

1 **THE FULLNESS OF TIME**

2. Jacob, Joseph, and Judah

2 **IN THE "FULLNESS OF TIME"**

- *In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. (Eph 1:7-10)*

3 **JACOB'S FAMILY**

4 **THE CONTEXT OF JACOB**

- Some three generations earlier, God established the Abrahamic covenant with all of the lineage of Abraham.
- God would later renew this covenant with Isaac, and then with Jacob. This was God's way of specifically choosing the Israelites out of all the nations of the world to be the means of redemption.

5 **FORESHADOWING IN THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT**

- *"And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." (Gen 15:13-16)*

6 **THE TWOFOLD TRACK OF REDEMPTION**

- In this prophecy in Genesis 15, we already see the twofold track of redemption at work:
 - As part of God's plan, God will use the bondage of the Egyptians to grow Israel into a mighty nation and judge the wicked Amorites.
 - Satan will attempt to destroy the line of promise through evil kings and oppression.

7 **ISAAC AND JACOB**

- In Genesis 17, God established Isaac – not Ishmael – as the son of promise through which the holy line would come.
- But Isaac, like his father, has two sons: Esau and Jacob.
- The Bible tells us that God chose Jacob to carry on the line of promise before he was even born or had done anything good or evil.

8 **JACOB**

- Jacob is a less-than-exemplary individual in many ways, but he is eventually sought out by God and God establishes his covenant with Jacob as well, ensuring that it is through his line that the Holy Seed will come.
- Jacob (Israel)'s descendants would eventually comprise the nation of Israel. Jacob will have twelve sons.

9 **JACOB'S SONS**

- Anytime you have a group of men/boys together you can expect a certain level of competition.
- Jacob's family was divided by favoritism and by an ongoing competition between the sisters Leah and Rachel for the attention of their husband.
- Additionally complicating things was the Levantine law and the incredibly fluid order of succession.

10 **THE LEVANTINE LAWS**

- In the time before the Law of Moses, Jacob and his sons would have been culturally bound by two sets of laws:
 - The Noachide Laws (Genesis 9:1-7)
 - The Levantine Laws
- The Levantine Laws were a number of culturally understood laws that dictated social conduct, including inheritance and succession.

11 **THE LEVANTINE LAWS**

- This is the first instance of the concept of a "kinsman redeemer." If a man dies and leaves a widow, his nearest unmarried kinsman has a responsibility to marry her and raise up seed for his brother.
 - This is so that the continuity of succession can be preserved.
- The eldest son was to receive a double-portion of the inheritance under the Levantine law. He was to be the head and leader of the family after the father's passing.

12 **THE BIRTH ORDER**

- Leah:
 - Reuben
 - Simeon
 - Levi
 - Judah
- Rachel (via Bilhah her handmaid):
 - Dan
 - Naphtali
- Leah (via Zilpah, her handmaid):
 - Gad
 - Asher
- Leah:
 - Issachar
 - Zebulun
- Rachel:
 - Joseph
 - Benjamin

13 **DISINHERITING**

- As if lineage and inheritance weren't complicated enough in a family like Jacob's, it turns out that several of Jacob's sons have actually been 'disinherited', at least insofar as losing

the blessing of the firstborn.

- By the time of the story of Joseph, there is every real possibility that Jacob means to leave everything to the oldest son of his favorite wife when he dies.

14 **THE BIRTH ORDER**

- Leah:
 - ~~Reuben~~ – Immorality with his father's concubine
 - ~~Simeon~~ – Disinherited for the slaughter of the men of Schechem
 - ~~Levi~~ – Disinherited for the slaughter of the men of Schechem
 - Judah
- Rachel (via Bilhah her handmaid):
 - ~~Dan~~ – Disinherited for some unspecified sin.
 - ~~Naphtali~~ – Disinherited for some unspecified sin.
- Leah (via Zilpah, her handmaid):
 - ~~Gad~~ – Disinherited for some unspecified sin.
 - ~~Asher~~ – Disinherited for some unspecified sin.
- Leah:
 - Issachar
 - Zebulun
- Rachel:
 - Joseph
 - Benjamin

15 **JUDAH'S FAILINGS**

16 **JUDAH**

- Judah is a fleshly man whose own sin and compromise threatens to destroy his line and make him ineligible to carry on the line promise from Jacob.
- *And Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, and her name was Tamar. But Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD put him to death. (Gen 38:6-7)*

17 **TAMAR**

- Tamar is left without a husband. According to the Levantine Law, one of Tamar's unwed brother-in-laws had to marry her to take care of her and to make sure that the continuity of the line of the firstborn was preserved.
- Onan, Judah's second son, married Tamar, but he wickedly refused to give her children that would be his brother's.

18 **TAMAR**

- *And what he did was wicked in the sight of the LORD, and he put him to death also. Then Judah said to Tamar his daughter-in-law, "Remain a widow in your father's house, till Shelah my son grows up"—for he feared that he would die, like his brothers. So Tamar went and remained in her father's house. (Gen 38:10-11)*

19 **TAMAR**

- Judah essentially withholds his son Shelah, and has no plans of giving him to Leah for a husband. Note that he actually seems to blame Leah for the death of his last two sons.

- Tamar eventually tricks Judah into giving her two sons: she has twins, Zarah and Pharez. Since these are Tamar's children, they are technically the descendents of Er, and thus the line of Judah is preserved according to Levantine law.

20 **THE SONS OF JUDAH**

- Er – The eldest, so wicked that God killed him
- Onan – So wicked that God killed him
- Shelah – Should have carried on the seed, but failed to do so because of Judah's sin
- Zarah – Judah's son by his daughter-in-law Tamar. First out of the womb, but not the first one born.
- Pharez – Youngest, through whom the Messiah would come.

21 **GOD'S JUDGING IS NOT OUR JUDGING**

- The ways and manner in which God judges people in Scripture can sometimes be confusing.
- For instance, Er or Onan are struck down for their sins while men like Jacob and Judah – who are both guilty of great deception and immorality – are allowed to continue to live and are loved and used by God.

22 **UNLESS YOU REPENT...**

- *There were some present at that very time who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And he answered them, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."* (Luk 13:1-5)

23 **GOD'S MERCIES**

- It is important to understand that it is God's mercy, and not God's judgment, at which we should marvel.
- Jacob and Judah were every bit as deserving of God's wrath as Er and Onan – and so are we.
- *It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.* (Lam 3:22-23)

24 **JOSEPH AND THE FAMINE**

25 **LEAH'S SONS' FEAR**

- Jacob had two wives – Leah and Rachel
- Rachel was the favorite; Leah however accounted for the six oldest of the sons of Jacob.
- The three oldest of Leah's sons have already been disinherited because of their sins.
- Joseph is Rachel's eldest son – and his father's favorite.

26 **LEAH'S SONS' FEAR**

- Jacob's sons have already seen a family history of the eldest son(s) being disinherited in favor of the younger sons (Isaac, Jacob).
- On top of this, Joseph is his father's favorite son.

- So Jacob's sons aren't just angry because Joseph gets better treatment than them, they're fearful that he is going to receive the eldest son's inheritance.

27 **THE COAT**

- Joseph is given a "coat of many colors" by his father as a sign of his father's love and favor.
- There is some debate about the translation of this word. It has been translated in some versions as a "striped coat" or a "coat with long sleeves."
- There is archeological evidence to suggest that colorful coats were used as a sign of nobility amongst Semitics around this period.

28 **THE COAT**

- The only other use of this term in Scripture is to denote the kind of robe worn to denote the virginity of King David's daughters (2 Samuel 13:18-19).
- The point, then, is that by this gift of a specialized garment, Jacob is showing Joseph his favor – showing that Joseph is set apart from all of his other brothers.

29 **SOLD INTO SLAVERY**

- Joseph's brothers are eventually jealous enough that they conspire to kill him.
- Only at the last minute does this plot turn into one to sell him into slavery in Egypt.
- Joseph thrives in slavery, in prison, and eventually as the rule of Egypt – second only to Pharaoh himself.

30 **THE FAMINE**

- A famine strikes the lands of both Canaan and Egypt.
- Because of Joseph's wise stewardship and tax cuts, Egypt is the only nation that is still prospering. All the world is coming to Joseph to buy grain – including his brothers, who no longer recognize him.

31 **THE FAMINE**

- To test his brothers and see whether or not their hearts have changed in the intervening years, Joseph sets up a number of tests.
- These tests culminate in Benjamin – the last son of Leah and Jacob's current favorite – being framed for theft and sentenced to be Joseph's slave.
- It is then that we see Judah's redemption manifest.

32 **JUDAH'S PLEA**

- *"Now therefore, as soon as I come to your servant my father, and the boy is not with us, then, as his life is bound up in the boy's life, as soon as he sees that the boy is not with us, he will die, and your servants will bring down the gray hairs of your servant our father with sorrow to Sheol. 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." - (Gen 44:30-34)*

33 **JUDAH'S SACRIFICE**

- Judah willingly gives himself – he willingly sacrifices his ability to return home, to ever claim the rights and the blessings of the firstborn, for Benjamin – Benjamin who for all intents

and purposes was his enemy.

- In this moment Judah secured his place as the “firstborn,” through which the line of promise would come.

34 **PARALLELS**

1 Jesus Christ

- 2 • Was God; thought it not robbery to be equal with God.
- Left the throne of heaven to serve and die for the creation that had rejected him.
- Brought about the salvation of mankind.

3 Judah

- 4 • Was in line for the inheritance of the firstborn.
- Willingly gave up his rights as the firstborn to save Benjamin – who for all intents and purposes was his enemy.
- Through Judah’s selflessness, he and his family were ultimately saved.

35 **THE TWO TRACKS OF REDEMPTION**

1 Seed of the Serpent

- 2 • Tried to morally or physically destroy the sons of Jacob so that there would be none to carry on the line.
- Sought to destroy the line of Jacob with a famine.
- Sought to destroy Jacob’s family through division.

3 Seed of the Woman

- 4 • Used wicked men to preserve the line of Jacob through Judah despite Judah’s own failings.
- Used a famine to ultimately preserve God’s people. And fulfill his covenant with Abraham.
- Preserved Jacob’s family through forgiveness.

36 **SHILOH IS COMING**

- *Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee. Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be. (Gen 49:8-10)*