

Patriarchal Period: Genesis 26-50 and God's Faithfulness

Belcroft Bible Church: lesson 6



Lesson Numbers	Wednesday Night Pentateuch Lesson Titles	Class Dates
1	Pentateuch Introduction: From Paradise to the Promised Land	2/11
2	Primeval Period: Genesis 1-11 and the Noahic Covenant	2/18
3	Primeval Period: Genesis 1-11 and the Noahic Covenant	2/25
4	Patriarchal Period: Genesis 12-25	3/4
5	The Abrahamic Covenant	3/11
6	Genesis 26-50 and God's Faithfulness	3/18
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11	Deuteronomy Overview	5/6

This class begins a *Bible Overview Series* where the elders will be systematically teaching us through the Old Testament over the next few years during the Wednesday night winter/spring semester. The goal for this semester will be to gain a clear overview of the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible. Thus, we will seek to understand the foundational nature of the Pentateuch while also seeing the purpose, main theme, some interpretative issues along with the historical setting of each individual book. This teaching time will also seek to help you better understand the critical nature of some of the primary Biblical covenants and how they fit into God's overall plan for His people in Christ. Have you ever wondered what all those sacrifices were about and why God gave all those laws to Israel? Have you ever been perplexed by God's covenant with Abraham or wondered how God's covenant with Noah fits into God's plan for the ages? Well, it is the goal of this class to wrestle with those questions and many more as we work through the Pentateuch together!

Intro:

~ Patriarchal History (Gen 11:27-50:26)... consider the four great men

- Abraham (Gen 12-24)
 - Issac (Gen 25-26)
 - Jacob (Gen 27-36)
 - Joseph (Gen 37-50)
- (note: some of these chapters in this simple outline crossover between characters)

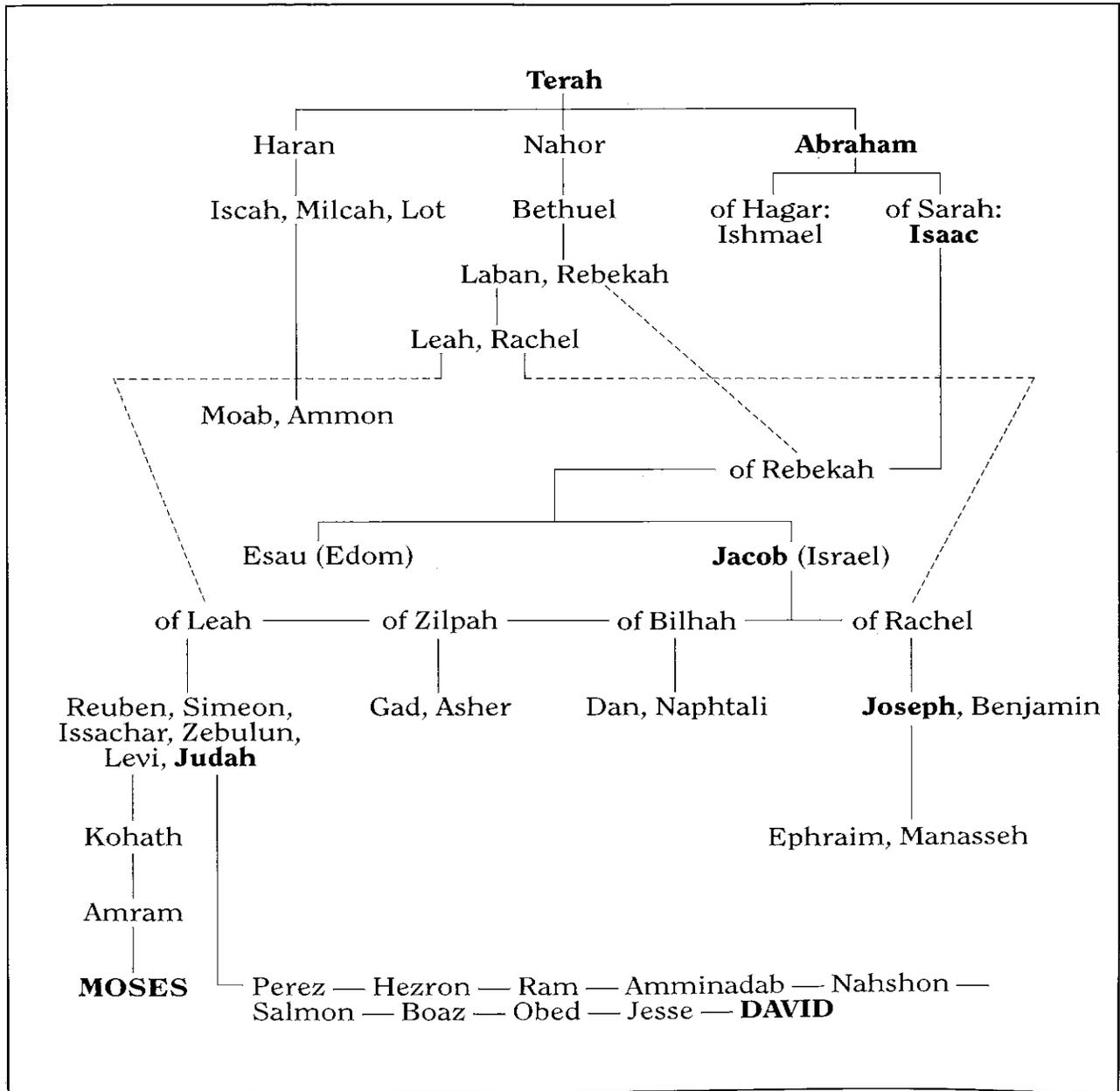
Isaac's Timeline:¹

Event	Age of Isaac	Genesis
Isaac's Mother Dies	37	23:1
Isaac Marries Rebekah	40	25:20
Isaac Father's Jacob and Esau with Rebekah	60	25:26
Isaac's Father Abraham Dies	75	25:7
Isaac's Brother Ishmael Dies	123	25:17
Isaac Sends Jacob to Laban in Haran	137	28:5
Isaac's Grandson Joseph is Born	144	30:25; 31:38-41
Isaac Dies	180	35:28

The Longest Chapter in Genesis (Chapter 24): Now, with Abraham well advanced in years he sends out his servant back to the land of Mesopotamia, to the city of Nahor, in order to find a wife for Isaac (Gen 24:1-10). The servant agrees and even prays to God for His help to find the right wife for Isaac and the daughter of Nahor, Abraham's brother just happens to show up (Gen 24:11-15)! The servant knows that God has led him to the right house and woman and praises God for His divine providence (Gen 24:22-28). The servant takes Rebekah to meet Isaac, and they are married and she brings much comfort to Isaac after his mother's death (Gen 24:34-67).

¹ Crossway Bibles. (2008). [The ESV Study Bible](#) (p. 94). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

Patriarchal Family Tree



The Distracted Life of Isaac

Chapter 25 finishes out with Abraham's marriage to Keturah (Gen 25:1-4) and some of his other children through her but makes it clear that none of these children would receive the covenant blessing promised to Abraham as that was rightfully reserved by God for Isaac. These sons of Keturah would become various Arab tribes in the east of Canaan. Even though Abraham gives these other sons gifts to help them get established on their own he sends them away from Isaac (Gen 25:5-6). Abraham dies and is buried with Sarah back in the cave at "Machpelah" that he bought from the Hittites but God continued to bless Isaac (Gen 25:7-11). Genesis 25:12-18 highlights another "*toledoth*" which gives us the descendants or generations of Ishmael. This short section highlights God's faithfulness to Ishmael as promised to him in Gen 17:20 where he did become the father of 12 princes.

Now, remember the characters and their lives through this last section of the Genesis crossover one another and are clearly intertwined at times. Isaac is not a particularly interesting character as his life tends to be tedious and undistinguished. Many have seen that the man before and the man after him are great but Isaac not so much. Notwithstanding his submissiveness to his father when being offered up as a sacrifice to God which was no small matter (Gen 22)! Yet, as Graham Scroggie has pointed out, we only see him **once** build an altar to God (Gen 26:25). Only once do we read of him praying (Gen 25:21). Only once do we are told that "he called on the name of the Lord" (Gen 26:25). And only once is it recorded that God appeared to him and spoke with him (Gen 26:2-5) and that was a repetition of what was promised to Abraham not any new revelation from God (Scroggie, *The Unfolding Drama of Redemption: vol 1*, 116).

Isaac has the longest life (180 years) of all the Patriarchs but the most uneventful! G. Campbell Morgan, once said, "Abraham is more interesting than Isaac and Jacob is more interesting than Isaac to us but not to God." His importance is in the fact that he is the child of the covenant promise and thus serves as a major transition between Abraham, the root of the nation, and Jacob whose posterity constituted the fruit of the nation. Consider the outline of Isaac's life below...

1. *Isaac's Devotion:* (Gen 22) Isaac shows himself faithful in his submission to his father during the sacrifice at Mt Moriah. Isaac is a clear type of Christ in his devotion to his father and his sacrificial offering. God is faithful to provide a ram and preserve the covenant son of the promise.
2. *Isaac's Delight:* (Gen 25:67) Isaac Marries Rebekah at the age of 40 and is overjoyed with her. God is faithful to provide a wife for Isaac as he will be in a place to further propagate the lineage and heritage of "nations." Rebekah is his second cousin. She is the daughter of Bethuel, the Syrian or Aramean. Her brother is Laban. Rebekah is a byproduct of God's providence in and over Isaac's life as Gen 24 unfolds so clearly. God's "Providence" is His divine work in planning beforehand what will happen and going "before" us to actually accomplish His will in our lives. God's providence looms large throughout Scripture!!
3. *Isaac's Decedents:* (Gen 25:19-27) The Scripture is clear that two nations were in the womb of Rebekah and that it was God's plan for the older (Esau) to serve the younger (Jacob) even though that was totally contrary to cultural norms (Gen 25:25; see 43:33; Dt 21:17).

4. *Isaac's Distraction:* (Gen 25:28) Isaac was a man who grew distracted by the temporal delights of the world which blinded him to the disruption in his family and the potential destruction it might bring on God's blessing and plan for his family! Isaac in his later years proves to be an ungodly father who is divided in his heart being a man of the flesh who delights not in the things of God but in the things of the world like food (Gen 25:28; see chap. 27 how many times food is mentioned!). This would blind him as a father as he played favorites between his sons which created a volatile environment on many levels (Gen 25:29-34). Isaac was such a distracted man that he thought he was going to die when he was 137 maybe because that was the age that Ishmael died. So Isaac plans to give Esau the final blessing motivated by man centered fear and man centered desire for food and not driven by a godly character either his or Esau's! Interestingly, after the whole deceptive debacle Isaac lives for another 43 years!

5. *Isaac's Deception:* (Gen 26:6-7; 27:35) Isaac deceived Abimelech in a similar vein of Abraham as they both lied about their wives in fear for their lives. Jacob follows in the family deception and with Rebekah's help tricks Isaac into thinking that he is Esau so that he (Jacob) can receive the final family blessing from Isaac. This note from the ESV Study Bible is helpful here...

Isaac Blesses Jacob. Genesis records in detail two important occasions when patriarchs, nearing death, pronounce special blessings on their firstborn sons (27:1–46; 49:1–27). In this present account, Isaac's intention to bless Esau is subverted by Rebekah, who helps Jacob receive the blessing of the firstborn. This event not only builds on the earlier incident when Esau sells his birthright to Jacob (25:29–34), but also develops the divine statement in 25:23 that the older will serve the younger. Although Rebekah's actions involved deception, the text simply reports what Rebekah did without condoning or commenting on her actions. Nevertheless, the first audience again would see the ways in which God in his sovereignty uses all kinds of actions (good, bad, and mixed) to bring his people to the place in which they find themselves.

The paternal blessing that Isaac wishes to give to Esau is important because it will establish the identity of the heir to the divine promises given to Abraham and Isaac. In light of this, the "firstborn" line will eventually lead to a royal descendant through whom all the nations of the earth will be blessed. This link between firstborn and blessing is emphasized in a wordplay involving both terms. In Hebrew, "firstborn" is *bekorah*, whereas "blessing" is *berakah*. Much of the story involving Esau and Jacob centers on these concepts and how the younger twin, Jacob, acquires both the firstborn birthright and the related paternal blessing.²

6. *Isaac's Division:* (Gen 27:41-28:9) The family is completely divided by now as Esau seeks to kill Jacob and thus, he must flee for his life. Isaac and Rebekah have been divided for some time over their children and that division has now manifested itself fully (Gen 25:28). Esau brought great bitterness upon the family especially for Isaac and Rebekah (Gen 26:35) through his marriage to two different Hittite woman. Esau sadly tries win back favor with his parents after

² Crossway Bibles. (2008). *The ESV Study Bible* (p. 96). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

seeing how Jacob was encouraged to take a wife from their family line and so Esau marries an Ishmaelite (Gen 26:6-9). However, he still retains his two Hittite wives previously attained (Gen 28:9; 26:36). What a said family marked by great division! Even though Isaac started as a man marked by devotion to God he ended as a man distracted from the ways of God which ultimately brought great division upon his life and family legacy!

The Determined Life of Jacob (Gen 25:19-37:2; the focus on Jacob is primarily Gen 28-36)

Jacob is no small Patriarch in the plan of God and must not go unnoticed in the study of the Pentateuch. An examination of how many times Scripture uses the names of the main three Patriarchs is thought provoking and revealing. Isaac is mentioned 123 times. Abraham is mentioned 230 times. Jacob is mentioned 345 times!

Jacob Timeline:³

Event	Age of Isaac	Genesis
Jacob's Grandfather Abraham Dies	15	25:7
Jacob Sent to Laban in Haran	77	28:5
Jacob Marries Leah and Rachel	84	29:21-30; 30:1, 22-26
Jacob Fathers Joseph with Rachel	91	30:22-24
Jacob Flees from Laban to Canaan	97	31
Jacob's Son Joseph Sold into Slavery	108	37:12-36
Jacob's Father Isaac Dies	120	35:28-29
Jacob Reunites with Joseph and Moves his Family to Egypt	130	46-47
Jacob Dies	147	47:28

³ Crossway Bibles. (2008). [The ESV Study Bible](#) (p. 100). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

Jacob's life can be traced geographically through his travels abroad: Jacob's journey to Haran (28); Jacob's sojourn in Haran (29-30); Jacob's return to Canaan (31-33) and Jacob's life in Canaan (34-35). Another way to outline the life of Jacob would be Jacob serves for a wife (28-30); Jacob is separated for God (31-33); Jacob's suffers for sin (34); Jacob is saddened and satisfied (35, 36).

Jacob's Departure: (Gen 28:1-5) Again we see the shrewd and swift action of Rebekah as she seeks to protect Jacob from the rage of Esau (Gen 27:41). She now provokes Isaac to send Jacob away to her brother Laban where he will not only be safe from Esau but also find a wife among their people (Gen 27:42-46). In this passage we also see Isaac is no longer distracted by the things of the world and has returned to trusting in God's plan for fulfilling the promise to Abraham. Much like Abraham his father did for him (Gen 24), Isaac now seeks to see that Jacob finds a wife from among their people and not marry a Canaanite woman. Isaac sends Jacob back to Laban, the brother of Rebekah, and tells Jacob to marry one of his daughters. Verses 3-4 demonstrate that Isaac has come to see that Jacob is the promised son of the covenant and not Esau. These two verses also point directly to the promise of many children, the blessings of nations from your line, and the reality of a future land. All of this flows out of God's promise to Abraham!

Jacob's Dream: (Gen 28:10-22) This is a significant time for Jacob because as he flees for his life in many ways, we see God reveal Himself to Jacob for the first time and confirm to Jacob his place in the Abrahamic covenant (28:13-15). Not to be missed is the fact that this revelation and confirmation from God happen while he is leaving Canaan. God promises to not leave Jacob and to protect him and ultimately bring him back to this land that he will eventually give to him and his people. This would have been a huge encouragement to Jacob especially in light of the recent events and his long journey in which it seems like he was alone. The stairway Jacob sees in his dream seems to depict God's sovereign activity in and over the affairs of men and the happenings on earth as God fulfills His ultimate plans especially those in the Abrahamic covenant. Jacob's response in reverential awe to the Lord as he worships Him and builds a pillar and makes a vow of confidence in the Lord's promise given to him. The name Jacob gives the place is Bethel which means "House of God."

Jacob Deceived: (Gen 29) This chapter shows that a man reaps what he sows as the deceiver now gets deceived. Jacob makes it to Haran and by God's providence just happens to meet with some shepherds that help him find his way to Laban. God is already proving Himself faithful to what He promised to Jacob (Gen 28:15). Jacob quickly falls for the beauty of Rachel and agrees to a seven-year dowry deal as the bride price for Rachel (29:18). One should consider the similarities between this episode and how Rebekah was found in Gen 24. One major difference is that Jacob is never seen praying for God's guidance as Abraham's servant does! After the seven years of labor/dowry have been completed Jacob seeks out Rachel from Laban and they enjoy a big celebration. After the wedding night Jacob is shocked that he wakes up with Leah and not Rachel...the trickster has been seriously tricked! Laban agrees to give Jacob Rachel for another seven years of work. Jacob is proving himself faithful and Laban is proving himself wicked. While Leah faced hardship of not being loved by Jacob like Rachel, Leah was blessed with the joy of children something Rachel was not at this time.

Jacob's Descendants: (Gen 30) This chapter chronicles the drama between Rachel and Leah and the many children that come to Jacob. Rachel's desperation looks like Sarah's once did and following in a similar practice Rachel seeks to have children through having her maid servant, "Bilhah", who now marries Jacob and conceives a child with Jacob and gives birth. The note below is helpful...

To overcome her barrenness, Rachel offers Jacob her servant **Bilhah** as a substitute wife (v. 3). This practice, which was also carried out by Abraham and Sarah (see 16:1-4), was part of ancient Near Eastern culture. (E.g., the Nuzi texts from the 15th century B.C. treat the concept of marriage, and many of these texts deal with the issue of childlessness and provisions for new wives.) Children born to the substitute, or second, wife were regarded as belonging to the main, or first, wife. In this way, continuity of the family line was preserved. For this reason, Rachel names the two boys born to Bilhah (30:6, 8). Once again each name involves wordplay, **Dan** and **Naphtali** being associated with the verbs "judge" and "wrestle"⁴

The competition continues between the sisters and Leah now gives her maid servant, "Zilpah", as a wife to Jacob. This birthing drama continues until the Lord finally opens Rachel's womb and she gives birth to Joseph. This chapter points to Jacob's prosperity both in gaining a great family but also in gaining great wealth by God's gracious providence! Laban will not let Jacob leave because of what seems to be selfish reasons and again we see Laban's wickedness revealed even his use of "divination" (Gen 30:27). Jacob submits to Laban's demands and then seeks to recover from what Laban has taken through some "sovereignly blessed" selective breeding program for his goats! What Laban thought to be to his advantage proves to his detriment as Jacob's herd and wealth continually expands while Laban's shrinks. This does not sit well the Laban or his herdsmen.

Jacob's Destination: (Gen 31-33) Jacob flees Laban upon hearing from God that it is time to go back to Canaan. Jacob explains to Leah and Rachel how Laban has cheated him despite the fact that Jacob has worked hard and faithfully for him. However, Jacob explained how God has been with him and how God has helped him through it all and now God has made it clear that it is time to leave. Both Leah and Rachel agree with Jacob and tell him to do whatever God has said as they see clearly that whatever God has removed from their father has now become theirs through Jacob. So, Jacob leaves while Laban is away but word gets to Laban and he is not happy. Meanwhile Rachel had stolen her father's idols which only further angered him. This only served to prove that Laban was a wicked pagan worshipper much like his family before him (Josh 24:2). The polytheism of Laban is further seen in his calling on the (*Eliohim*) "god of Nahor and their father" which only provokes Jacob to call on the one true God "The Fear of Isaac." See note below...

Two separate "witnesses" are set up, one by Jacob and the other by his kinsmen. Jacob uses one **stone** to create a **pillar** (v. 45), similar to what he did earlier at Bethel (28:18, 22). His **kinsmen** pile up **stones** to form a **heap** (31:46). The creation of two witnesses may have been intended to underline the seriousness of the oath. More likely, the two witnesses reflect in some way the deities worshiped by Jacob and Laban. Jacob's single

⁴ Crossway Bibles. (2008). [The ESV Study Bible](#) (p. 102). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

stone stands in marked contrast to the heap of stones set up by Laban and his relatives. Jacob's monotheistic faith is set alongside the polytheism of Laban. Since ancient Near Eastern treaties normally involved the gods as witnesses, the treaty between Jacob and Laban also required divine witnesses. Because Jacob is not prepared to compromise his monotheistic faith, two witnesses are established.⁵

Laban was not being nice in calling for this covenant but using it as an act of further control and basically saying to Jacob that I will hurt or attack you or may harm befall you if you go beyond this boundary.

Chapter 32 begins with Jacob meeting an angelic host who was no doubt dispatched to remind Jacob that God was with him and would see him safely back into the "promised land." Now, Jacob seeks reconciliation with Esau demonstrating great humility speaking of Esau as his lord multiple times and sending many gifts ahead to soften his heart and demonstrate the nature of Jacob's coming. However, before this meeting with Esau Jacob will have another meeting with God as he wrestles with a man, who later is proven to be God (Gen 32:22-32; see Hos 12:4). Jacob will not release the man until the man blesses him and then God touches Jacob's hip which pushing it out of socket and then gives Jacob his new name "Israel." See note below...

From the context, "Israel" is probably to be understood as meaning "he strives with God"; the alternative meaning is "God strives" (see ESV footnote), but the context makes this less likely. Hosea 12:3-4 reflects on this event. The renaming of Jacob brings to a climax a lifetime of struggling with others (see Gen. 25:22). Through all this, Jacob has finally come to realize the importance of being blessed by God. The events of the preceding years have changed Jacob. The God of his father has now become his God (32:9; see also 28:21). (This is the first mention of the name "Israel" in the Bible. In extra biblical literature, it first appears in the "Israel Stele" of Pharaoh Merneptah of the late 13th century B.C. The text says: "Israel lies desolate; its seed is no more." Obviously by this early date the name was being used for a people and not merely for an individual.)⁶

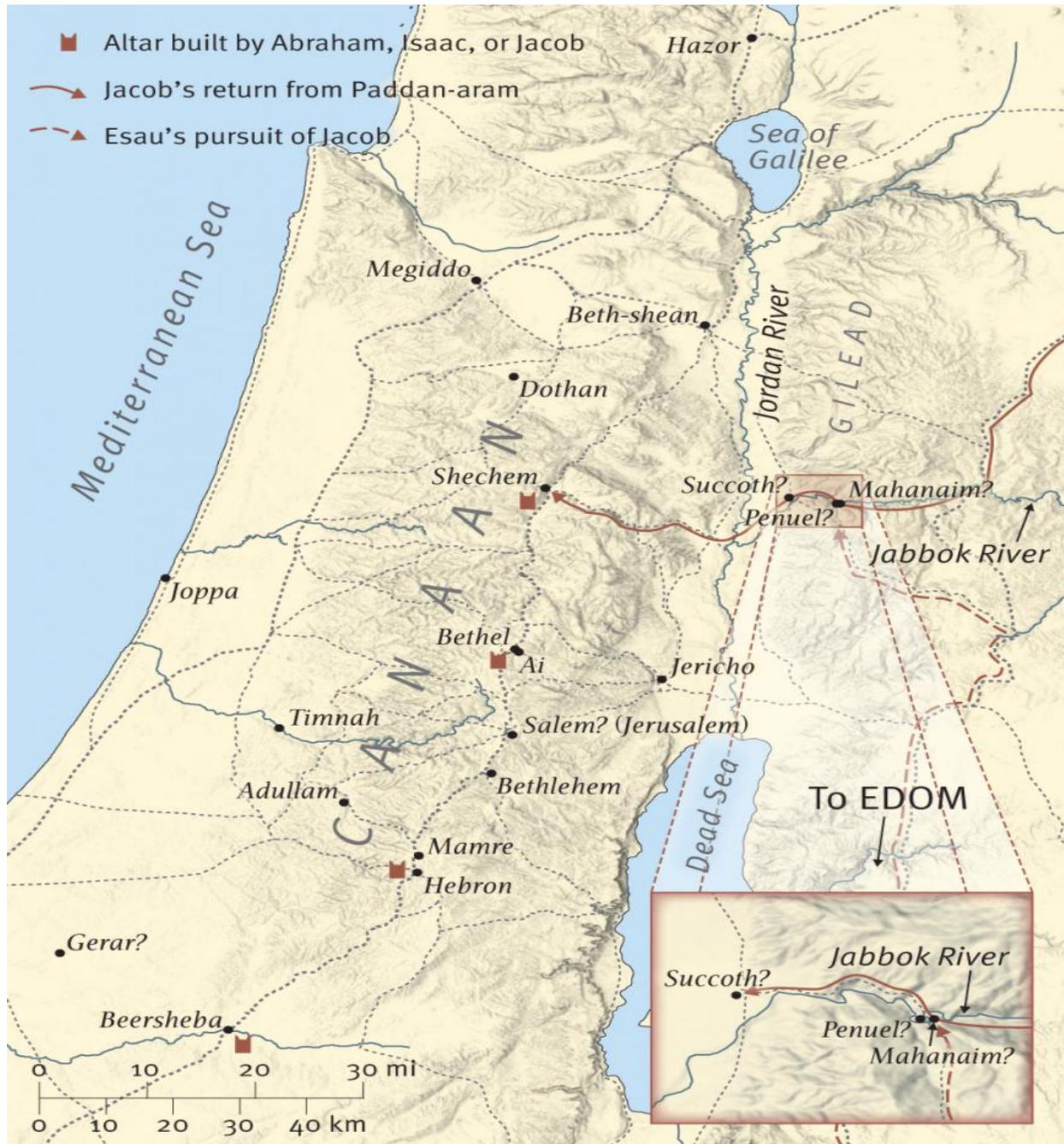
Chapter 33 we see Jacob and Esau reunited in deep love for each other! Jacob bowing seven times to the ground further demonstrates his broken humility before his brother. After encouraging each other and Jacob refusing much help from Esau, Jacob makes it back to Canaan safely just as God has promised. Jacob rightfully erects an altar to "God, the God of Israel."

⁵ Crossway Bibles. (2008). *The ESV Study Bible* (p. 105). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

⁶ Crossway Bibles. (2008). *The ESV Study Bible* (p. 108). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

Jacob Returns to Canaan

After acquiring wealth in Paddan-aram, Jacob returned to Canaan. He came to Mahanaim, where he sent his household ahead of him and crossed the Jabbok alone. There he wrestled with a mysterious man until morning and named the place Peniel (also called Penuel). Jacob then encountered his brother Esau, who had come from Edom to meet him. After the two were reconciled, Esau returned to Edom, while Jacob journeyed to Canaan.⁷



⁷ Crossway Bibles. (2008). *The ESV Study Bible* (p. 106). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

Jacob's Disaster: (Gen 34) This chapter demonstrates the great disaster that comes upon Jacob's family through the sin of others including the uncontrolled anger of his sons! This passage also serves as a precursor of what awaits the decedents of Abraham and their willingness to intermingle and even marry with the people of Canaan which is something that will not go well with them! This is one of the saddest passages in all of the Patriarchal Section of Genesis as we see Dinah raped and then a whole city including innocent little ones that pay for the sin of a few! While it is clear that Jacob could have done more it is clear that he is not happy with his sons violent retaliation. The pain of this event followed Jacob to the end of his life (Gen 49:5-7). See the notes below...

The Rape of Dinah. Almost as soon as Jacob returns to Canaan, an incident threatens the future security of his whole family. While the rape of Dinah by Shechem is inexcusable, the punishment meted out by Simeon and Levi far exceeds the crime. While they are reluctant to acknowledge any fault on their part, Jacob is very conscious of how their actions have endangered his entire household. Furthermore, circumcision, which was intended by God to bring divine blessing, leads on this occasion to death and destruction. All of this takes place without any reference to God.⁸

Jacob's Delight amidst Distress: (Gen 35) God again speaks to Jacob and tells him to go to Bethel where he should build an altar to God. Jacob calls his whole household to purify themselves as they prepare to meet with God which means they must rid themselves of foreign gods they carried with them from Haran (Gen 31:19). God has continued to answer Jacob in his distress and now God brings distress on all the cities as Jacob travels through the land as God sovereignly secures safe passage for Jacob and his family. God speaks to Jacob again and reminds him of his name Israel and of all the covenant blessings he will inherit! Yet there was still much sadness as Jacob's beloved wife dies giving birth to Benjamin. Then Reuben, Jacob's first-born sleeps with his father's wife/concubine Bilhah and Jacob's father Isaac dies at 180 years old. See note below...

While Reuben's action may have been prompted by inappropriate lust, it challenged Jacob's position as head of the household. As the firstborn son, Reuben may also have viewed his action as establishing his authority over his brothers (see 2 Sam. 16:20–23). Yet it had the opposite effect (see 1 Chron. 5:1–2; also note on Gen. 48:3–7). Although initially Jacob takes no immediate action against Reuben—implied by the narrator's brief comment, **Israel heard of it**—he later denies Reuben his preeminence as the firstborn (49:3–4). Although Jacob's actions run counter to the provisions for inheritance in Deut. 21:15–17, the unseemly behavior of Reuben means that he will not inherit what he otherwise would have received.⁹

God's faithfulness throughout Jacob's story is clear and at this point it is not complete as we will see Jacob once again as he blesses his children and further establishes the foundation for the 12 tribes of Israel. However, there is some deep distress that is yet to hit Jacob's life as he will deeply mourn the presumed death of his beloved Joseph while dealing with the loss of other children (Gen 42:6) but God will once again prove His providential faithfulness to His promise!

⁸ Crossway Bibles. (2008). *The ESV Study Bible* (p. 109). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

⁹ Crossway Bibles. (2008). *The ESV Study Bible* (p. 112). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

Sons of Jacob

MOTHER	SON	MEANING OF NAME	REFERENCE OF BIRTH (GENESIS)	ORDER OF BLESSING	SYMBOL OF BLESSING	REFERENCE OF BLESSING (GENESIS)
L E A H	Reuben	Behold, a son	29:32	1	Reckless	49:3-4
	Simeon	Hearing	29:33	2	Violence	49:5-7
	Levi	Attachment	29:34	3	Violence	49:5-7
	Judah	Praise	29:35	4	Lion	49:8-12
B I L H A H	Dan	Judgment	30:6	7	Serpent	49:16-18
	Naphtali	Wrestle	30:8	10	Doe	49:21
Z I L P A H	Gad	Good fortune	30:11	8	Raider	49:19
	Asher	Happy	30:13	9	Rich food	49:20
L E A H	Issachar	Reward	30:18	6	Donkey	49:14-15
	Zebulun	Abode	30:20	5	Ships	49:13
R A C H E L	Joseph	May he add	30:24	11	Fruitful	49:22-26
	Benjamin	Son of the right hand	35:18	12	Wolf	49:27

The Difficult Life of Joseph: (37-50)

The final section of Genesis is where Moses focuses on the life of Joseph because what happens over these next 90 years will set the stage for what happens across the next two thousand years in Israel's history. God's story of faithfulness to and through Joseph begins in chapter 37 but we also see God's faithful hand in the preceding chapter that chronicles the descendants of Esau. God had not chosen Esau much like He did not choose Ishmael, but God had blessed Esau and Ishmael just as he promised to Abraham. Moreover, the Edomite's (Descendants of Esau) would become bitter enemies with Israel in years to come. See note below...

Joseph's Timeline¹⁰

Event	Age of Isaac	Genesis
Joseph's father moves the family from Haran to Canaan	6	31:17-21
Joseph sold to Potiphar in Egypt	17	37
Joseph interprets dreams of the cupbearer and baker in prison	28	40
Joseph's grandfather Isaac dies	29	35:28-29
Joseph interprets Pharaoh's dreams, is released from prison	30	41:1-36
Seven years of plenty; sons Manasseh and Ephraim born during this time	30-37	41-47-52
Seven years of famine; two years into the famine Joseph reconciles with his brothers and father	37-44	41:53-47:26
Joseph father Jacob dies	56	47:28
Joseph Dies	110	50:22-26

¹⁰ Crossway Bibles. (2008). [*The ESV Study Bible*](#) (p. 114). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

Esau's Descendants in Edom. Largely through genealogy-like lists, this chapter provides a brief description of Esau and his descendants. This information, which concludes the narrator's interest in Esau, precedes the much fuller and more important account of Jacob's descendants. The location of this material resembles 25:12–18, where information about Ishmael's descendants comes before the longer account of Isaac's family. The author of Genesis usually writes about minor characters before concentrating in detail on the main participants of the unique family line. Particular attention is given to the presence of both "chiefs" and "kings" among Esau's descendants, who coexist alongside the Horites, the original inhabitants of Seir. Eventually, however, Esau's descendants assume control of Seir, renaming it "Edom."¹¹

Joseph in the Pit (Gen 37) The story of God's faithfulness continues through the difficult life of Joseph which quickly lands him in a pit by way of his brother's evil plans. Joseph was a teenage young man of 17 years when we meet him tending the sheep with his brothers. We are not told all the circumstances, but Joseph brings a bad report back to his father about his brothers. Jacob, much like Isaac before him, had fallen into a cardinal sin while parenting the disaster of having favorites among your children! Joseph was Jacob's favorite which only set Joseph up for animosity and envy from his siblings. Furthermore, add to that the whole special robe of many colors and you have a familial volcano ready to explode and that is what happens when Joseph speaks openly and boldly about his multiple dreams where his brothers will ultimately bow before him. Joseph's dreams brought swift and open rebuke from his brothers and from Jacob. All of this leads to a sad event where Joseph's brothers conspired to kill him but in the end they throw him into a pit but by the providence of God they do not kill him as they originally planned but sell Joseph to some Ishmaelite's who take Joseph to Egypt. Jacob is once more deceived but this time by his own children about the death of Joseph.

Judah and Tamar (Gen 38) See note below that helps brings some clarity to this very disturbing story and its placement in the middle of Joseph's story...

Judah and Tamar. Readers are likely to be shocked by the sexually oriented content of this chapter, with its references to spilled semen and prostitution. Nevertheless, the unsavory account of Judah's relationship with Tamar, which interrupts the ongoing story of Joseph's time in Egypt, fulfills an important role in Genesis, for it focuses on the continuation of Judah's family line and concludes with a birth account in which a firstborn twin is pushed aside by his younger brother. In light of preceding episodes, these features highlight the potential importance of Judah's line through Perez (v. 29). Later, in ch. 49, kingship will be associated with Judah's descendants, and biblical history reveals that from Perez comes the Davidic dynasty (see Ruth 4:18–22). Although this chapter shows Judah at his worst, it also accounts for a remarkable transformation in his life, which comes through in the remaining episodes of the Joseph story. Further, Judah provides a stark contrast to the chaste Joseph in Genesis 39: though he suffered for his chastity, Joseph's behavior is the right way to bring blessing to the Gentiles.¹²

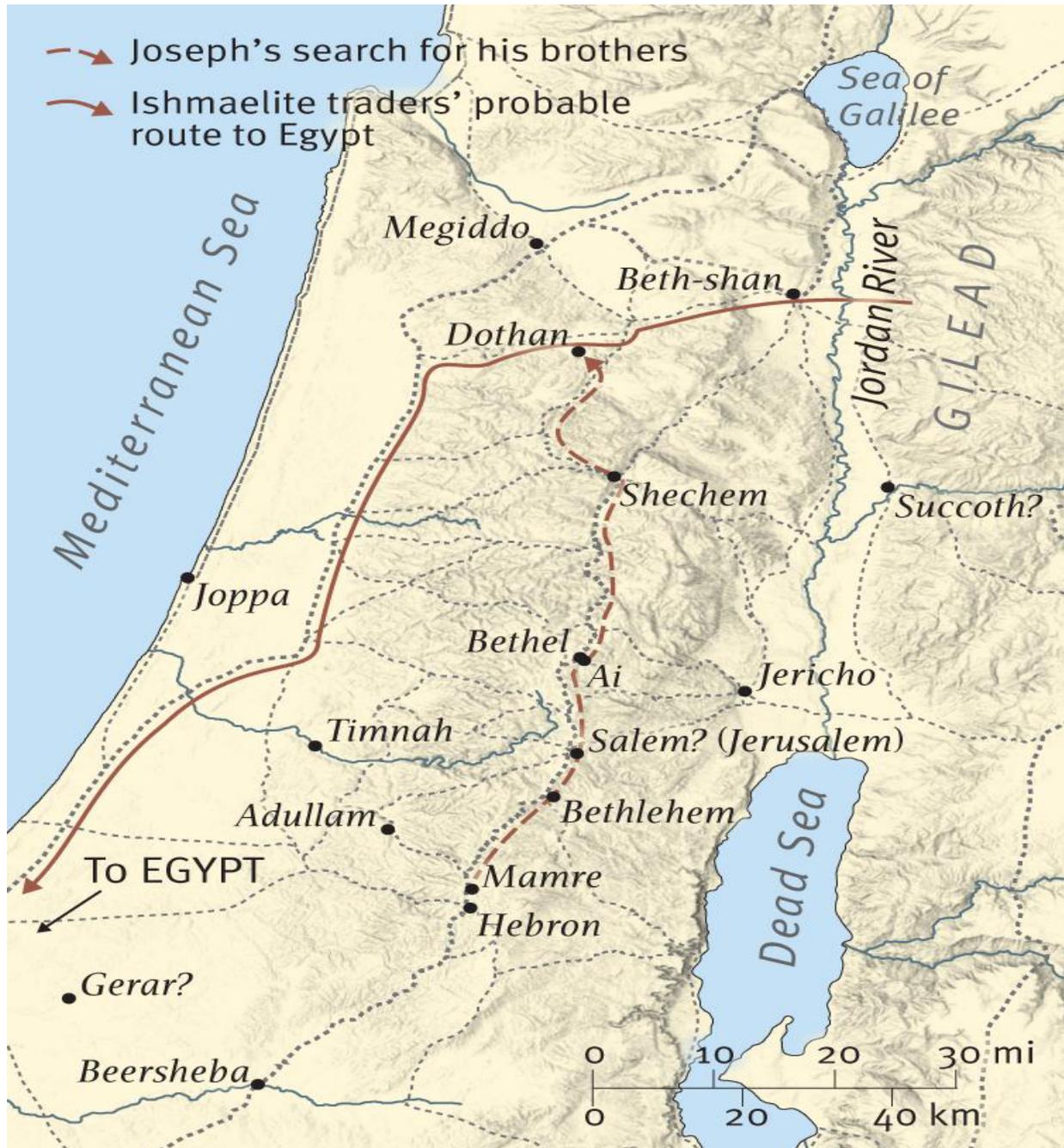
¹¹ Crossway Bibles. (2008). *The ESV Study Bible* (p. 112). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

¹² Crossway Bibles. (2008). *The ESV Study Bible* (p. 116). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

Joseph and His Brothers

c. 1900/1730 B.C.

Jacob sent Joseph from Hebron to Shechem to find his brothers, who had been pasturing their father's flock. When Joseph arrived, he learned that his brothers had gone on to Dothan, so he went there and found them. His brothers threw him into a pit and later sold him to some Ishmaelite spice traders on their way from Gilead to Egypt. The traders took Joseph to Egypt and sold him to Potiphar, the captain of Pharaoh's guard.¹³



¹³ Crossway Bibles. (2008). [The ESV Study Bible](#) (p. 115). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

Joseph in Potiphar's House (Gen 39) Joseph now sold into slavery in Potiphar's house excels in all he does as God's blessing is clearly upon His man as even Potiphar recognizes this divine blessing. Joseph grows in favor with Potiphar and gains great influence and authority over Potiphar's house so that God blessed everything Potiphar had both in house and in his field. One can see the massive impact of God's promise to Abraham upon people and nations that support and bless God's people (Gen 12:1-3). While Joseph was given charge over everything in Potiphar's house, Potiphar's wife was not part of that deal, but someone needed to explain that Potiphar's wife. She persisted to seek out Joseph as she tried to seduce him into sexual sin, but Joseph proved faithful to his God! Even still she would not stop until one day when she cornered Joseph in the house and he ran away from her but not before she stole his cloak and cried out that Joseph sought to rape her. Though a complete lie Potiphar bought the bait and threw Joseph into prison even though he did nothing wrong. This is not an uncommon story with God's people! Yet the story is really about God not Joseph because all of this only serves to prove that God is sovereign and faithful to care for, protect, and promote His man wherever and whenever God sees fit! Thus, the text says that God showed Joseph steadfast love, gave him favor in the sight of the jailer so that Joseph was put in charge of the jail and now the jail prospers as whatever Joseph touches excels!

Joseph in Prison (Gen 40) Now while Joseph is in prison he providentially meets two people that God will use to bring Joseph into the very courts and presence of Pharaoh. Joseph meets the cup bearer and the baker of Pharaoh who both have dreams and are not sure how to respond to these personal dreams that have disturbed them. Joseph interprets the cup bearer's dream and explains how in the three days Pharaoh will restore you to your position as cup bearer. Joseph pleads with him to not forget him when this happens and speak to Pharaoh so that he can get Joseph out of prison. The baker's dream is also interpreted but with a sobering end as in three days Pharaoh will kill the baker by hanging him and the birds will eat his flesh! All of this was fulfilled just as Joseph said but the cup bearer forgot Joseph's kindness. But God's timing is always perfect!

Joseph in Pharaoh's Service (Gen 41) **Two years later** the cup bearer finally remembers Joseph after Pharaoh has some dreams that really disturb him and none of his officials or magicians can interpret the dreams. However, Pharaoh calls upon Joseph once he hears about what Joseph did for the cup bearer and baker. Do not miss how the text says that Joseph was brought out of the pit further describing the desperate situation Joseph was in and how he had to shave since that was the protocol of the day and no doubt Joseph was a mess! God will often use the pit as the platform from which He launches you into some of your greatest ministry! Joseph ultimately ends up in the palace, by God's sovereign hand, because Joseph was faithful through his time in the pit! **Faithfulness is never driven by circumstances but by a character committed to God!** Joseph gives glory to God and makes it clear that it is God who is at work in all this and then Joseph explained what God was doing with seven years of great blessing which would be followed by seven years of great famine. Pharaoh and all the people see that there is no one like Joseph in the whole kingdom in who rest the Spirit of God. Joseph is placed second in command behind Pharaoh and given a special bride by Pharaoh for marriage. Joseph rules over all of Egypt and leads them through the years of blessing and then the years of famine. Just before the years of famine Joseph is blessed with two sons.

Egypt at the Time of Joseph

c. 1900/1730 B.C.

Joseph arrived in Egypt during the reign of the Twelfth Dynasty, arguably the zenith of Egypt's power. Shortly before this era, Upper and Lower Egypt had been unified under one ruler, and now Egyptian influence expanded south and east. The regular flooding of the Nile River provided a relatively stable supply of food and offered some degree of protection from the famines suffered by other lands of the ancient Near East.¹⁴



¹⁴ Crossway Bibles. (2008). [The ESV Study Bible](#) (p. 118). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

Joseph in the Presence of His Brothers (Gen 42-44) God's providence has prepared the way for the protection of God's people in a way they could not have ever imagined! Joseph's brothers are driven by the famine to seek the help of Egypt which is the only place where food can be found. Joseph recognizes them as they come and bow before him since Joseph was the one who was overseeing the distribution of the food as the governor of the land. Just as Joseph dreamed many years ago now his brothers bow before him and the text says that Joseph remembered the dreams. Joseph puts his brothers through a series of tests that involves them leaving and coming back. Upon their return Joseph is overcome with emotion and reveals his identity to the brother's shock.

Joseph in Protection of His Family (Gen 45-47) Now Joseph explains to his brothers all that God has done to and through him. Joseph brings the whole family to Egypt and while they are on their way "Israel" stops to offer sacrifices to God and Yahweh once again speaks to Jacob encouraging his heart that God is with him and will bless him in Egypt and bring him back from that land into the land Canaan. Joseph helps his family settle in the land of Goshen and Pharaoh instructs Joseph to give them the best land to live in and graze their flocks. Also, Pharaoh asks that if there are any able men among that they be put over the flocks of Pharaoh. Again, the whole story points to God's faithfulness in and over His people as He carries through with all of His promises! Joseph's wisdom from God is further displayed as he shrewdly deals with all the people of Egypt as they now start to come to Joseph for food but have no money. Jacob lived in Egypt 17 years and prospered greatly in every way and when he was about to die he made Joseph promise him to bring his bones back to Canaan and bury him in the burying place.

Jacob's Final Blessings (Gen 48-49) See notes below...

Jacob's Blessing of Joseph, Ephraim, and Manasseh. When Jacob is very old and close to death, he pronounces a variety of blessings on all his sons. The first part of this process is recorded in this chapter and focuses specifically on Joseph and his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. Immediately following this, all of Jacob's other sons gather around his bed in order to be blessed (ch. 49). While chs. 48 and 49 stand together, the events of 48:1-22 set Joseph and his younger son Ephraim apart from all the other brothers. In particular, Ephraim receives from Jacob the blessing of the firstborn, indicating that the special line traced throughout Genesis will continue through his descendants (see Introduction: History of Salvation Summary). Various elements within ch. 48 are reminiscent of how Jacob was blessed by his father Isaac (27:1-40).¹⁵

Joseph Dies (Gen 50) After Jacob again makes his family promise to bury him back in the family cave in Canaan he dies and there is great mourning among God's people and even among the Egyptians! Once the days of mourning were complete Joseph seeks Pharaoh's favor to bury Jacob as he wished in Canaan. Pharaoh is pleased with Joseph's request and Joseph with the whole house of Jacob take his body back to Canaan with much weeping! Upon returning to Egypt Joseph's brothers were afraid that Joseph would seek revenge on them for what they did by trying to kill him. A guilty conscience is a horrible and unrelenting task master! Consider how long these men have lived with the weight of their past sin. How awesome is full forgiveness in

¹⁵ Crossway Bibles. (2008). *The ESV Study Bible* (p. 132). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

Christ that washes man's conscience clean from the guilt and penalty of sin! Joseph explains how the evil that they set out to do was under the sovereign hand of God and He used it for good that many people should be protected and kept alive through the famine and beyond! Joseph continues to care for his brothers and their families and they all prosper. At the end of Joseph's life he also makes his son's promise to carry his bones out of Egypt and back to the land promised by God to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. Joseph dies shortly thereafter and he is embalmed and put into a coffin. There is a real sense of anticipation of when the bones of Joseph will be carried up out of Egypt and brought into that land promised by God...hence the Exodus!

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