

THE STUDY OF

GENESIS

"IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED
THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH."

Pagan Praise and the Promise

Genesis 38

THE REDEMPTION STORY: FROM GENESIS TO JESUS

- The Bible is one beautiful story of Jesus and redemption (Ephesians 1:7-10)
- Scripture presents a purposeful narrative revealing God's redemptive plan (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Big Picture

- Redeemer/Seed Hunt Gen. 3:15; 12:1-3 (There is one Hero... Jesus)
- Past promises point to future faithfulness, different times - same Lord
- Continuity — From Abraham to Christ (Heb 11:13–16; Gal 3:29)

v.1 The Camera Cut: Judah Steps Away

1. “At that time...” → parallel timeline with Joseph (Gen 37:36 - Gen 39:1–2)
2. Judah leaves his brothers → family begins to splinter

3. Adullam (Canaanite town; Judah “goes down”) → a geographic move that signals spiritual drift
4. Judah befriends Hirah the Adullamite (Canaanite network)
5. Judah = יהודה (Yehûdāh) → “praise / thanksgiving” (Gen 29:35)

v.2-5- Assimilation: Marriage into Canaan

1. Abraham's fear: do not take a Canaanite wife (Gen 24:3–4)
2. Isaac's command: (Gen 28:1)

v.6-10 God Intervenes

1. Two sons die under divine judgment
(Gen 38:7, 10)
2. Levirate duty assumed; widow
protection at stake (Deut 25:5–6)
3. Onan's sin is not just sexual but
exploitation without responsibility

v.11-23 - Identity Traded for Appetite

1. Tamar = תָּמָר (Tāmār) → “date palm”
(often a symbol of beauty/flourishing)
2. Signet/cord/staff = legal identity & authority (Gen 38:18)
3. Sin enslaves (ruled by “god is their belly”) (John 8:34; Phil 3:19)

v.24-26 - Identity Traded for Appetite

1. Adultery/punishment: Deut 22:21;
Lev 21:9
2. Prohibition of father-in-law relations
later explicit: Lev 18:15
3. Theme: God opposes hypocrisy, gives
grace to humbled: Prov 28:13; Jas 4:6

v.27-30 - Identity Traded for Appetite

1. Perez = פֶּרֶץ (Peretz) → “breach / breakthrough”
2. Zerah = זֶרַח (Zerah) → “rising / dawning”
3. Scarlet thread imagery becomes a salvation-echo later in Scripture

4. Twin struggle echo: Gen 25:22–23
(Jacob/Esau)
5. Perez treated as firstborn in Judah's
clans: Num 26:20
6. Ruth blesses Boaz: “house like Perez”
+ genealogy: Ruth 4:12, 18–22
7. Messiah line: Matt 1:3; Luke 3:33

The genealogy matters: grace not merit

1. “made himself of no reputation” “but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant...” (Philippians 2:7)

2. Ruth 4 explicitly links Tamar → Perez
→ David’s line.

3. Matt. 1:3 Tamar; Luke 3:33 Perez

Takeaway 1 - Trade Appetite for Identity

Your identity is not your cravings; it's your calling.

Action: Name one appetite (approval, comfort, lust, control, escapism) that competes with your identity in Christ, and take one concrete step this week to starve it and feed holiness (Matt. 5:8; Phil. 3:19–20).

Takeaway 2 - Protect the Vulnerable, Don't Exploit Them

Action: Ask, “Who is vulnerable around me?”—widowed, single parent, financially strained, lonely, new believer, teen, marginalized. Choose one person/family and move toward them with practical help and consistent presence (James 1:27; Psalm 68:5).

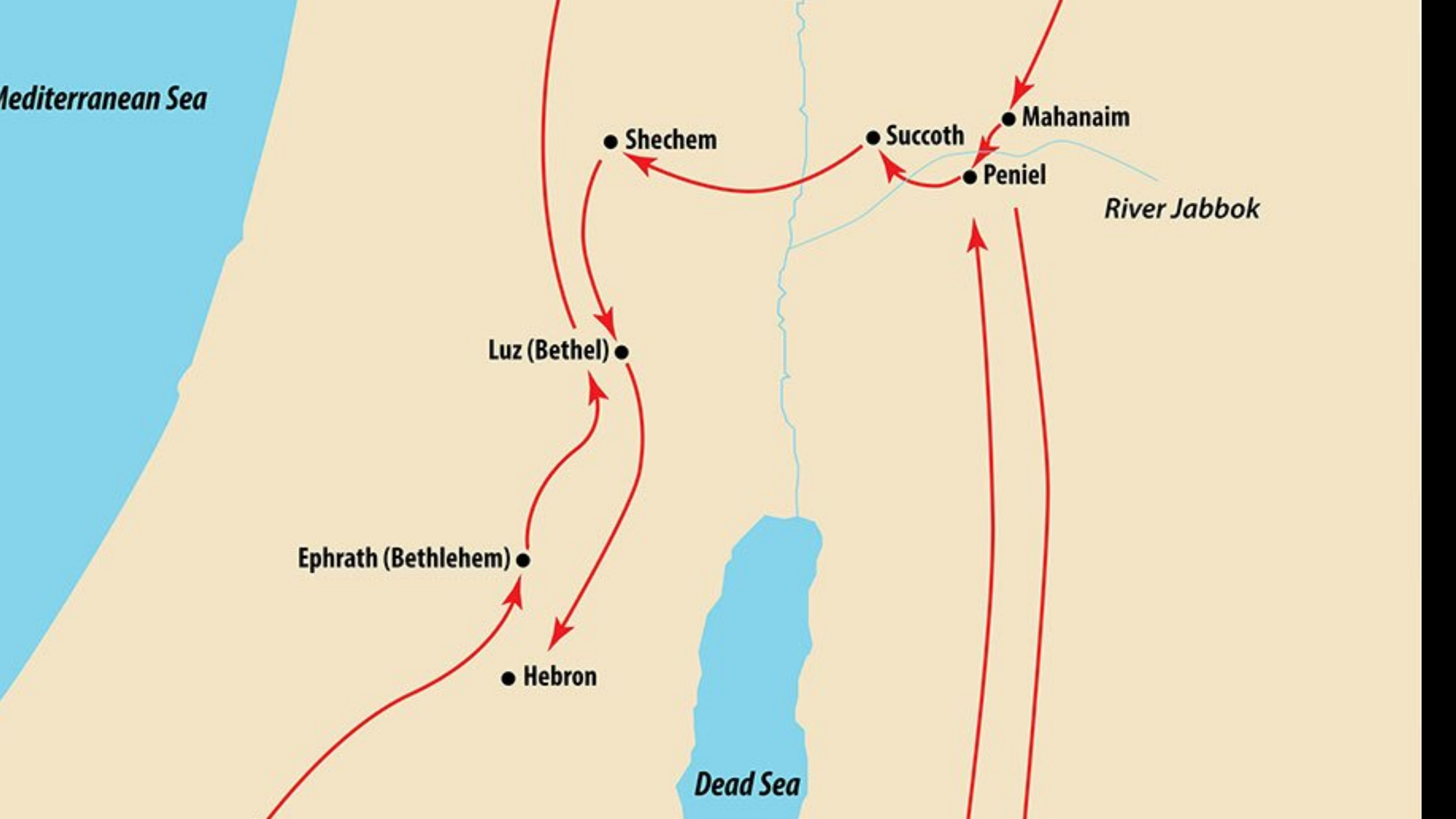
Takeaway 3 - Confess Quickly, Repent Deeply, Walk Forward Humbly

Action:

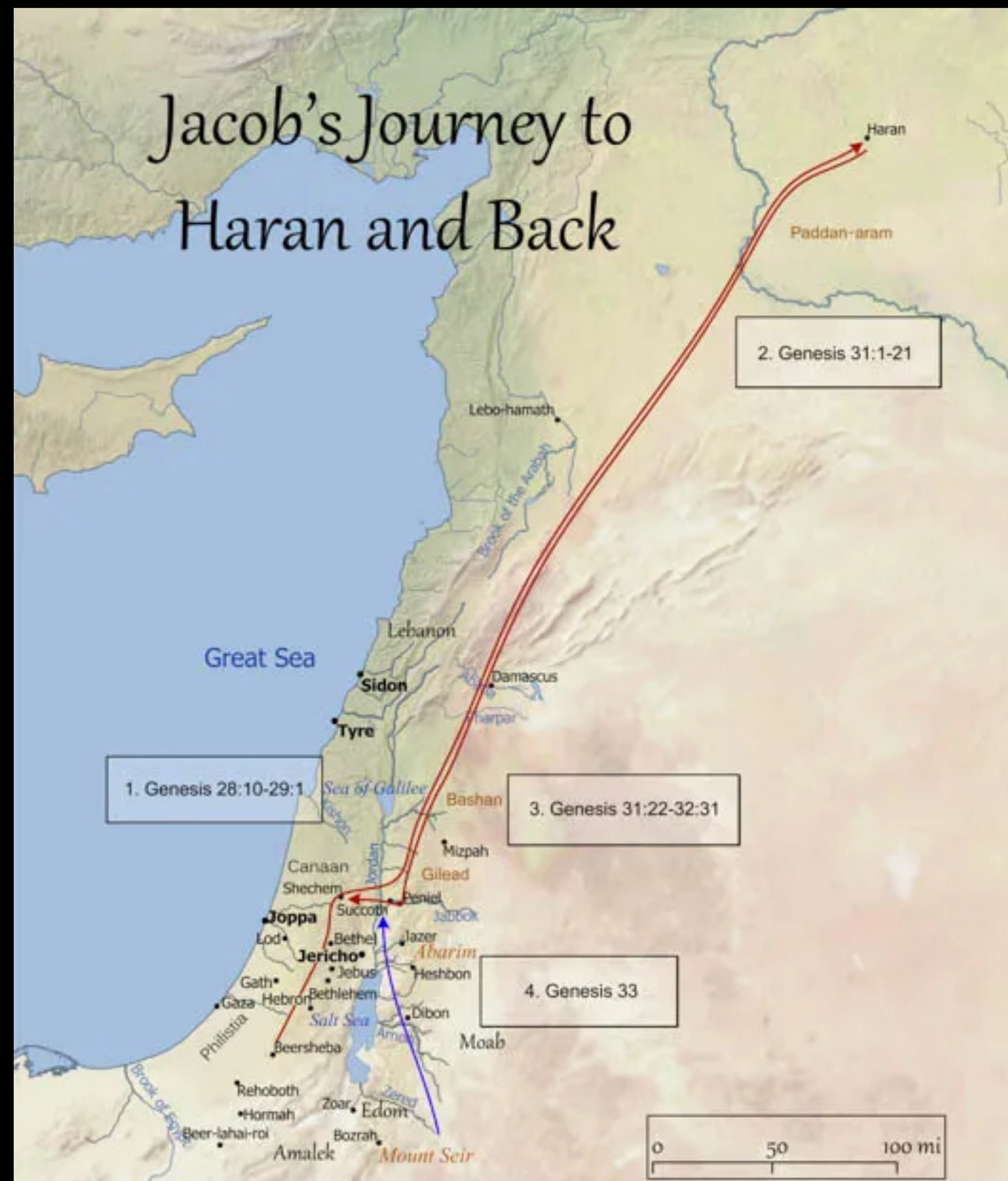
Make one confession this week—first to God (1 John 1:9), then to the appropriate person (James 5:16). Don't protect your image; pursue integrity. Confession is the doorway to freedom.

Resources/ Bibliography:

1. Carson, D. A., et al., eds. New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition. 4th ed. Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994. (Entry by Gordon J. Wenham on Genesis).
2. Francisco, Clyde T. "Genesis." In The Teacher's Bible Commentary, edited by H. Franklin Paschall and Herschel H. Hobbs. Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1972.
3. Guzik, David. "Genesis 38: Tamar and the Sin of Judah." (Study notes / commentary; 2018 notice in excerpt).
4. Jamieson, Robert; Fausset, A. R.; Brown, David. Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible. Vol. 1. Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997 (reprint / digital edition).
5. Longman III, Tremper. "Genesis." In The Baker Illustrated Bible Background Commentary, edited by J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2020. (Includes Walton material cited in excerpt).
6. Sailhamer, John H. NIV Bible Study Commentary. Kindle ed. (Excerpted section "Judah and Tamar (38:1–30)").
7. Sailhamer, John H. The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary. Kindle ed. (Excerpted pages 209–210).
8. Walton, John H. "Genesis." In Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Old Testament, Vol. 1. (Referenced in excerpt as ZIBBCOT 1:125–26; cited through Longman/Baker excerpt).
9. Wiersbe, Warren W. Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1993. (Outline section Ge 38–39).
10. Alter, Robert. (You referenced his discussion of the seal/cylinder and identity function. If you want it formally cited, tell me which Alter volume/edition you're using—e.g., The Five Books of Moses—and I'll format it precisely.)
11. <https://bibleproject.com/videos/genesis-1-11/>



Jacob's Journey to Haran and Back



HEAT - THORNS - CROSS - FRUIT

Heat = pressure, trials, difficulty (Ps.
88; James 1:1-15)

Thorns = our sin, flesh response (Eph.
4-6; Heb. 4:14-5:10)

HEAT - THORNS - CROSS - FRUIT

Cross = God's gospel transformative power, changes our focus from self to Jesus, (Rom 1;16; 2 Peter 1:1-11)

Fruit = the new right, Holy Spirit, Grace- empowered response to life's struggles. (Ps. 1; Gal 5:22)