

The Patriarch Era

(Genesis 12-50)

Gen. 11:27–50:26 **Patriarchal History**. The narrative now moves from the general survey of humanity to the specific family from which Israel comes. The narrative style becomes severely matter-of-fact. The narrator devotes much more time to describing the lives of the characters: whereas chapters 1–11 cover many generations, the patriarchal history deals with only four generations in 39 chapters. It begins with Abraham and goes on to his son Isaac, and Isaac's two sons Jacob and Esau; the final section focuses on Jacob's sons, especially Joseph. Here the specifics of the Abrahamic covenant are made clear: the land, the people, the blessing, and the calling. The Sinai (or Mosaic) covenant, which the first audience for these chapters receives, will provide the setting in which Israel is to put these patriarchal promises into practice. Throughout these chapters, the readers will see how God has preserved the members of his chosen family, whose calling it is to walk with him, to be the headwaters of a special people and to be the channel by which blessing comes to the entire world (ESV Study Bible).

Story Line Summary: *Abraham is chosen by God to “Father” a people to represent God to the world.*

Expansion: There are four major men in the Patriarch Era: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph

Abraham: father of the Hebrew people (Genesis 12-23) Because of Adam's son and the fall of man, God's attention is now focused on a plan of redemption for mankind. God wants a people through whom He can work to produce a reflection of Himself, and through whom He can spread the message of redemption to the world. He chooses Abraham, who becomes the father of the Hebrew people, and promises him a country (land), countless descendants (seed), and a worldwide and timeless impact (blessing). At the time, Abraham is living in UR, near the convergence of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. God leads him to the land of Canaan, where Abraham settles and has two sons, Ishmael and Isaac.

Gen. 19:24–25, the Lord rained on **Sodom and Gomorrah** sulfur and fire from out of heaven (v. 24). These words

Gen. 14:18 **Melchizedek** (which means “king of righteousness”; see Heb. 7:2) generously provides a meal for the returning victors. Salem is possibly a shortened version of “Jerusalem” (see Ps. 76:2) and is related to shalom, the Hebrew word for “peace” (see Heb. 7:2). He was priest of God Most High. Although very little is known about Melchizedek, he provides an interesting example of a priest-king linked to Jerusalem. There appears to have been an expectation that later kings of Jerusalem should resemble him (see Ps. 110:4). The book of Hebrews presents Jesus Christ, from the royal line of David, as belonging to the “order of Melchizedek” and therefore superior to the Levitical priests (Heb. 5:5–10; 6:20–7:17). “God Most High” in Hebrew is 'El 'Elyon'. 'El is the common Semitic term for “God.” To this is added the attribute 'Elyon', meaning “Most High.” Elsewhere in Genesis, other attributes are added to 'El (e.g., in Gen. 16:13 “God of seeing” translates 'El Ro'I”; in 17:1 “God Almighty” translates 'El Shaddai”; in 21:33 “Everlasting God” translates 'El 'Olam'). These different names highlight different aspects of God's nature (ESV Study Bible).

emphasize the divine nature of the punishment, the consequence of which is the total destruction of all the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah and all the vegetation (v. 25). The theme of universal destruction echoes the flood story. The judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah, the flood of chapters 6–9, and the later destruction of the Canaanites when the people of Israel entered the Promised Land (Deut. 20:16–18) all vividly demonstrate God's righteous wrath against sin, His mercy in rescuing the godly from destruction, and the certainty of the final judgment to come (cf. 2 Pet. 2:4–10) (ESV Study Bible).

Read Genesis 22 to learn about how God tests his people's faith in the LORD.

Isaac: Second father (child) of promise (Genesis 24-26) Isaac becomes the second father of promise as the fulfillment of Abraham's promises is passed down to him. He witnesses several major miracles during his life. He lives in the land of Abraham, becomes prosperous, and dies at an old age after having fathered two sons, Esau and Jacob.

Jacob: Father of the nation of Israel: (Genesis 27-35) The promises given to Abraham are passed through Isaac to Jacob, Isaac's younger son. Jacob begins life as a conniving scoundrel. However, through a series of miracles and other encounters with God, he mends his ways. Jacob has twelve sons, and the promises of Abraham are passed down to them all as a family. While Abraham is the father of the Hebrew people, Jacob is the *father of the nation of Israel*, as from his twelve sons emerge the twelve tribes of the nation of Israel. (Gen. 29:15–30) Jacob's journey to Paddan-aram to find a wife results in his obtaining not one, but two. The episode is full of irony. Having deceived his father by pretending to be the firstborn, Jacob himself is now deceived by his uncle Laban into marrying his firstborn daughter, Leah. Afterward, Laban permits Jacob to marry Rachel, but only on the understanding that Jacob will work for another seven years in order to pay the bride-price for her. [ESV Study Bible].)

Joseph: Leader in Egypt (Genesis 37-50) Jacob's sons, for the most part, have very little commitment to God's call on them as a nation. They sell their brother Joseph as a slave, and he is taken to Egypt. Because of Joseph's righteousness, he rises to become a great leader in Egypt. During a severe famine, his family comes to Egypt for food, is reunited with Joseph, and as a result, enjoys peace and comfort. After Joseph dies, however, his people are enslaved for the next four hundred years. This time of trial sharpens the spiritual hunger of the Hebrew people, and they cry out to God for deliverance.

Joseph's Timeline

| Event | Age of Joseph | Genesis |
|--|---------------|-------------|
| Joseph's father Jacob moves family from Haran to Canaan | 6 | 31:17–21 |
| Joseph sold to Potiphar in Egypt | 17 | ch. 37 |
| Joseph interprets dreams of cupbearer and baker in prison | 28 | ch. 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's father Jacob dies | 56 | 47:28 |
| Joseph dies | 110 | 50:22–26 |

Genesis 50:20 may be one of the most important verses in the book of Genesis and the Patriarch Era. Probably encouraged by news of Joseph's reaction to their message, the brothers also came and fell down before him. Once again, their obeisance and words, "Behold, we are your servants", fulfill Joseph's dreams (37:5–10). Echoing what he had said previously (see 45:5–9), Joseph stresses that God transformed their evil into good and that as a result, many people have been kept alive. This principle that God ultimately overrules human sin for his glory and the ultimate good of mankind is important in Scripture. The crucifixion is the prime example of it (Acts 3:13–26; Rom. 8:28). Joseph's gracious, forgiving attitude unites the family. Like the lives of Jacob and Esau, Joseph's life was marred by deadly hatred between brothers. In both cases, the story ends with the offended brother offering full forgiveness to those who had mistreated him (Gen. 33:4) (ESV Study Bible).

Name _____ Date _____ (1.5 points each) Score _____

Patriarch Era Homework

List the four patriarchs in Genesis 12-50 in birth order:

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|

Abraham and his wife, _____, (18:9) had a son, _____, (21:3) who married _____ (24:67) and they had twin sons, _____ and _____ (25:24-26). Jacob and his four wives had twelve sons, who became the patriarchs of the 12 tribes of _____ (32:28).

List the 12 sons of Jacob: (Genesis 35:22-26)

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

What wife of Jacob gave birth to six or half of his sons? _____

Who was the mother of Joseph and Benjamin? _____

What are the three parts of the covenant God made with Abraham?

| | | |
|----------|----------|----------|
| L | S | B |
|----------|----------|----------|

There are several name changes in Genesis that are significant:

Abram to _____ which means _____ (17:5)

Sarai to _____ which means _____ (17:15)

Jacob to _____ which means _____ (32:28)

Other names have significant meanings in the original Hebrew:

Isaac means _____ (21:6)

Esau means _____ (25:25)

Jacob means _____ (25:26)

Benjamin means _____ (35:18)

Who is Abraham's nephew? _____ In what city did he build a family? _____

Who is Melchizedek? _____
(14:18)

Describe what happened of significance in each of these locations:

| |
|----------------|
| Haran (12:4) |
| Sodom (19) |
| Moriah (22:2) |
| Bethel (28:19) |
| Peniel (32:30) |

Organizing the Patriarch Era by chapters in Genesis:

Genesis chapters 12 -23 tell the story of _____ and _____ and their descendants.

Genesis 24 is about _____ and his wife _____.

Genesis chapters 25-29 describe the life of twin boys: _____ and _____.

Genesis chapters 29-31 tell about Jacob's life with _____ (first wife) and _____ and their father _____.

Genesis chapters 32-33 tell the story of the reunion of two brothers: _____ and _____ who have been at odds with each other since the stealing of a birthright and blessing from their father.

Genesis chapters 34-36 seem out of place as a story of violence, rape and death. The main character is the daughter _____.

Genesis chapters 37-50 are all about the life of _____ who ultimately saves his family from starvation as the Prime Minister of the land.

Joseph is sold into slavery for _____ pieces of silver. (37:28)

After the ultimate in promotions, who is Joseph's boss in Egypt? _____

Joseph takes a Gentile bride and by her has two sons they are: _____ and _____.

Genesis closes with the death of _____ in _____.

What is the name of the major river in Egypt? _____

What is the name of the land that God promises Abraham? _____ (17:8)

God promises Abraham descendants as the stars of heaven. How is that being fulfilled?

Who are the three main male characters of the entire book of Genesis?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| A | N | A |
|---|---|---|