



OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

Part 1: The Pentateuch



WEEK 3: GENESIS 12-50

**GENESIS 12-50, GOD'S COVENANT WITH
ABRAHAM**

GENESIS OVERVIEW

Foundational Events (1-11)

- Creation
- Fall
- Flood
- Babel

Foundational People (12-50)

- Abraham
- Isaac
- Jacob
- Joseph

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- The events of Genesis 12-50 likely took place in the Middle Bronze Age (2000-1550 B.C.)
- Initially, the Amorites rose to power in Mesopotamia (2112-2004 B.C.)
- Eventually, Hamurapi rose to power and established the Old Babylonian Empire (1792-1595 B.C.)
- Hammurapi is known for his collection of laws.

(Arnold & Beyers, *Encountering the Old Testament*, p. 23)

LITERARY BACKGROUND

- Genesis 1-2 reveal God's original intention for His creation: a good expression of God's love & beauty to be ruled by humans made in His image.
- Genesis 3 details the Fall of humanity into sin which opened the door to violence, futility, & death.

LITERARY BACKGROUND

- Human sin hit a breaking point in Genesis 6 when God decides to exact judgment by flooding the earth.
- But God chooses to spare one man (Noah) and his family in order to continue His redemptive plans for humanity.

LITERARY BACKGROUND

“And you, be fruitful and multiply, increase greatly on the earth and multiply in it...Behold, I establish my **covenant** with you and your offspring after you... I establish my **covenant** with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.”

(Genesis 9:7–11 ESV)

LITERARY BACKGROUND

- Noah is kind of a “new Adam,” and his family is recommissioned to “multiply & fill the earth.”
- Genesis 10, sometimes called “The Table of Nations” reveals how the earth is repopulated through Shem, Japheth, & Ham

A satellite-style image of the Eastern Mediterranean region, showing the coastlines of North Africa, the Middle East, and parts of Europe. The image is partially obscured by a dark, wavy border on the left side.

TABLE OF NATIONS

- Many of the people groups mentioned in Genesis 10 can be identified with relative certainty.
- In general, the descendants of Ham settled in North Africa and the eastern Mediterranean coast.
- The descendants of Shem in Mesopotamia and Arabia.
- The descendants of Japheth in Europe and the greater area of Asia Minor.

(From ESV Study Bible; Genesis 10)



LITERARY BACKGROUND

- But the narrative reveals that human nature has not changed after the Flood.
 - Ham's disgraceful act & resulting curse
 - Culmination of sin once again at Babel
- God intervenes again to stem the tide of rising sin
 - Confuses their language
 - Disperses humans

THE PROBLEM CONTINUES

“The narrative provokes us to question where salvation will come from, especially since human beings haven’t changed since the flood; a depth of corruption still inhabits the heart.”

(Thomas Schreiner, *Covenant and God’s Purpose for the World*, p. 41)

ABRAHAM

A dramatic painting depicting a scene from the Bible. In the foreground, a man in a blue robe and a red cloak stands on a rocky ledge, looking towards the right. Behind him, another man in a white tunic and red cloak is visible. The background is a dark, stormy landscape with a bright, glowing light source in the sky, possibly a sunset or sunrise, casting a warm glow over the scene. The overall mood is somber and dramatic.

WHO IS ABRAHAM?

And Joshua said to all the people, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘Long ago, your fathers lived beyond the Euphrates, Terah, the father of Abraham and of Nahor; ***and they served other gods.*** Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the River and led him through all the land of Canaan, and made his offspring many. I gave him Isaac.

(Joshua 24:2–3 ESV)

WHO IS ABRAHAM?

Terah took Abram his son and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife, and they went forth together ***from Ur of the Chaldeans*** to go into the land of Canaan, but when they ***came to Haran, they settled there.***

(Genesis 11:31 ESV)

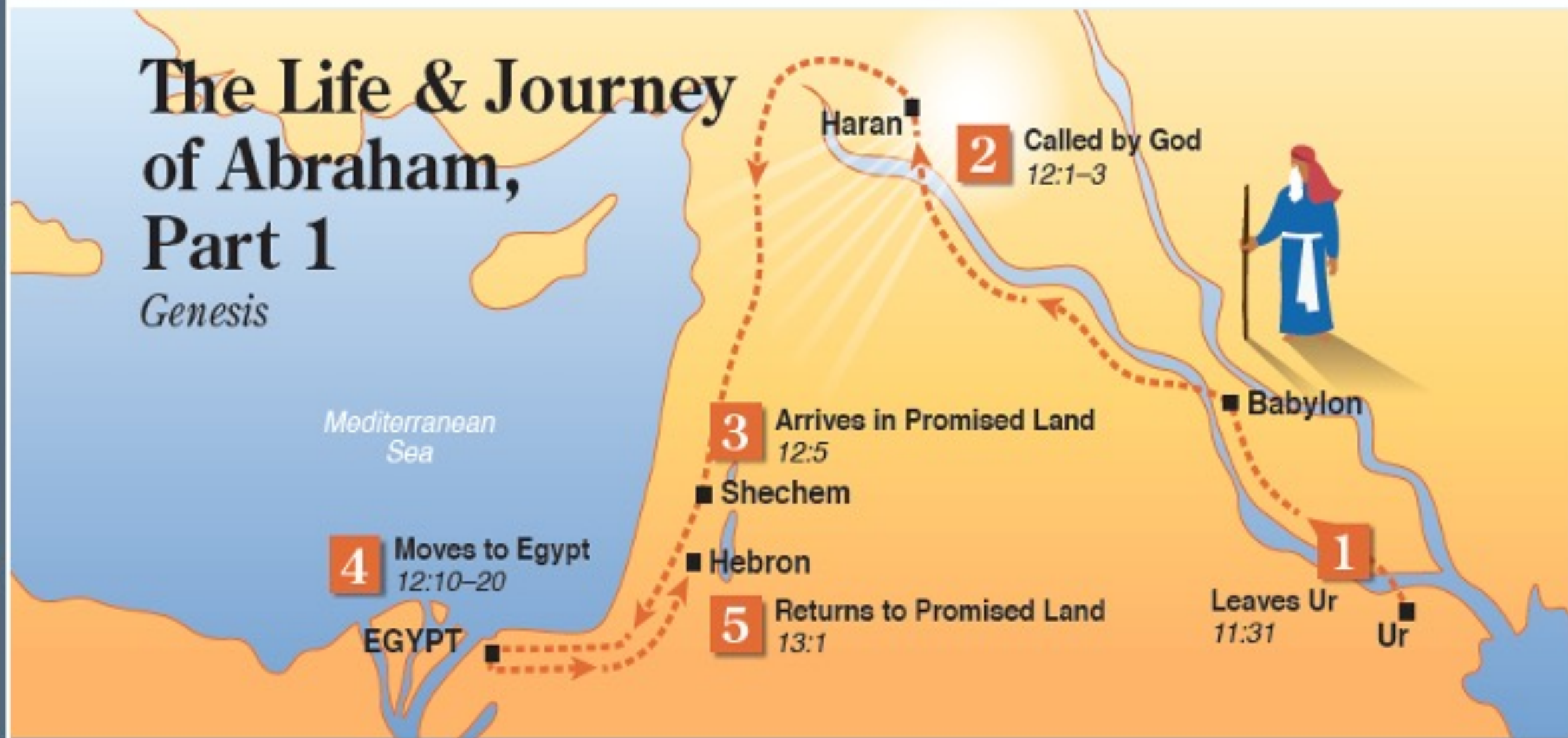
CALL OF ABRAM

“In the call narrative of Genesis 12, God asked Abram to leave all possible sources of security. He called on Abram to step out in faith and leave Haran to travel to an unknown land and begin life anew. Eventually Abram traveled through SHECHEM, BETHEL, and the NEGEB (southern Palestine). The point of the narrative is Abram’s faithfulness all along the way—from Ur to Haran to Shechem.”

(Arnold & Beyers, *Encountering the Old Testament*, p. 100)

The Life & Journey of Abraham, Part 1

Genesis



CALL OF ABRAM

Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the **land** that I will show you. And I will make of you a great **nation**, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and **in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.**” (Genesis 12:1–3 ESV)

3 PRIMARY COMPONENTS OF PROMISE



LAND



NATION



BLESSING

PROMISES AFFIRMED & DEVELOPED

- Extent of land & offspring affirmed (13:14–16)
- Abraham would have a son and his offspring would be as numerous as stars in sky (15:4-7)
- God confirms the promise to Abraham through a covenant ceremony (15:7-21)
- Abraham's descendants will sojourn in foreign land & suffer affliction for 400 years (15:13)

PROMISES AFFIRMED THROUGH COVENANT

When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, “To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates...

(Genesis 15:17–18 ESV)



WHY A SMOKING FIRE POT & FLAMING TORCH?

- ***Symbolic of God's own presence***
 - God reveals himself to Moses in the burning bush (Ex. 3)
 - God's presence is manifested at Sinai with smoke & fire (Ex. 19:18)
 - God led his people in the wilderness by a pillar of smoke/cloud during the day & pillar of fire at night (Ex. 13ff)



Although the customs are distant and strange to us, it is clear that God was committing himself to Abram in a remarkable relationship. God was actually invoking a curse on himself should he fail to keep his covenant with Abram. This covenant, or intimate and lasting relationship between God and Abram, is one of several in the Bible. We shall see this covenant with Abram modified and adapted under Moses, David, and, eventually, Jesus Christ.

(Arnold & Beyers, *Encountering the Old Testament*, p. 102)

COVENANT AFFIRMED & EXPLAINED

- Name change from Abram to Abraham to confirm he would be the “father of many nations,” and that kings would come from him (17:5-6)
- Circumcision is commanded for Abraham & his male descendants, and will act as a sign of the covenant (17:9-14)
- Abraham’s promised son will come through Sarah, not Hagar (17:16)

OLD TESTAMENT COVENANTS

	NOAHIC	ABRAHAMIC	MOSAIC	DAVIDIC
MEDIATOR	Noah	Abraham	Moses	David
PROMISE	Will not destroy earth with flood again	Nation, Land, & Blessing to the nations	Israel to be kingdom of priests to the nations	God will build a "house" for David, including a descendant who reigns forever
BENEFICIARY	Whole earth	Abraham's Descendants	Israel	David's Seed
SIGN	Rainbow	Circumcision	Sabbath	N/A

ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

“Noteworthy here is that the covenant with Abraham was never focused solely on Israel; from the beginning there was concern that the entire world would experience blessing... Through Abraham the whole world would experience blessing.”

(Thomas Schreiner, *Covenant and God's Purpose for the World*, p. 46)

BUT THERE ARE OBSTACLES

- Abraham & Sarah are childless & old (15:2, 17:17)
- Abraham denies being married to Sarah *twice* to protect himself (12:13, 20:2)
- Abraham & Sarah scheme to accomplish God's promise their own way through Hagar (16:2)
- This decision results in conflict in the family (16:5)
- 25 years pass between promise & birth (12:4; 21:5)
- God tests Abraham with call to sacrifice Isaac (22)

ABRAHAM TESTED

After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” He said, “Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.”

(Genesis 22:1–2 ESV)



WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF GEN. 22?

- Parallel to Genesis 12, Abraham's journey begins & ends with a call for complete dependence on God.
- Refines Abraham's faith by forcing him to trust solely on God to deliver on His promises (Rom. 4 & Heb. 11)
- Reveals God as the ultimate Provider for what his people need (Jehovah Jireh)
- Foreshadows God's own plan to sacrifice his only beloved son (cf. Gen. 22:1-2 & John 3:16)

LESSON BEHIND THE OBSTACLES

“The importance of the threats to fulfillment lies in the fact that the promises point to an ultimate fulfillment that can be achieved only by the supernatural work of God.”

(Goldsworthy, *According to Plan*, p. 121)

LESSON BEHIND THE OBSTACLES

Is anything too difficult for the LORD?

At the appointed time I will return to you, at this time next year, and Sarah will have a son.”

(Genesis 18:14 NASB)



ISAAC

GOD'S PLAN CONTINUES: ISAAC

Sojourn in this land, and I will be with you and will bless you, for to you and to your offspring I will give all these lands, and ***I will establish the oath that I swore to Abraham your father.*** I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and will give to your offspring all these lands. And in your offspring all the nations of the earth shall be blessed...

(Genesis 26:3–4 ESV)

GOD'S PLAN CONTINUES: ISAAC

- Story about Isaac's **birth** shows that God can overcome obstacles to fulfill His plan (21:1)
- Story about Isaac's **near death** shows God wants his people to trust He sees things we don't (22:14)
- Story about Isaac's **marriage** shows that God can guide his people in ways that fulfill His plan (24:48)



**JACOB:
THE DECEIVER**

GENESIS 25:19-34

- Common themes present (barrenness, fraternal conflict, choice of younger over the older, favoritism, etc.)
- Core character qualities established for both brothers (hairy vs. smooth, outdoor guy vs. indoor guy, short-term vs. long-term priorities)
- Narrator's Neon Light: "Thus, Esau despised his birthright."

Larger Context:

God's promise would continue in spite of barrenness, favoritism, cultural norms, and even human sin. God's promise will prevail primarily through His sovereign grace.

GENESIS 27:1-46

- **Narrator's Nuances:** Utilizes all the senses to paint Isaac as (ironically) senseless
 - Isaac cannot see who he is blessing because his eyes are "dim"
 - Isaac hears Jacob's voice, but is told it is Esau
 - Isaac smells and feels the goat skins Jacob wore to trick him into thinking he is Esau
 - Isaac tastes food he thinks is wild game prepared by Esau, but it is goats of the herd prepared by Rebekah

Larger Context:

Establishes the irony of Jacob's attempts to "grasp" for things that God has already planned to "give" him, thus creating obstacles in the human realm to be overcome by God's divine providence.

GOD'S PLAN CONTINUES: JACOB

“In the Joseph story we will see how God works out his plan for blessing in someone's life despite the foul schemes perpetrated against him. In Jacob, however, God works out his plan for blessing in someone's life despite the foul schemes the main character himself is involved in.”

(Walton, Genesis, p. 561-562)

GENESIS 28:1-22

- Transformation is a key motif in this chapter:
 - Setting: night becomes day, the stone becomes an altar, & the city Luz (devious) becomes Bethel (house of God).
 - Jacob: the deceiver is confronted by the Truth; deserves a curse but receives a blessing; is leaving the Land but is promised he will return to the Land; is alone but is promised he will become a great assembly

Larger context:

God pursues rebels and surprises sinners with the blessings of his presence, his provision, and his protection.

GENESIS 29:1-30

- Parallels exists in this chapter with Genesis 24 (Bride for Isaac) & Genesis 27 (Jacob deceiving Isaac):
 - Same place & people involved in finding a bride (chp. 24)
 - Isaac & Jacob both tricked into giving up more than they should have to obtain what they “loved” (chp. 27)

Larger context:

Jacob's transformation comes (in part) through the school of hard knocks when he meets his match in his uncle Laban.

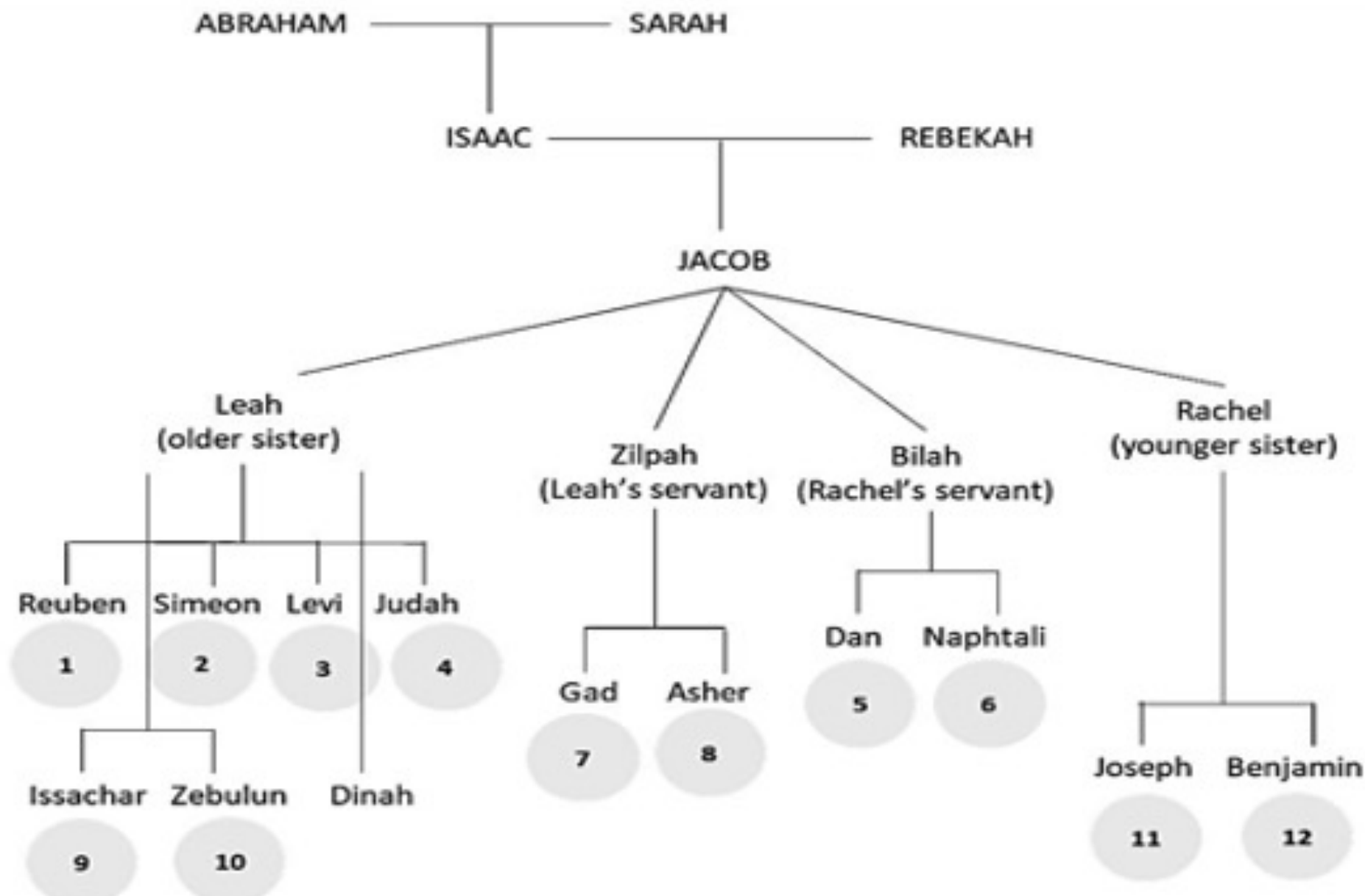
GENESIS 32:1-32

- **Jacob's Circumstances:**
 - Jacob again finds himself on a journey between two places of conflict when God meets him (Gen. 28).
 - Jacob's 1st recorded prayer (32:9-12)
 - God renames Jacob to Israel ("one who strives with God") after their wrestling match.

Larger context:

The wrestling match is a parable of Jacob's life, and his transformation takes place when he asks God to bless him instead of relying on his own self-sufficiency.

JACOB'S FAMILY TREE





JOSEPH & HIS BROTHERS

GOD'S PLAN CONTINUES: JACOB'S SONS

- Jacob has 12 sons with 4 wives, who become the 12 tribes of Israel.
- Yet again, the line of Abraham proves to be flawed and sinful as Jacob's sons exhibit jealousy, deceit, foolishness, violence, & sexual sin.
- A recurring theme in the Joseph narrative is dreams and their interpretation.

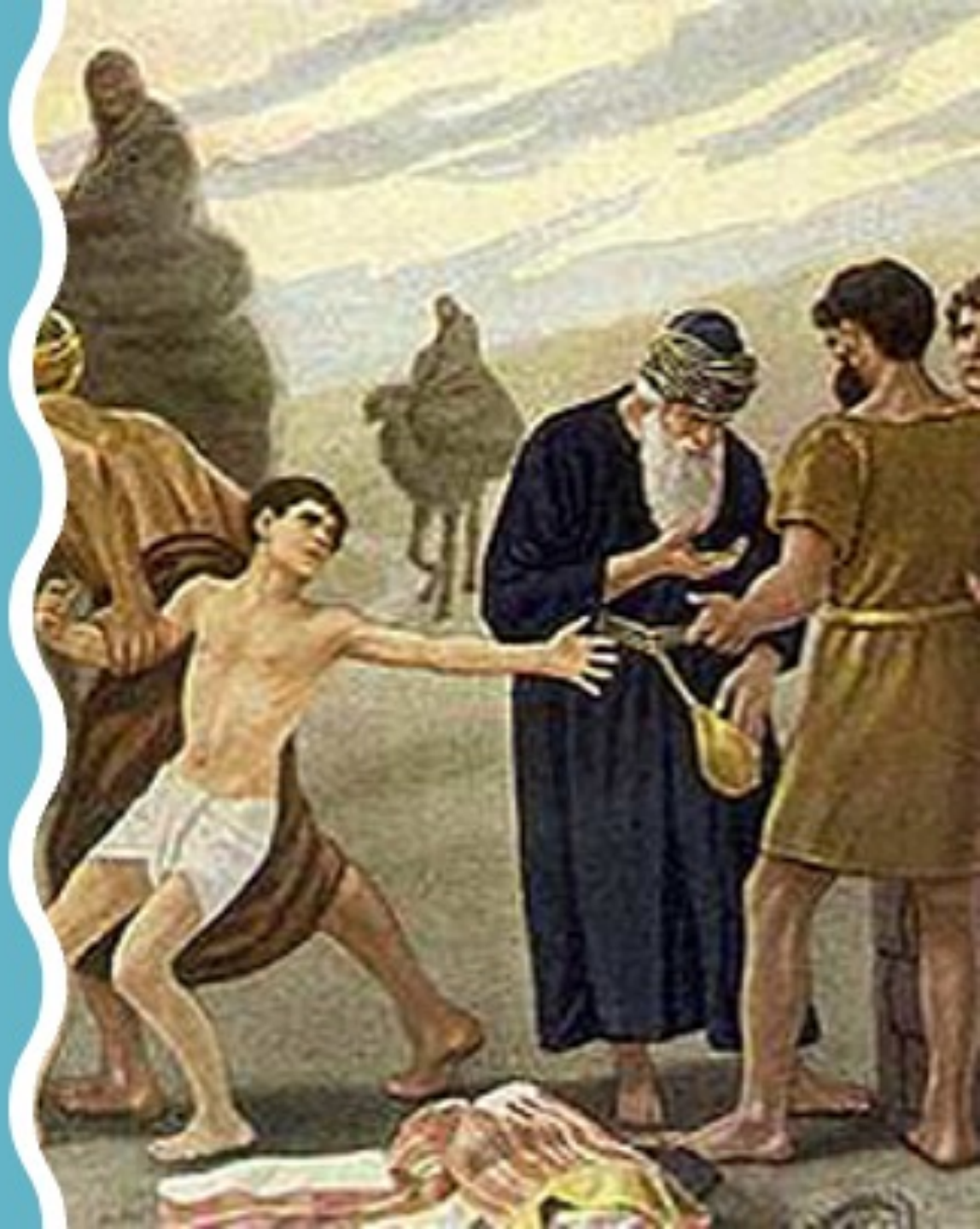
OVERVIEW: JOSEPH'S JOURNEY

- **Sold** by his brothers into slavery (37:25-28)
- **Served** faithfully in Potiphar's house (39:1-19)
- **Sent** to prison after wrongfully accused (39:20)
- **Succeeds** in prison & put in charge (39:21-23)
- **Supplies** accurate interpretations of 2 prisoners' dreams (40)
- **Slipped** the mind of his fellow prisoner for 2 years (40:23-:41:1)

OVERVIEW: JOSEPH'S JOURNEY

- **Supplies** accurate interpretations of 2 of Pharaoh's dreams & is put in charge to address famine (41)
- **Secretly** tests his brothers who visit Egypt twice to obtain food during the famine (42-44)
- **Surprises** his brothers about his true identity and extends forgiveness (45)
- **Settles** in Egypt with 70 of his family members (46-50)

**JOSEPH
HATED BY
HIS
BROTHERS**



YOUNG JOSEPH

- **Conflict**: Joseph brought “bad report” about brothers & is favored by father (37:1-4)
- **Dream #1**: Brothers’ sheaves bow down to Joseph’s sheaf (Gen. 37:5-8)
- **Dream #2**: Sun, moon, & 11 stars bowing down to Joseph (Gen. 37:9-11)

BROTHERS' RESPONSE

But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they **hated** him and could not speak peacefully to him. (Genesis 37:4)

His brothers said to him, "Are you indeed to reign over us? Or are you indeed to rule over us?" So they **hated** him even more for his dreams and for his words. (Genesis 37:8)

And his brothers were **jealous** of him, but his father kept the saying in mind. (Genesis 37:11)

JUDAH & JOSEPH



JUDAH & JOSEPH

“As the account begins, the heroes, Joseph and Judah, are immature and troubled. Joseph is a bratty talebearer. Judah is cold and spiritually insensitive. But in God’s providential design, these men are refined through difficult trials.”

(Waltke, Genesis, p. 496)

Judah	Joseph
Abandons his family (38:1)	Abandoned by family (39:1)
Blessed with children (38:2-5)	Blessed in his work (39:2-4)
Wickedness in his house (38:6-11)	Blessing in his house (39:5-6a)
Faces temptation once (38:12-15)	Faces temptation repeatedly (39:6b-10)
Gives in to temptation (38:16-19)	Resists temptation (39:11-12)
Rightly worried about being mocked by others (38:20-23)	Wrongly accused of mocking others (39:14-17)
Man of hypocrisy & anger (38:24)	Man of integrity & loyalty (39:8-10)
Confesses his sin when confronted (38:26)	Punished for sin he didn't commit (39:20)
God's blessing through twins (38:27-30)	God's blessing in prison (39:21-23)

TRACING SIGNIFICANT PARALLELS

Genesis 38	Genesis 37	Genesis 1-36
Er despised by his brother Onan	Joseph despised by his brothers	Cain & Abel / Ishmael & Isaac/ Jacob & Esau
Judah deceived by Tamar with garment	Jacob deceived by sons with garment	Isaac deceived by Jacob with garment (goatskin)
Goat used by Judah to convince Tamar	Goat used by sons to convince Jacob	Goat(s) used by Rebekah to help Jacob deceive Isaac
Judah asked to "examine" items to confirm source	Jacob asked to "examine" robe to confirm source	Blind Isaac asked to examine the hands of his son "Esau"
Younger Perez usurps older Zerah	Younger Judah usurps older Reuben	Younger Jacob usurps older Esau

JOSEPH TESTED HIS BROTHERS



JOSEPH TESTED HIS BROTHERS

- He recognizes his 10 brothers (Benjamin at home)
- He accuses them of being spies (42:9)
- He put them in prison for 3 days (42:17)
- He requires 1 brother to stay in prison until they return to Egypt with Benjamin (42:18-20)
- He returns the money they paid for the grain (42:25)
- But Jacob does not want to send Benjamin (42:38)

JOSEPH TESTED HIS BROTHERS

- They run out of grain & Judah negotiates with his dad to ensure Benjamin's safe return (43:1-8)
- The brothers return a 2nd time with Benjamin and receive a surprisingly warm welcome (43:9ff)
- Joseph returns money again but adds extra money & his silver cup to Benjamin's sack
- Brothers leave only to be confronted by Joseph's officials for theft, which they deny. But the goods are found in Benjamin's sack

JUDAH'S TRANSFORMATION

For your servant became a pledge of safety for the boy to my father, saying, 'If I do not bring him back to you, then I shall bear the blame before my father all my life.' Now therefore, ***please let your servant remain instead of the boy*** as a servant to my lord, and let the boy go back with his brothers. For how can I go back to my father if the boy is not with me? I fear to see the evil that would find my father." (Genesis 44:32–34 ESV)

JUDAH'S BLESSING BY JACOB

“Judah, your brothers shall praise you; your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; your father’s sons shall bow down before you. Judah is a lion’s cub; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He stooped down; he crouched as a lion and as a lioness; who dares rouse him? ***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.***

(Genesis 49:8–10 ESV)

JOSEPH'S FORGIVENESS

And Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?" But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed at his presence. So Joseph said to his brothers, "Come near to me, please." And they came near. And he said, "I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. And now **do not be distressed or angry with yourselves** because you sold me here, **for God sent me before you to preserve life.** (Genesis 45:3–8 ESV)

JOSEPH'S FORGIVENESS

For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are yet five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. ***So it was not you who sent me here, but God.*** He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. (Genesis 45:3–8 ESV)

JOSEPH'S SUMMARY

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.

(Genesis 50:20 ESV)

JOSEPH: A TYPE OF CHRIST

- Like Joseph, Jesus was beloved by his father
- Like Joseph, Jesus was rejected by his brothers
- Like Joseph, Jesus resisted temptation
- Like Joseph, Jesus was falsely accused
- Like Joseph, Jesus speaks God's message
- Like Joseph, Jesus is exalted after being rejected
- Like Joseph, Jesus provides salvation for his people
- Like Joseph, Jesus forgives his oppressors

PROMINENT THEMES PATRIARCHS

- Family strife & eventual reconciliation prominent in both the Jacob & Joseph cycles
- Imperfect but authentic faith among God's people
- God graciously works with flawed & sinful people to accomplish His plan
- God's providential care & faithfulness to his people in the face of impossible circumstances



OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

Part 1: The Pentateuch