- What prompted the baker to ask about his dream?
- On what occasion did Pharaoh recall his officials?
- What request did Joseph make after giving the interpretations? Was his request honored?

Joseph in the Palace

Joseph's time in prison was a preview and rehearsal for his time in the palace. In both places, dreams were followed by dejection when no one could interpret the dreams. On each occasion, Joseph accurately provided the interpretation with the help of God.

| | Prison | Palace |
|----------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| <i>Two Dreams</i> | 40:5 | 41:1-7 |
| <i>Troubled Dreamer(s)</i> | 40:6-7 | 41:8 |
| <i>No One to Interpret</i> | 40:8 | 41:8 |
| <i>God Acknowledged</i> | 40:8 | 41:16, 25, 28, 32 |
| <i>Joseph Interprets</i> | 40:12-13, 18-19 | 41:25-32 |

While Joseph was initially forgotten in prison, his interpretation would ultimately lead to his release from prison and success in the palace. When Pharaoh was unable to find anyone to interpret his dreams, the cupbearer remembered Joseph and informed Pharaoh about his ability to interpret dreams. Joseph was summoned, and he successfully provided the interpretation, giving credit to God in the process.

- Identify the content and interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams.

| | |
|-----------------|-----------|
| Dream #1: | Dream #2: |
| Interpretation: | |

- How long did Joseph stay in prison? How do you think he felt during this time?
- How can the providence of God be seen in Joseph's life?

Dreams play an important role in Joseph's life, coming on three separate occasions and always in pairs. The dreams provide divine messages that predict the future and push the story forward. God is clearly in the driver's seat in the life of Joseph.

Joseph's Two Dreams (37:5-11). Joseph dreamt about sheaves and celestial figures bowing before him. The interpretation was immediately recognized to be that Joseph's family would bow before him.

The Dreams of the Cupbearer and Baker (40:5-23). The cupbearer dreamed about a budding and fruitful vine while the baker dreamed about bread eaten by birds. The men did not understand the interpretation until Joseph interpreted their dreams by God's help, stating that the cupbearer would be restored and the baker would be executed.

Pharaoh's Dreams (41:1-36). Pharaoh dreamed that that thin cows ate fat cows and thin ears of corn ate plump ones. No one was able to interpret the dreams until Joseph was summoned and indicated that years of famine would follow years of feast.

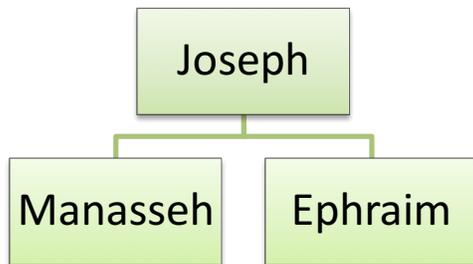
Joseph's Promotion

Joseph followed his interpretation with a proposal for Pharaoh, suggesting that the surplus crops from the years of prosperity be stored up for the years of famine. The plan sounded good to Pharaoh and his servants.

"Can we find a man like this, in whom is the Spirit of God?" (41:38)

For Pharaoh, there was only one man suited for such a task. Just like Potiphar and the chief prison guard, Pharaoh saw that Joseph was a successful man because God was with him. For this reason, he promoted him, putting him in charge of everything in his house.

The chapter concludes with descriptions of the years of plenty and famine, sandwiched around the recounting of the birth of Joseph's children. He married an Egyptian named Asenath, and she bore two children, Manasseh and Ephraim.



- How did Pharaoh honor Joseph after hearing his proposal?
- How much food did Joseph store up? How was it described?
- What are the meanings of the names of Joseph's sons?
 - Manasseh:
 - Ephraim:
- How was the famine described? How far did it extend?

Joseph's Garments

They say that clothes make the man. This is true for Joseph, whose clothes play a pivotal role in his life.

His Coat of Privilege (37:3, 31-33). Joseph's first garment represented his favored status with his father, a source of jealousy for his brothers, and the means of the deception of Jacob.

His Garment of Purity (39:11-18). The next garment that is mentioned was the outer coat that Joseph left with Potiphar's wife as he fled from Potiphar's wife. This garment represented Joseph's integrity and purity, although it was also used as the means of his imprisonment.

His "Criminal" Clothes (41:4). Joseph's clothes in prison would have indicated his lowly status. When he was called to appear before Pharaoh, he shaved and changed his clothes.

His Royal Clothes (41:42-43). Joseph interpreted dreams for Pharaoh and was elevated to second in command. Joseph was given Pharaoh's signet ring and clothed in fine linen garments.

Genesis, Part 2

Outline:

- I. Joseph's Brothers' First Journey to Egypt (42:1-38)
- II. Joseph's Brothers' Second Journey to Egypt (43:1-34)
- III. Benjamin Accused of Stealing (44:1-34)

The Brother's First Journey to Egypt

The events of this chapter are structured around a series of conversations:

- Jacob's conversation with his sons, sending them to Egypt to buy grain (42:1-5)
- Joseph's first conversation with his brothers (42:6-17)
- Joseph's second conversation with his brothers (42:18-24)
- Jacob's conversation with his sons upon their return from Egypt (42:25-38)

Jacob's First Conversation with His Sons (42:1-5). As the famine intensified in Canaan, Jacob feared starvation and sent his sons to buy grain from Egypt, the one place that had food available. The next events that unfold harken back to the reader's first encounter with Joseph and his brothers. First, Jacob held Benjamin back from traveling to Egypt, continuing to show favoritism to Rachel's children. Second, when the brothers come to Egypt to buy grain, they came to Joseph and bowed down to him, albeit without recognizing him.

| Genesis 37 | Genesis 42 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Jacob's Favoritism of Joseph (37:3) | Jacob's Favoritism of Benjamin (42:3-4) |
| Joseph's Dream that his Brothers Would Bow Down to Him (37:5-8) | Joseph's Brothers Bow Down Before Him (without recognizing him; 42:6, 9) |

"And Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him" (42:9)

The plot that unfolds over the next several chapters stems from the fact that Joseph recognized his brothers while they did not recognize him. Joseph's hidden identity would serve as a test for whether the brothers had changed or not.

| | |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| The Brothers as the Deceivers (Gen. 37) | The Brothers as the Deceived (Gen. 42-44) |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|

Joseph's First Conversation with his Brothers (42:6-17). Joseph accused his brothers of being spies, while they emphatically denied the accusation. As evidence of their innocence, they told Joseph about their family situation to confirm their identity. Joseph proposed that they all remain confined while one goes back to retrieve their youngest brother to verify their claim. Then Joseph put them all in confinement, which turned the tables from their earlier confinement of him in a pit.

Joseph's Second Conversation with his Brothers (42:18-24). After the third day, Joseph altered his proposal by suggesting that one of them stay while the rest return

home to retrieve their youngest brother. They reasoned among themselves that this trouble had come upon them because of their earlier treatment of Joseph. Joseph then sent them home with their money, grain, and provisions for the journey.

Jacob's Second Conversation with his Sons (42:25-38). On their return trip, the brothers discovered that the money was returned and they became afraid. They reported to their father what had happened and their need to bring Benjamin back with them. Jacob refused their request, fearing that he would lose yet another son.

- How does Jacob suggest that he might die in each of his two conversations with his sons (42:2, 38)?
- How did Joseph come to hear the reasoning of the brothers? What did he do after he heard them?
- What two times does Reuben speak up in this chapter and what did he say each time? What does this tell us about Reuben?
- Who did the brothers believe was responsible for this calamity? See 42:21, 28. Were they right?
- What did Jacob's refusal to send Benjamin mean for Simeon?

The Brother's Second Journey to Egypt

The continued severity of the famine and food shortage would require Jacob's sons to make a return trip to Egypt to buy more food. The second journey continues the plot of Joseph's hidden identity and his request to bring Benjamin back to Egypt. It consists of the following sections:

- Jacob reluctantly sends Benjamin with his other sons to Egypt (43:1-14)
- Joseph warmly receives his brothers (43:15-34)
- Joseph tests his brothers by framing Benjamin for theft (44:1-13)
- Judah pleads for mercy (44:14-34)

Jacob Sends His Sons Back to Egypt (43:1-14). When Jacob requested that his sons go to buy food, Judah reminded him that "the man" demanded that they return with the youngest brother. In the face of his father's continued reluctance, Judah pledged his own life upon the safe return of Benjamin. Jacob finally relented and made preparations for a favorable reception by "the man" in Egypt, sending gifts and double the money along with his youngest son.

- How did Judah's pledge for Benjamin's safety differ from Reuben's pledge?
- What did Jacob want God to do? See 43:14.

Joseph Receives His Brothers (43:15-34). Upon their return to Egypt, Joseph called the brothers to his house, which frightened them as they feared the worst. They were relieved when Joseph welcomed them with a message of peace, inquiries of their

father, and provisions of a meal. Once again, the brothers bowed before Joseph in fulfillment of his childhood dreams (43:26, 28). Joseph also began to set the stage for his next plot, as he showed favoritism to Benjamin by serving him five times as much as any of the brothers.

- What reason did Joseph give for the brothers finding money in their sacks? See 43:23.
- What amazed the brothers at their meal at Joseph’s house?
- Why did Joseph give Benjamin five times as much food?

Joseph Tests His Brothers (44:1-13). As the brothers prepared to return home, Joseph instructed his servant to fill their sacks with ample food and their money. He then told the servant to plant his silver cup in the sack of Benjamin. When the brothers left, the servant pursued them and inquired about the cup. The brothers proclaimed their innocence, but when the bags were searched, it was discovered in Benjamin’s sack. The brothers were devastated, tearing their clothes and returning to Egypt to give an answer for the alleged theft.

- How did the servant describe the purpose of Joseph’s silver cup?

Judah Pleads for Mercy (44:14-34). Joseph had set his trap to test his brothers. Would they repeat their sin against Joseph by turning on their younger, favored brother Benjamin? Or would they show that they had changed? Judah stepped up to answer that question.

- Summarize Judah’s speech throughout the story and notice his development.

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Gen. 37:26-27 | |
| Gen. 43:2-5 | |
| Gen. 43:8-10 | |
| Gen. 44:16 | |
| Gen. 44:30-32 | |
| Gen. 44:33-34 | |

- What did Joseph propose should be the consequence for the “stolen” cup?
- How had Judah changed over the course of his life? What kind of character does he display before Joseph in Genesis 44?

Genesis, Part 2

Outline:

- I. Joseph Reveals his Identity (45:1-28)
- II. Jacob and his Family Come to Egypt (46:1-34)
- III. Joseph Oversees Distribution of Food (47:1-31)

Joseph's Revealed Identity

Joseph's hidden identity and testing of his brothers had taken an emotional toll. When Judah revealed his changed character by offering to take Benjamin's place, Joseph could no longer control himself. After securing a private audience with his brothers, he revealed his identity and spoke comforting words. Joseph's perspective was heavily influenced by his recognition of God's activity in his life. He referenced God four times in his short message. After he finished talking, he wept tears of joy as he hugged and kissed them.

Joseph's Tears

Joseph's encounter with his family was an emotional experience. On several occasions, the text states that Joseph wept.

- When he heard his brothers discuss their guilt (42:24)
- When he first greeted Benjamin (43:30).
- When he revealed his identity to his brothers (45:2, 14).
- When he met his father (46:29).
- When his father died (50:2).
- When his brothers asked for forgiveness (50:17).

| | Joseph's Instruction | God's Role |
|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Message for his Brothers (45:4-8) | Do not be grieved or angry with yourselves | God sent me to Egypt to preserve life (3x in 45:5, 7, 8) |
| Message for His Father (45:9-13) | Come to Egypt and I will provide for you | God made me ruler (45:9) |

- How loud was Joseph when he revealed himself to his brothers?
- What can we learn from Joseph's attitude toward God? How did it help develop his character?
- Why did Jacob and his family need to come to Egypt?

When Pharaoh heard about Joseph's brothers, he bid them to come back with their father and he offered them the best of the land of Egypt (45:16-20). At the bidding of Pharaoh, Joseph provided his brothers with wagons and ample provisions for the journey home. When they arrived in Canaan, they told their father that Joseph was still alive and ruler over Egypt.

- What instruction did Joseph have for his brothers as they departed?
- How did Jacob respond to the news of Joseph?

The Third Journey to Egypt

As Jacob set out for Egypt, he came to Beersheba, where he worshipped the Lord by offering sacrifices to him. God responded to his worship in a vision at night, calling out to him and giving him a message of comfort (46:3-4).

Genesis 46:3-4

Introduction: *"I am God, the God of your father."*

Instruction: "Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt"

Reason #1: *"For there I will make you into a great nation."*

Reason #2: *"I myself will go down with you to Egypt, and I will bring you up again,"*

Reason #3: *"and Joseph's hand shall close your eyes."*

A Great Nation. The first assurance that God gave Jacob of his journey to Egypt was that he would make him a great nation there. The promise of a great nation had initially been given to Abraham and reiterated throughout his efforts to father an heir (12:2; 17:4-6; 18:18; 21:18). It was also a part of Jacob's identity since the womb (25:23) and restated upon his return to Canaan (35:11). As the book of Genesis closes, this promised nation was becoming a greater reality and would be accomplished in Egypt.

God's Presence. The first time that Jacob left Canaan to go to Padan-Aram, God stated that he would be with him and bring him safely back to his homeland (28:15; 31:3). As Jacob left for Egypt, God made the same promise to him, indicating that he would be with him and bring him back to Canaan.

Joseph's Hand. God's final assurance was that Jacob would be with his beloved son Joseph at his death.

- How would God's presence provide security for Jacob?
- Notice the connection between Jacob's sacrifice and God's response. Who does Jacob sacrifice to? How does God introduce himself?

Jacob left Beersheba and came to Egypt. Jacob's sons had undertaken two previous journeys to Egypt to buy food during the famine (Gen. 42 and 43-45). The third trip would include their father Jacob, their possessions, and all of their families. Genesis 46:8-27 provides a manifest of Jacob's children and grandchildren who made the trip to Egypt.

Famine, Egypt and the Patriarchs

- **Abraham** went to Egypt because of a severe famine in Canaan (12:10).
- **Isaac** endured another famine, but he was specifically told by God not to go to Egypt (26:1-2)
- **Jacob** joined his son Joseph in Egypt because of the 7-year famine (45:9-13; 46:5-7)

- Identify the number of people in each family who came to Egypt.

| Family | Number of People |
|---------------------------------|------------------|
| The family of Leah (46:8-15) | |
| The family of Zilpah (46:16-17) | |
| The family of Rachel (46:18-22) | |
| The family of Bilhah (46:23-25) | |
| TOTAL | |

Joseph met his father in the land of Goshen, and it was an emotional meeting (46:28-30). For many years, both of them thought they would never see the other one again. Jacob even stated that he could die in peace after having met his long, lost son.

Joseph prepared his family to meet Pharaoh by informing them that the Egyptians detested shepherds. This news could work out to their advantage, though, and allow them to inhabit the land of Goshen, which was separated from the Egyptians. Pharaoh graciously greeted Joseph's family, offering them the land of Goshen to pasture their flocks. He even offered his flocks to the care of trustworthy shepherds in Joseph's family. As his family settled in Goshen, Joseph provided them all with ample food.

- How did Jacob describe his life when he met Pharaoh?
- What did Jacob do as he departed from Pharaoh?

Joseph continued in his role as overseer of food distribution, and he was able to bring great success to Pharaoh through his shrewd dealings. The surplus of food was a necessary commodity for a starving people, and they continued to give all they had to attain it.

- Identify what the people offered on each successive occasion.

| | |
|----------------------------------------|--|
| 1 st Exchange (47:13-14) | |
| 2 nd Exchange (47:15-17) | |
| 3 rd Exchange (47:18-21) | |

- What tax was levied upon the Egyptian farmers?
- When else did Joseph prosper his masters in Genesis? How was he able to bring them prosperity each time?

While Joseph was bringing great success to Pharaoh, Jacob was nearing the end of his life. As he drew near to death, he made an earnest request to Joseph, asking that his bones be buried in Canaan and not Egypt.

- How did Jacob's request fit in with God's promises to him in 46:1-4?

Genesis, Part 2

Outline:

- I. Jacob's Blessing for Joseph and His Sons (48:1-22)
- II. Jacob's Final Blessings and Instructions (49:1-33)
- III. The Burial of Joseph's Bones in Canaan (50:1-14)
- IV. Joseph's Final Reconciliation and Death (50:15-26)

Jacob's Last Words

As Jacob neared his death, his attention turned to his family and their future. God had already told Jacob that he would make him a nation in the land of Egypt. Jacob's parting words to his family were prophetic in nature and looked to the future of their descendants.

Jacob gave his final words on two different occasions: to Joseph's two sons (48:1-22) and to his own sons (49:1-27). In his final words, two sons receive special emphasis within his message – Joseph and Judah. These two individuals would be representative of the future nation of Israel – Judah in the south and Ephraim (Joseph's son) in the north.

God: I will
make you into
a great nation
in Egypt
(46:3)



Jacob's Last
Words address
the future tribes
of national Israel
(49:1-27)

Jacob Blesses Ephraim and Manasseh

When Joseph heard of his father's poor health, he went to visit him with his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. Jacob spoke to him, reminding him of God's promise to multiply his descendants and give him the land as a possession. Then he claimed Joseph's two sons as his own and recipients of the inheritance of the land alongside his own sons.

Jacob's eyesight had dimmed with age, and he asked Joseph to bring his sons closer. He then kissed, embraced and blessed them. Joseph had placed Manasseh so that he would get the preferred blessing from Jacob's right-hand. However, Jacob crossed his arms and gave the preferred blessing to the younger son Ephraim. When Joseph objected, Jacob persisted in his blessing of the younger.

Similar Blessings

In many ways, Jacob's blessing of Joseph's sons resembles his own blessing from his father. The both shared the following similarities:

- The father intended to bless the older son.
- The one giving the blessing had poor eyesight.
- The younger son received the preferred blessing.
- There was a protest when the younger was blessed.
- The blessing for the younger son was not revoked after the protest.

- What blessing did Jacob pronounce upon Joseph and his sons?
- What land inheritance did Jacob give to Joseph?

| Final Words | Mother |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Reuben (49:3-4) | Leah |
| Simon & Levi (49:5-7) | |
| Judah (49:8-12) | |
| Zebulun (49:13) | |
| Issachar (49:14-15) | |
| Dan (49:16-18) | Bilhah & Zilpah |
| Gad (49:19) | |
| Asher (49:20) | |
| Naphtali (49:21) | Rachel |
| Joseph (49:22-26) | |
| Benjamin (49:27) | |

Jacob Speaks His Final Words to His Sons

“Then Jacob called his sons and said, ‘Gather yourselves together; that I may tell you what shall happen to you in days to come’” (49:1)

Jacob individually addressed each of his sons in groups according to their mothers: Leah (49:3-15), the handmaids Bilhah and Zilpah (49:16-21) and Rachel (49:2-27). The final words are given in poetic form and use imagery, metaphors, and analogies. The statements are described as “blessings” afterward (49:28), but they also included curses and

general truths. Like Isaac’s blessing of Jacob and Esau, the sayings contain predictive elements of the one blessed and their descendants. Judah and Joseph receive the lengthiest statements and the greatest prominence.

The wickedness of the first three sons defaulted the greatest blessing to the next one in line, who was Judah. Judah would receive praise from his brothers and victory over his enemies. His descendants would be kings and rulers over the people.

“The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples” (Gen. 49:10).

Joseph would be fruitful and strong, withstanding the attacks of his enemies. As already seen in his life, God would bless and strengthen him.

- What sin was identified for Reuben and what did it cost him?
- What sin was identified for Simeon and Levi? What would happen to them as a result?
- Judah was promised a royal family? How did his family begin according to Gen. 38?
- How many times is the word “bless” or “blessing” found in the words for Joseph?
- How was God described in the section addressed to Joseph?
- What animal metaphors are used in Jacob’s final words?
- What kind of future would Dan have?
- What was Jacob’s dying request of his children?

Return Trip to Canaan

When Jacob died, Joseph wept over his father and ordered his body to be embalmed, which would have prepared the body for burial according to Egyptian custom. Joseph then requested that Pharaoh allow him to return to Canaan to honor the oath that he had made to his father about burying his bones in his homeland. Pharaoh graciously granted his request, sending an Egyptian envoy to accompany the sons of Jacob to Canaan. With Pharaoh's blessing, Joseph returned to Canaan and buried his father in the family burial plot. Afterward, Joseph and his brothers returned to Egypt, marking the fourth trip of the family to Egypt.

- The normal mourning period for an Egyptian Pharaoh was 72 days. How long did the Egyptians mourn for Jacob? What does this say about Jacob?
- How many different times was Jacob mourned according to the text?
- What promises of God to Jacob were fulfilled in Genesis 50? See 46:3-4.

Joseph's Trust in God

After Jacob's death, Joseph's brothers feared that he would take revenge on them for selling him into slavery. They sent a message ahead to Joseph, stating their father's desire for reconciliation and requesting forgiveness. When they met, Joseph wept and the brothers bowed before him and proclaimed themselves his servants. Joseph again calmed their fear, stating that what happened to him was according to God's purpose for good.

Joseph would live out his days in Egypt, living to be 110 years old. Like his father, he requested that his bones be carried back to Canaan to be buried in the land of promise. Within his request, Joseph made a prophetic statement that would preview the coming events in Egypt:

"I am about to die, but God will visit you and bring you up out of this land to the land that he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob" (50:24)

"As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today" (Gen. 50:20)

- How did the brothers further fulfill Joseph's dreams in his youth?
- Why is it important to recognize the difference between the intentions of people and the will of God? How did this help Joseph and how can it help us today?
- Why did Joseph want his bones carried back to Canaan?
- How did Joseph show faith in God's continued activity for his family?

Genesis, Part 2

Review Questions

1. How is the book of Genesis related to the overall theme of the Bible?
2. How has God been active throughout the book of Genesis?
3. What can be seen about the nature of God's promises in Genesis?
4. How did Jacob grow and mature in his faith over the course of his life?
5. Who practiced favoritism within their family in Genesis? What was the result?
6. Why were younger giving priority over the older in Genesis? What can be learned from this theme?
7. What was a turning point for Jacob in his life? What did he learn from this experience?
8. What moral failings are mentioned of Jacob's sons?
9. How did the sin and betrayal of Joseph's brothers affect everyone involved?
10. What kind of influence did Joseph have upon those around him?
11. What examples of forgiveness can be found in Genesis? What affect did it have on the parties involved?
12. How did Joseph show faith in God throughout his life?