

A Visitor's Guide to the Old Testament

The Book of Genesis (11:27-50:26)

- I. Keep the Main Thing, the Main Thing
 - A. This is *not a history book* of the nation of Israel – in the classic definition
 - B. This is the early history of God's saving activity among the patriarchs
 1. God's grace on display
 2. The direction of the plot:
 - a. in the immediate – get us to Egypt
 - b. in the long-term – the slow revelation of God's plan to save sinners, initially given in vague terms in Genesis 3:15
 3. Foreshadowing or “setting things up”
 - a. People and plots are introduced because they will come in to play later.
 - b. God is laying a foundation (e.g. Abram/Abraham's faith training) that will be valuable in the New Testament (e.g. Paul's letter to the Romans)
- II. The People
 - A. The Big Three
 1. Abram/Abraham [Sarai/Sarah]
 2. Isaac [Rebekah]
 3. Jacob [Leah, Rachel]
 - B. Others
 1. Jacob's (and daughter!)
 2. Esau, his wives, and children
 3. Hagar and Ishmael
 4. Terah, Haran, Nahor, and Lot
 5. Melchizedek
 6. Tamar and Perez
 7. Potiphar and Pharaoh
 8. Laban

III. The Places

A. In the life of Abraham and Isaac

1. Ur of Chaldea
2. Haran
3. Canaan
4. Shechem
5. Moreh
6. Bethel
7. Negev
8. Egypt
9. Sodom and Gomorah
10. Mamre
11. The scuttle of Gen. 14
12. Salem
13. Beersheba
14. Paran
15. Moriah
16. Hebron
17. Machpelah
18. Beer Lahai Roi
19. Gerar

B. In the life of Jacob and Joseph

1. Padan Aram
2. Luz/Bethel
3. Haran
4. Gilead
5. Mizpah
6. Mahanaim
7. Seir/Edom
8. Jordan River
9. Peniel
10. Succoth
11. Shechem
12. Memre
13. Hebron
14. Dothan
15. Midian
16. Egypt
17. Timnah
18. Goshen

IV. The Plot

An Outline of the Book of Genesis

Theme: The Beginning History of God's Saving Activity

Introduction: The creation account as vital background (1:1-2:3)

I. ~~The early history of God's saving activity in the original world (2:4-11:26)~~

A. ~~The "toledoth" of heaven and earth (2:4-4:26)~~

B. ~~The "toledoth" of Adam (5:1-6:8)~~

C. ~~The "toledoth" of Noah (6:9-9:29)~~

D. ~~The "toledoth" of the Sons of Noah (10:1-11:9)~~

E. ~~The "toledoth" of Shem (11:10-26)~~

II. The early history of God's saving activity among the patriarchs (11:27-50:26)

A. The "toledoth" of Terah (11:27-25:11)

B. The "toledoth" of Ishmael (25:12-18)

C. The "toledoth" of Isaac (25:19-35:29)

D. The "toledoth" of Esau (36:1-37:1)

E. The "toledoth" of Jacob (37:2-50:26)

(Carl J. Lawrenz and John C. Jeske – *A Commentary on Genesis 1-11*, pp. 13,14)

1 Chronicles inserts into the reading of Genesis

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| • Genesis 4:1-5:32... 1 Chronicles 1:1-4 | • Genesis 36:1-43... 1 Chronicles 1:35-54 |
| • Genesis 10:1-5... 1 Chronicles 1:5-7 | • Genesis 45:1-46:9... 1 Chronicles 5:1-6 |
| • Genesis 10:6-20... 1 Chronicles 1:8-16 | • Genesis 46:10-12... 1 Chronicles 2:18-55 |
| • Genesis 10:21-11:26... 1 Chronicles 1:17-27 | • Genesis 46:10-12... 1 Chronicles 4:1-23 |
| • Genesis 25:12-18... 1 Chronicles 1:28-31 | • Genesis 46:13... 1 Chronicles 7:1-5 |
| • Genesis 25:1-4... 1 Chronicles 1:32-34 | • Genesis 46:14-8... 1 Chronicles 7:30-40 |
| • Genesis 25:5-6... 1 Chronicles 1:34 | • Genesis 46:19-25... 1 Chronicles 7:6-12 |
| • Genesis 33:1-35:29... 1 Chronicles 2:1,2 | |

Questions for the Book of Genesis (chapter 11:27-50:26)

VI. The early history of God's saving activity among the patriarchs: The "toledoth" of Terah (11:27-25:11)

1. Take a few minutes to sort out the names and events in verses 27-31. This information lays the foundation for Moses' account of Abram/Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The people and places mentioned here will play a big role in their lives. (11:27-31)
2. How does God's grace come through in each element of God's promise to Abram? (12:1-4)
 - "I will make you into a great nation."
 - "I will bless you."
 - "I will make your name great."
 - "You will be a blessing."
 - "I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse."
 - "And all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."
3. How did Abram stumble in his life of faith? Think of the promise God gave Abram. What part of the promise did Abram doubt? (12:10-20)
4. How well did Abram's plan succeed? (12:14-16)
5. How did the Lord protect Pharaoh from adultery? (12:17f)
6. Identify Abram's sin against Pharaoh . . . against Sarah . . . against God. (12:10-20)
7. What problem developed in Abram's life? (13:1-7)
8. How did Abram settle the matter? (13:8,9)
9. Lot did not choose wisely. Explain. (13:10-13)
10. What promise did the Lord reaffirm to Abram? How does this section of Scripture underline the truth of Matthew 5:5? (13:14-18)
11. Describe the terrible situation that developed in the well-watered plain where Lot chose to live. (14:1-12)
12. How did Abram show his faith on this occasion? On what promises of God (12:2,3) did Abram rely? (14:13-16)
13. Melchizedek served as God's agent in repeating God's blessing on Abram. What is significant about Abram's giving him a tenth? (14:17-20)

14. Why didn't Abram want to receive anything from the king of Sodom? (14:21-24)
15. How did Abram waver in his faith? (15:1-3)
16. How did the Lord strengthen Abram's faith? (15:1,4,5)
17. How did Abram respond to God's promise? (15:6)
18. On what one thing did Abram's faith rest? Take time to read Romans 4:19-24. (15:1-6)
19. What did God command Abram to do? What did this mean? (15:7-9)
20. Under normal conditions, Abram would have walked together with God between the pieces of the sacrificial animals. However, what does Abram do when this covenant is being ratified? (15:12-17)
21. God had promised Abram the land. Yet that promise would be fulfilled in the future. What had to happen before Abram's descendants took the land? (15:16)
22. What is different about this covenant described in verses 17-21 and ordinary covenants between two people? (This is important to us today too when we consider God's covenant with us.)
23. The Bible portrays believers as they really are—real saints and real sinners at the same time. Name at least four sinful traits that manifest themselves in the activity described in the first six verses of chapter 16. (16:1-6)
24. The angel of the Lord "found" Hagar. How is this verse a great comfort to us too? (16:7)
25. How did Hagar confess her faith? (16:8-15)
26. Isaac, the son through whom God would fulfill his promise to Abraham, would soon be born. At this point, the Lord made some changes in Abraham's life.
 - How did the Lord speak to Abraham about how he was to live? (17: 1)
 - What did the Lord do with Abram's and Sarai's names? (17:3-8; 15-16)
 - How did God set Abraham's people apart from the world? (17:11-14)
27. How serious was God's requirement that Abraham's children be circumcised? (17:14)
28. How did Abraham respond to God's promise that he and Sarah would have a son? (17:17)
29. What was it about Isaac that would cause his parents such great joy? (17:19)
30. Why did Abraham open his home to these three men? (18:1-15)
31. Why did the Lord reveal his plans to Abraham? (18:16-21)

32. Who was crying out against Sodom and Gomorrah? (18:20)
33. Describe Abraham's prayer and how it was answered? (18:22-33)
34. The angels went down to Sodom and Gomorrah. Their mission was to save Lot. How did they witness Lot's faith? How did they personally witness the wickedness of the city? (19:1-11)
35. How did the angels save Lot and his family? (19:12-22)
36. Lot's future sons-in-law thought he was only joking. Lot himself hesitated to go. Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt. In the end Lot was saved. But what difficulties had he brought on himself for choosing to live in a place like Sodom? (19)
37. What's the point of the sordid story between Lot and his daughters? (19:30-38)
38. What does it tell you about Abraham that he did the same thing here as he did in chapter 12? What does it tell you about God? (20)
39. How did Abimelech find out he was planning to marry a married woman? (20:3f)
40. According to God, who was guilty? (20:6f)
41. How did Abraham underestimate the people of Gerar? (20:8-18)
42. Note Abraham's statement about the request he made of Sarah when they left Haran (verse 13). What insight does this give us into Abraham's level of spiritual growth at this time? (20:13)
43. How do the first two verses of chapter 21 set our focus on God? (21:1,2)
44. Why did Sarah tell Abraham to send Hagar and Ishmael away? How did the Lord help him do this difficult thing? (21:8-13)
45. Read Galatians 4:21-31. How does this section help us understand what was going on in this section of Genesis chapter 21?
46. One of the elements of God's promise to Abraham was that God would make his name great. How do verses 22-32 show one way God fulfilled that part of his promise? (21:22-32)
47. How did Abraham respond to the Lord's command? (22:3)
48. When they were not far from Moriah, Abraham told his servants to wait there while he and Isaac went to worship. In what sense would Abraham worship God on Mount Moriah? (22:5-8)
49. It would be difficult to take a knife to his own son. Yet there was an even more difficult aspect to God's test. What was that? Read Hebrews 11:17-19 if you need help with your answer.
50. In what ways did Abraham pass this test? (22:8-14)

51. God said to Abraham, "I will surely bless you . . . because you have obeyed me." In your own words, reconcile this statement with Genesis 15:6, that Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness. Explain how God would say the same thing about us. (22:15f)
52. Describe the negotiations between Abraham and Ephron. (23:3-20)
53. Why is the purchase of a burial ground for Sarah a testimony to Abraham's faith in God and his promises? (23:1-20)
54. What were the two things the servant was not to do in finding a wife for Isaac? Why was each prohibition important? (24:1-9)
55. Describe the wisdom of Abraham's servant
 - in how he began his quest. (24:12)
 - in the "condition" that had to be met by the woman. (24:14)
 - in how he responded when God blessed his mission. (24:26)
 - in how he reported the matter to Rebekah's family. (24:34-49, especially 49)
56. Describe how God, for the sake of his promise, showed Abraham and Isaac mercy
 - in how he met the servant's condition. (24:15)
 - in how he opened the hearts of Bethuel's family. (24:25-31)
 - in how he opened Rebekah's heart. (24:58)
57. Why did Abraham make a distinction between Isaac and his other sons? (25:5,6)

VII. The early history of God's saving activity among the patriarchs: The "toledoth" of Ishmael (25:12-18)

1. Why does Moses relate this seemingly insignificant "toledoth"? (25:12-18)
2. How is the line of Ishmael a fulfillment of God's promises to Abram/Abraham?

VIII. The early history of God's saving activity among the patriarchs: The "toledoth" of Isaac (25:19-35:29)

1. Sarah had been barren, and now Rebekah was barren. How did God use this for the spiritual good of the patriarchs and their families? (25:21)
2. Describe the struggle between Jacob and Esau (25:22-34)
 - in their mother's womb.
 - at the time of their delivery.

- once when Esau came in hungry from hunting.
3. Whenever there was a famine in the land, it was tempting for people to go down to Egypt. The Nile flowed from high in the mountains of central Africa and provided a dependable source of water. Why didn't the Lord want Isaac to go down to Egypt? What promise did the Lord give Isaac to help him fight the temptation to go there? (26:1,2)
 4. What great blessing did the Lord give Isaac? (26:3,4)
 5. What did Isaac that paralleled Abraham's actions in Egypt? (26:7-11; chapter 12)
 6. Why did Isaac move away from the Philistines at their request? (Hint: Consider what Abimelech said about how powerful Isaac was.) (26:12-18)
 7. How did Isaac deal with the envy and hostility of the herdsmen living in the Valley of Gerar who kept stealing his wells? (26:19-23)
 8. What assurance did God give Isaac in verse 24? How did Isaac respond? (26:24,25)
 9. How did the Lord bless Isaac's loving and patient way of dealing with Abimelech? (26:26-35)
 10. Read the account. Then focus on each person and discuss what that person might have been thinking which led to his or her actions. (27)
 - Isaac
 - Rebekah
 - Esau
 - Jacob
 11. Compare the blessing Isaac gave to Jacob with the blessing God gave to Abraham (Genesis 12:2,3). What is different? What is the same? (27:28-29)
 12. Evaluate the blessing God gave to Esau. Esau was the father of the Edomites. From what you know about the Edomites, show how this prophecy came true. (27:39-40)
 13. Esau couldn't win. He threatened to kill Jacob and stirred Rebekah into action. She told Jacob to flee to her hometown. Then she urged Isaac to send Jacob away. What was the reason she gave Isaac for why Jacob should go to Paddan Aram? (27:46)
 14. Isaac's demeanor and tone seem to have changed. Between the time when he mistakenly blessed Jacob and now, Isaac must have thought the matter through carefully. He must have realized his mistake and accepted God's way of making sure the right person got the blessing. How does this come through in Isaac's parting blessing to Jacob? (28:1-5)
 15. How did Esau try to make up for his poor choice in wives? Did he succeed? (28:6-9)

16. Describe the dream Jacob had. How did God strengthen Jacob? How did Jacob respond? (28:10-22)
17. This place would become significant in the life of Jacob and the Israelites. What name did Jacob give to it? (28:19)
18. How did Jacob make his splash among his relatives? (29:1-13)
19. Whom did Jacob choose as his wife? (29:14-21)
20. At this point, God began to discipline Jacob. Jacob had a crafty, dishonest streak in him. God let Jacob taste a bit of his own medicine. There is an uncanny similarity between the account of Jacob deceiving his father and Laban's deception of him. Can you see the similarities? (29:22f)
21. Note that all the names were in some way related to the struggle between Rachel and Leah and their desire to have Jacob's love. It is sad that so much trouble came into the life of the patriarch. How did the struggles between Jacob's wives parallel Jacob's own life? What may the Lord have been trying to teach him? (29:31-30:24)
22. How did Jacob fare while under Laban's "employ"? (30:25-43)
23. Evaluate Laban's attitude in verses 1,2; 25-30; 43,44; and 48-53. Do you think Jacob was justified in running away from Laban? (Read Jacob's response to Laban in verses 36-46 for information on what Laban had done to Jacob. Also note Laban's household gods.)
24. "Mizpah necklaces", two heart-halves that can be put together, are popular between friends. How does the true account of what occurred at Mizpah tell a different story? (31:44f)
25. Why did the Lord allow angels to appear to Jacob? (32:1,2)
26. How did Jacob react to what might be Esau's final act of revenge? (32:13-21)
27. Evaluate Jacob's prayer. (32:9-12) Compare this prayer to his earlier prayer at Bethel (28:20-22).
 - On what did Jacob base his prayer?
 - What was Jacob's attitude about himself and his right to pray?
 - What did he confess about God's grace?
 - What did he ask God to do for him?
28. Why did the Lord change Jacob's name to Israel? (32:22-32)
29. How did Jacob display a spirit of love and concern for his family when they went to meet Esau? (33:1-8)
30. Over the last 20 years, Jacob had become a humble man. Yet human characteristics of God's people linger on even as they grow in faith. Jacob had learned to rely on the

Lord, yet shrewd and crafty behavior was still his way of dealing with things. Explain the cleverness of each of Jacob's actions. (33:8-17)

- Jacob insisted that Esau take his gift.
 - Jacob told Esau to go on ahead and he would follow, moving as quickly as his people and animals would allow.
 - Jacob refused to let Esau give him an envoy to protect him.
 - Although Jacob said he would go south to Seir, he turned west and went to Shechem.
31. How did Jacob's purchase of land at Shechem show his belief and trust in God and his promises? (33:18-20)
 32. What do you think of Shechem's feelings toward Dinah? (34:1-12)
 33. Describe the sons' plan. (34:13-24)
 34. What horrible use did the sons of Jacob make of God's covenant of circumcision? (34:25-31)
 35. It's hard to think that Jacob was justified in waiting so long to go to Bethel. It is also hard to imagine that Jacob forgot his promise. From verses 2-4, what might have been the reason why Jacob did not immediately go to Bethel? (35:2-4)
 36. Jacob fulfilled his promise. At this point (verse 9), the Lord reaffirmed his promise to Jacob. He also reaffirmed his name change. Why do you think the Lord chose this time and place to give Jacob these blessings? (35:9f)
 37. What is the significance of the place at which Rachel passed away and was buried? (35:16f)
 38. What sin did Reuben commit? The sin may have involved more than sexual lust. What might Reuben have been attempting to do by sleeping with his father's concubine? [Hint: Another son, a son of David, did a similar thing when he usurped his father's throne.] (35:22)
 39. List Jacob's sons... who end up being the patriarchs of the Twelve Tribes of Israel. (35:23-26)
 40. What appears to have happened between Esau and Jacob? (35:29)

IX. The early history of God's saving activity among the patriarchs: The "toledoth" of Esau (36:1-37:1)

1. What promise to Abraham is fulfilled in the enumeration of Esau's lineage? (36)
2. We know little more about Esau's family history other than what is outlined in this chapter. What does this say about Esau's disparaging of his birthright? Why does Moses not give us more about Esau's family history? (36)

X. The early history of God's saving activity among the patriarchs: The "toledoth" of Jacob (37:2-50:26)

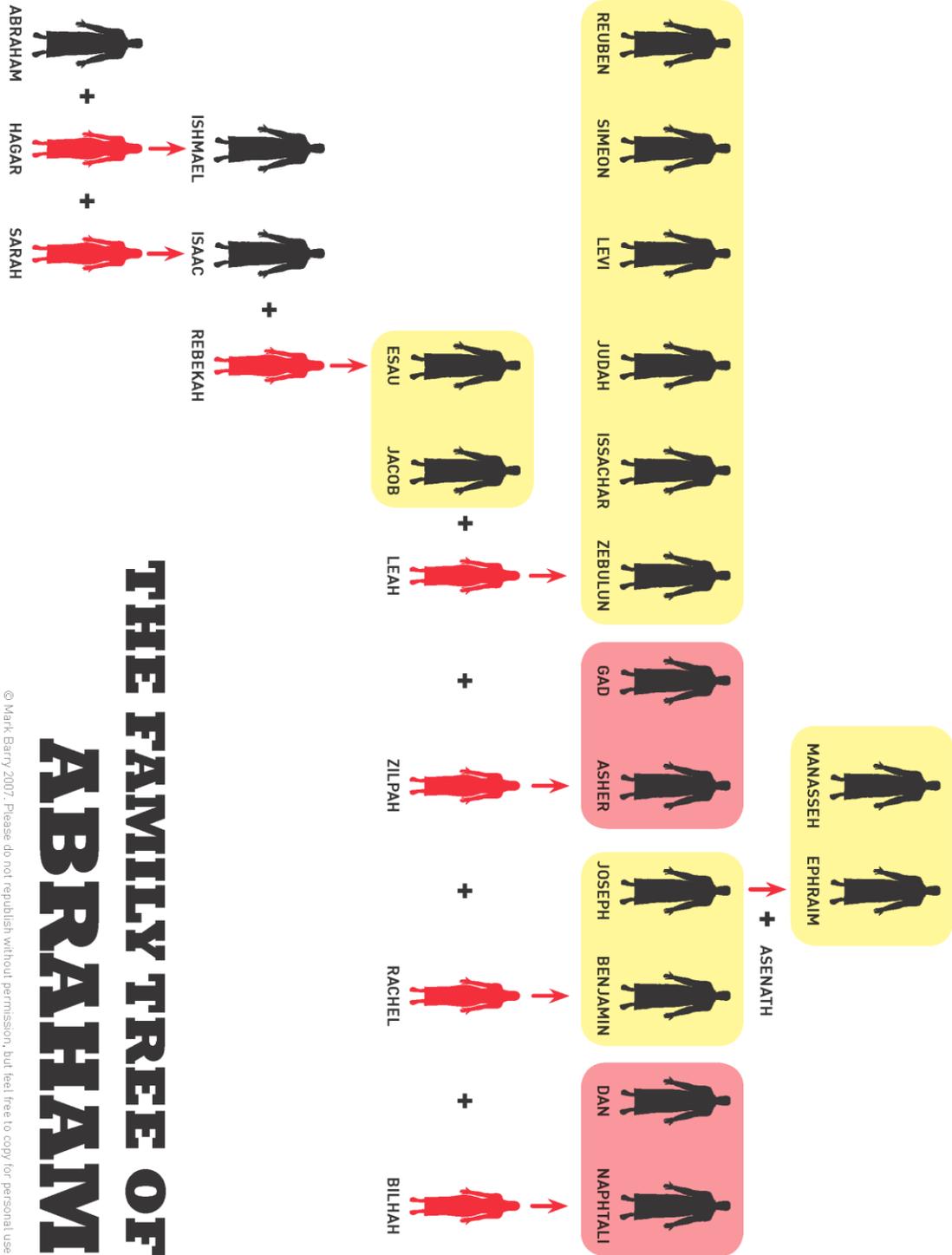
1. Describe some of the relationships and activities that went on in Jacob's family that contributed to the problems they faced. (37)
2. Describe Joseph's dreams. What was the obvious meaning of these dreams? (37:1-11)
3. How did the brothers retaliate? (37:12-36)
4. Look at each of these names and tell the story based on the roles these people played. (38)
 - Judah:
 - Hiram the Adullamite:
 - Shua:
 - Tamar:
 - Er:
 - Onan:
 - Shela:
 - Zerah:
 - Perez:
5. Why do you think we are told this story about Judah?
6. Chapters 39 and 40 tell us how God prepared Joseph for his future. Looking ahead, we see that God will call Joseph to save the world from starvation by administering a huge food-gathering project. Name as many ways as you can in which God prepared Joseph.
7. What example does Joseph give us in dealing with temptation? (39:6-10)
8. Relate the dreams of the cupbearer and the baker. What did each one mean and how was it fulfilled? (40)
9. What is the first thing Joseph confessed before he interpreted the dream for Pharaoh? (41:16)
10. How did Joseph's stay in prison further God's plans for Joseph? How did it further Joseph's preparedness to undertake this mission? (40,41)
11. Relate Pharaoh's dreams. What did each mean? (41:22f)
12. What did Joseph advise Pharaoh to do? What was at stake? (41:33f)

13. What did Pharaoh do for Joseph? (41:39f)
14. How old was Joseph when he became leader in Egypt? What does this tell you about God's power to work in hearts and minds? (41:46f)
15. Spend some time discussing the sequence of events, and then analyze what happened. (42)
16. Joseph accused the brothers of being spies. How did this "set up" what Joseph was trying to accomplish? (42:8f)
17. Joseph put the brothers' money back in their sacks. Why? (42:25f)
18. This is the first time we have seen something positive and good about the character of Judah. Why are his words to his father more noble than Reuben's words at the end of the previous chapter? (43:8f)
19. Joseph invited the brothers to his home. They thought he was going to punish them for the silver. What happened, instead? (43:17f)
20. How do the brothers begin to show that their attitudes have changed? (43:34)
21. When Joseph's steward accused the brothers of theft, Judah spoke up. Judah himself set the penalty if someone was found to have the cup: death. What happened, however? (44:10, 17)
22. There was no way out. "Go home. Leave Benjamin here," Joseph said. Judah responded with one of the most beautiful requests in Scripture. What parts of Judah's response do you think Joseph was looking for? What part do you think moved him the most? (44:18f)
23. Why could Joseph now tear off the "mask" that he had been wearing? (45:1-3)
24. Why did Joseph call the brother's attention to the fact that God had caused everything to happen as it did? (45:4f)
25. In verses 7 and 11, Joseph looked at the long-range blessing God brought about by sending him down to Egypt. What blessing was that? (45:7,11)
26. Why might Jacob have been reluctant to go down to Egypt? What did the Lord promise? (46:1-7)
27. How would the Israelites' occupation help isolate them from the corrupting influence of the Egyptians? (46:26-34)
28. Jacob said that his years had been "few and difficult." Discuss what had made his life difficult. (47:1-12)
29. Compare what Jacob says here with what he says later in Genesis 48:15,16.
30. Twice Jacob blessed Pharaoh. What does that tell you about Jacob's greatness relative to Pharaoh's greatness? (47)

31. How was Egypt's economy permanently altered at this time? (47:13-26)
32. What faithful action do we see Jacob involved in at the end of this chapter? (47:31)
33. Jacob blessed the two sons of Joseph by faith. In what did he have faith? (48:3,4)
34. Recall that Reuben, the firstborn, had slept with his father's wife Bilhah. He lost the right of the firstborn, the double portion that was customarily given to the firstborn. Who received the double portion and how did he receive it? (48:12f)
35. Why did Jacob cross his hands when he blessed Ephraim and Manasseh? (48:19f)
36. Not only did Joseph receive a double portion, but his double portion would be even greater than a mere twofold blessing. Explain. (48:20-22)
37. Look at each blessing and write a short statement that reflects what Jacob said to each son. Sometimes it is easy to see how the prophecy was fulfilled. Sometimes we can't be sure. (49:1-27)
 - Reuben (Leah)
 - Simeon and Levi (Leah)
 - Judah (Leah)
 - Zebulun (Leah)
 - Issachar (Leah)
 - Dan (Bilhah)
 - Gad (Zilpah)
 - Asher (Zilpah)
 - Naphtali (Bilhah)
 - Joseph (Rachel)
 - Benjamin (Rachel)
38. Why was the cave of Machpelah a very important piece of real estate? (49:39-50:14)
39. Why did Joseph weep when the message from his brothers came to him? Why did the brothers appeal to their father's request to Joseph and not to what they themselves wanted? (50:15-17)
40. Read Hebrews 11:22. What does Joseph tell us about his faith by the instructions he gave his brothers when he was about to die? (50:25)

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GENESIS 12-25 GENESIS 16-35 GENESIS 25-49 GENESIS 29-50 GENESIS 41



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THE FAMILY TREE OF ABRAHAM

SONS OF JACOB GENESIS 49

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"Reuben, you are my firstborn, my might, the first sign of my strength, ... turbulent as the waters." [3-4]



REUBEN

"Simeon and Levi are brothers—their swords are weapons of violence." [5]



SIMEON

"Simeon and Levi are brothers—their swords are weapons of violence." [5]



LEVI

"You are a lion's cub, Judah ... The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet" [9-10]



JUDAH

"Zebulun will live by the seashore and become a haven for ships." [13]



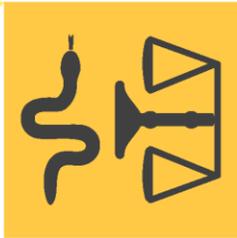
ZEBULUN

"Issachar is a rawnboned donkey lying down among the sheep pens." [14]



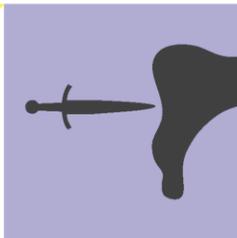
ISSACHAR

"Dan will provide justice for his people ... a snake by the roadside, a viper along the path." [16-17]



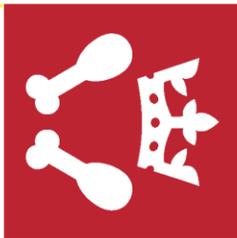
DAN

"Gad will be attacked by a band of raiders, but he will attack them at their heels." [19]



GAD

"Asher's food will be rich; he will provide delicacies fit for a king." [20]



ASHER

"Naphthali is a doe set free that bears beautiful fawns." [21]



NAPHTALI

"Joseph is a fruitful vine ... archers attacked him ... But his bow remained steady." [22-24]



JOSEPH

"Benjamin is a ravenous wolf." [27]



BENJAMIN