

God's Promise of Blessing and Life

26 SEP – 2 OCT 2017

GE 25–50

Week 2 --- 48 Weeks to Go

God blesses by bringing life. In Abraham and Sarah's old age, they are blessed with a son, Isaac. Through the experience of Abraham's offspring (the Israelites), God shows great love and His faithfulness to humanity. But God also demands that humanity live in accordance with God's expectations – to restore the image of God in their lives. The relationship between God and God's chosen people is described. We see examples of obedience, peace and prosperity, but also see times of disobedience, punishment and suffering. People are called to repent (turn back to God). The importance of obedience and repentance are overarching themes of these readings, as well as themes of the entire Bible.

Weekly Reading Plan

Day 1: GE 25:1—27:46
Day 2: GE 28:1—30:43
Day 3: GE 31:1—32:32
Day 4: GE 33:1—36:43
Day 5: GE 37:1-41:56
Day 6: GE 42:1-46:34
Day 7: GE 47:1-50:26

Outline

The Close of Abraham's Life (Days 1-4)
The Life of Isaac (Day 1)
The Life of Jacob (Days 1-4)
The Life of Joseph (Days 5-6)
Jacob Enters Egypt (Day 7)

Key Characters

Abraham	Ishmael
Isaac	Rebekah
Jacob (Israel)	Esau
Abimalek	Laban
Leah	Rachel
Zilpah	Dinah
Judah	Tamar
Jacob's Sons	Joseph

Key Locations

Canaan
Land of the Philistines
Beersheba
Harran
Moriah
Hebron
Bethel
Edom
Upper Mesopotamia
Egypt

Key Terms

Covenant, promise, swear
Blessing
Descendants, offspring
Land (Canaan)
Sacrifice
Birthright

Key Verses

Lift the boy up and take him by the hand, for I will make him into a great nation [GE 21:18]

And through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me [GE 22:18]

I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and will give them all these lands, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed [GE 26:4]

But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance [GE 45:7]

You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. [GE 50:20]

EPOCH 2
(2000-1500 BC)

Chapter Summaries (from @biblesummary)

GE25: Abraham died and was buried with Sarah. Isaac and Rebekah had twins: Esau and Jacob. Esau sold his birthright to Jacob for a meal.

GE26: In Gerar Isaac lied about Rebekah. He grew so rich that Abimelech sent him away. He dug wells, and at Beersheba the LORD blessed him.

GE27: Rebekah and Jacob tricked Isaac into giving Jacob his blessing. Esau vowed revenge so Rebekah told Jacob to go to her brother Laban.

GE28: Isaac sent Jacob to marry one of Laban's daughters. On the way Jacob dreamed of a ladder reaching to heaven and the LORD blessed him.

GE29: Jacob worked for Laban seven years to marry Rachel, but Laban gave him Leah and made him work seven more for Rachel. Leah had sons.

GE30: Rachel's maid had sons for Jacob, then Leah's maid, then Leah. Finally Rachel had a son. Laban allowed Jacob flocks as wages to stay.

GE31: The Lord told Jacob to return home. Jacob left in secret and Rachel took Laban's idols. Laban chased Jacob but they made a treaty.

GE32: Jacob heard that Esau was coming to meet him. He was afraid and sent gifts. That night he wrestled with a man who renamed him Israel.

GE33: Esau and his men arrived. Jacob bowed down but Esau ran to embrace him. Jacob settled near Shechem and built an altar.

GE34: Shechem raped Jacob's daughter and asked to marry her. Jacob's sons told him to circumcise his men, then Simeon and Levi killed them.

GE35: Jacob went to Bethel and God renamed him Israel. They journeyed on. Rachel died having Israel's twelfth son. Isaac died in Hebron.

GE36: Esau's sons were Eliphaz, Reuel, Jeush, Jalam and Korah. Esau and his family moved away to Seir. They became the Edomites.

GE37: Joseph was Israel's favorite son. He had dreams and his brothers were jealous so they sold him. He was bought by Potiphar in Egypt.

Chapter Summaries (from @biblesummary)

GE38: Judah's sons Er and Onan died, leaving Tamar a widow. Judah sent her away but she put on a veil and he slept with her. She had twins.

GE39: Potiphar put Joseph in charge of his house. His wife tried to seduce Joseph, then lied about it, so Potiphar put Joseph in prison.

GE40: Pharaoh put his cupbearer and baker in prison. Joseph interpreted their dreams. The cupbearer was restored but the baker was hanged.

GE41: Pharaoh had a dream and called for Joseph to interpret it. The dream predicted a famine. Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of all Egypt.

GE42: Joseph's brothers went to Egypt to buy grain but didn't recognize him. He kept Simeon in prison and sent the rest to fetch Benjamin.

GE43: When the grain ran out, Joseph's brothers went back to Egypt with Benjamin. Joseph invited them to his house and gave them a feast.

GE44: Joseph hid his cup in Benjamin's sack, then sent a steward after his brothers. Judah offered himself as a slave instead of Benjamin.

GE45: Joseph told his brothers who he was. They were afraid, but he told them, "God sent me here." His brothers went to fetch their father.

GE46: So Israel set out with all his household. God told him not to be afraid. Israel and all his family came to Egypt and Joseph met him.

GE47: Pharaoh allowed Joseph's family to settle in Goshen. The famine continued and the Egyptians sold all they had to Pharaoh for food.

GE48: Jacob became ill, so Joseph took his sons to see him. Jacob blessed Joseph's sons as his own, putting Ephraim ahead of Manasseh.

GE49: Jacob gathered his sons and blessed each of them. He charged them to bury him with Abraham in the cave in Canaan, and then he died.

GE50: Pharaoh allowed Joseph to go and bury Jacob. Before Joseph died, he said that God would lead his people back to the Promised Land.

Jacob flees Esau and goes to Haran

[Genesis 25:21-33:18]

Jacob took advantage of Esau's hunger and bought Esau's "birthright" in exchange for a bowl of food and he tricked his father (Isaac) into giving him the blessing that should have belonged to Esau. Jacob, fearing Esau's anger, fled to Haran (to the home of his relatives there) for safety.

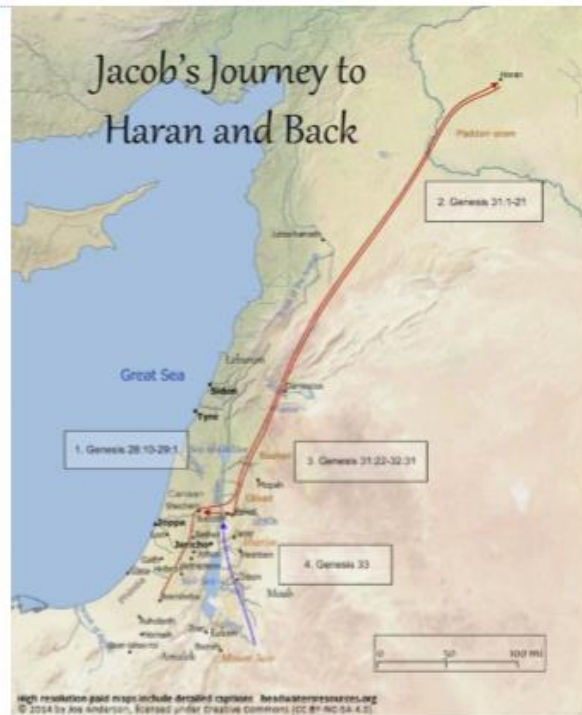
In Haran, Jacob married Leah then Rachel. Jacob stayed in Haran for 20 years and fathered 11 sons by his 2 wives and their 2 servants.

Jacob and his wives and children left Haran and returned to Canaan in time to see Isaac before he died.

On the way back to Canaan Jacob wrestled with God one night and God changed his name to Israel.

Esau left Canaan and settled in the land southeast of the Dead Sea (Edom). His descendants became the Edomites.

Esau's grandson was Amalek who settled in the land southwest of the Dead Sea (Amalek). His descendants became the Amalekites.



Joseph is taken to Egypt

[Genesis 35:16-45:24]

Israel favored his 11th son, Joseph, because he was the first son born to his favorite wife (Rachel)

Israel's 10 other sons became jealous of their much younger brother and sold him to traders who were traveling through Canaan on their way to Egypt.

Joseph was taken to Egypt and, as a result of wisdom given to him by God, became a powerful official in the Pharaoh's court

Joseph warned the Pharaoh that a major famine was coming and that for 7 years Egypt should store up reserves of food.

Joseph married an Egyptian woman and had 2 sons: Ephraim and Manasseh

Back in Canaan, Rachel gave birth to Israel's 12th son (Benjamin) but died in childbirth.



Lieber, D. (1994). *Bible 101 getting the big picture*. From a class presented at Solana Beach Presbyterian Church in 1994.

Israel's family moves to Egypt

[Genesis 45:25—50:26]

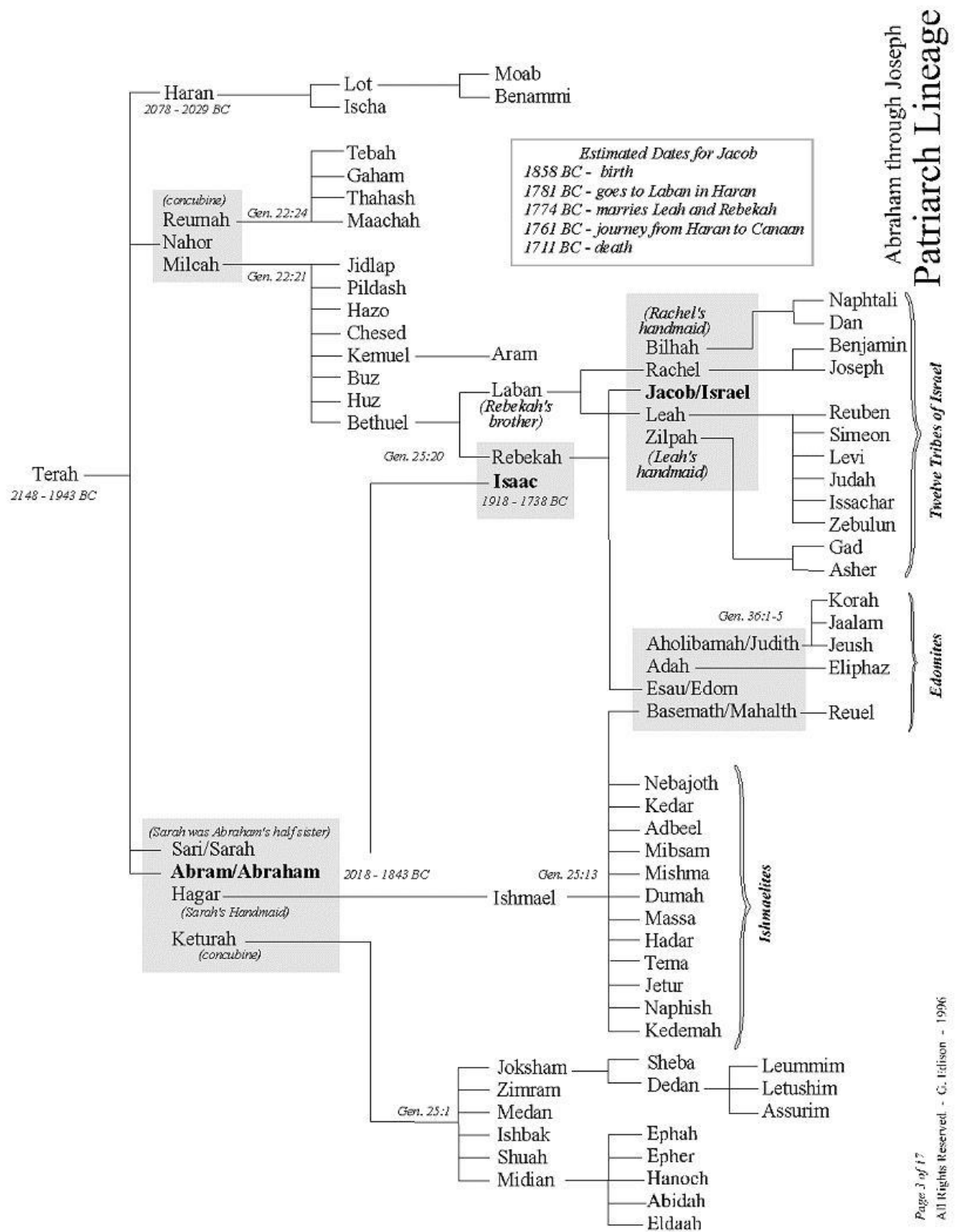
Israel and the 11 sons who were with him in Canaan (and their wives and children) eventually experienced the famine that Joseph had warned the Pharaoh of Egypt about.

After several rough years, Israel and his sons and their families traveled to Egypt to be with Joseph and to receive some of the food that had been stored up there.

For several generations Israel and his descendants (the Israelites) were welcomed guests of the Pharaohs of Egypt. They settled in the fertile Goshen region of Egypt and became quite numerous.



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WEEK 2 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What did I learn about God?

- Through the experiences of Abraham and his family, what do we learn about the way God treats us when we are obedient? When we are fearful? When we are wayward?
- God changed a deceiver into one favored; he chose a younger son over the older. What does this say about God and God's purpose? Who does God bless?
- Why do you think God chose to wrestle with Jacob? Why did God wrench Jacob's hip?
- What ways do you see God taking things intended for harm and turning them to good?

What did I learn about human nature?

- Esau made several terrible choices. He traded his birthright to his birthright for a bowl of stew, chose wives from the pagan peoples of the world and he moved away from his family. . Can our desire for something be so strong that we give up a blessing for the rest of our life to fulfill an immediate desire? Where do we see people today who are seeking immediate pleasure/satisfaction instead of seeking longer term blessing?
- Jacob was a schemer (steals Esau's birthright and blessing, increases his flocks at Laban's expense). What do his deceptive actions reveal about his true character and his trust in (or his relationship with) God?
- There are many broken relationships in this week's reading (Jacob and Esau, Jacob and Laban, Joseph and his brothers). What caused these problems? What do these examples tell us about how to deal with relationship issues?

What did I learn about my life/relationship with God?

- Can you be patient and wait for God's timing in delivering His promises and blessings? In what ways do we try to take control to "help" God fulfill his promises?
- Abraham found the meaning of his life to be serving God – he sought to make God his love, his life's focus and to bring God pleasure. What tends to distract us from God?
- When you meet with success, are you more likely to soak it in and be proud, deflect it with ungratefulness, or reflect it to its true source (God)? Do you react differently in different kinds of situations (work, with family, with friends, in competitions)?
- How have you best gained insight into who you are and what purpose you have? Through struggles? pain? blessings? disappointment?

Shared Time/Culture Insights

- In antiquity, both the birthright and the blessing were of vital importance. What does Jacob mean to achieve through his trickery? How did God use Jacob to fulfill His purpose?
- Abraham and his family lived amidst cultures that had many gods and idols. Joseph lived in Egypt who had their own gods. How did Abraham's family maintain their faithfulness. How is this similar to coping in the secular world we live in today?

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Notes for Discussion

What did I learn about God?

What did I learn about human nature?

How does what I read apply to my life and my relationship with God?

Insights about the time and/or customs?

Other thoughts