



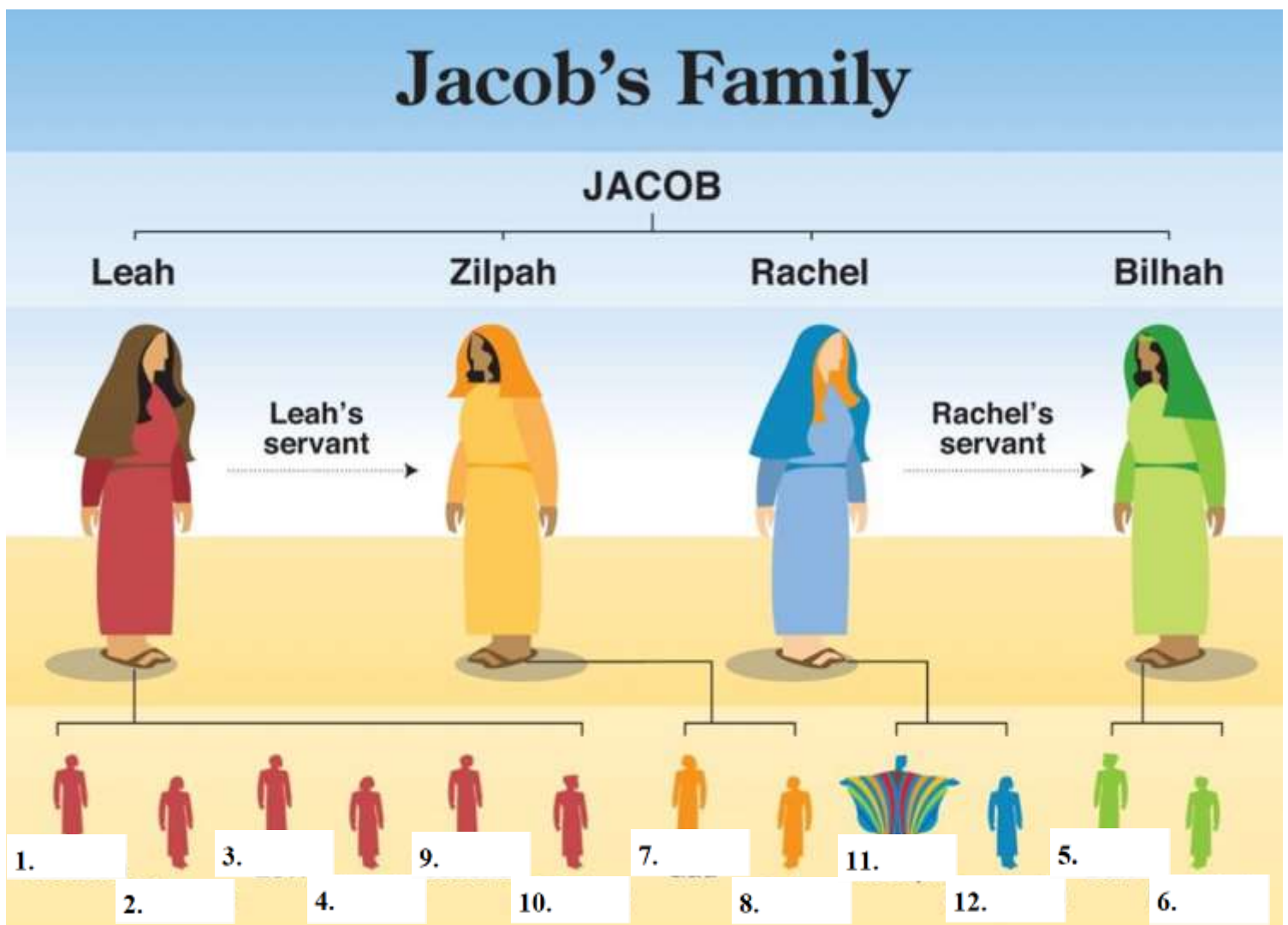
A Study of the Book of GENESIS

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WEEK ELEVEN

The Sons of Jacob & the Story of Joseph (Genesis 34-50)

The sons of Jacob in order of birth (and to whom) are as follows:



GENESIS 33-34 – Jacob’s Journeys, the Rape of Dinah, & the Vengeance of Her Brothers

At this point, Jacob met two adversaries on his journey, his father-in-law Laban and his brother Esau, and God protected him from both. Now, there will be new dangers in Canaan.

- **33:17-20 – Jacob _____ in Succoth and Shechem**

The first place Jacob lives in Canaan after his return is on the east side of the Jordan, a location known as Succoth. The place name Succoth (*sūkkôt*, the plural of *sukkâ*, “_____”) is so named because Jacob built booths (shelters) for his livestock there. After several years, Jacob moves his family to _____, on the west side of the Jordan in Canaan. It appears that he is planning to stay here, too, as evidenced by the fact that he purchases the land he will live on. Like his grandfather, Abraham, Jacob builds an altar there. Going by the new name God had given him (Israel, 32:28), he names the altar *El Elohe Israel*, which means “_____ is _____ of _____,” recalling Jacob’s vow made in Bethel (28:20-21).¹

- **34:1-5 – The Rape of _____**

Dinah, Jacob’s daughter, visits some of her peers in town. She is a child of about seven when the family left Haran, which would put her somewhere around the age of ___ by the time they lived in Shechem. More and more she catches the eye of Shechem, the son of _____, the town’s leader. One day, Shechem yields to his lust, takes her, and _____ her (“violate” is *’ānâ*, meaning “to humiliate”). Ironically, despite of his violence, he “_____” her and is eager to marry her. He tells his father, “Get me this girl as my wife,” that is, “arrange a marriage for me.”

Word travels fast. Hearing that his daughter was _____ (*tāmē’*, “polluted”), Jacob keeps quiet.

- **34:6-29 – Jacob’s _____ Deceive Shechem**

As soon as Dinah’s brothers hear the news, they rush home “grieved and very angry” (literally, “filled with grief and fury”). Shechem’s father Hamor, leaves Dinah at Shechem’s house (34:17, 26) and, with Shechem and his other sons, comes out to Jacob’s tent to seek _____ for _____ between Shechem and Dinah. Hamor asks Jacob to name whatever he wants for a bride price. We read _____ from Jacob, only from his sons.

They insist that _____ the _____ of Shechem be _____ for a marriage to take place. Hamor and Shechem, as members of the leading family in the town, convince the other men to consent.

Three days after the circumcisions, when all the men are sore, _____ and _____, two of Dinah's full brothers (children of Leah) secretly attack the town, kill all the men, and retrieve their sister. Then the other brothers loot the houses and carry off the women and children as slaves.

- **34:30-31 – Jacob Intervenes _____**

Only now does Jacob speak, and only out of fear. His sons have broken the peace. Jacob seems more concerned with peace than honor.

What should Jacob have done?

Instead of taking Shechem to court, Jacob is silent. The result is that he allows his sons to take matters into their own hands and commit a horrible crime.ⁱⁱ

GENESIS 35 – Jacob's Return to Bethel, and the Death of Rachel & Isaac

We now come to the final chapter in the story of Jacob's spiritual journey. From this point on, Genesis shifts its focus to Joseph, not Jacob, with the exception of Jacob's farewell blessings given to his sons (Genesis 49). Chapter 35 records four burials and three funerals, indicating that God is still cutting ties that bound Jacob to earthly things. Some of these ties are very dear.ⁱⁱⁱ

- **35:1-7 – Jacob's _____ and _____**

After the slaughter at Shechem, God intervenes. This isn't just an escape from the danger of Shechem, but a call to holiness, separation, and renewed faith. So, Jacob commands his household and other servants to purify themselves.

Who would have foreign gods in Jacob's household? Jacob's clan now included dozens of _____ and _____ captured from _____, all of whom had grown up believing in idols and amulets. When they left Shechem to go to Bethel ("the house of God"), Jacob was determined that they make a clean break with idolatry and to lead his suddenly-expanded household to trust in the true God, Yahweh, and in him only.

Jacob calls his household to _____ themselves _____ first, then they went to Bethel. In Bethel, Jacob built an altar, no doubt with the assistance of his sons, thus fulfilling the vow he made decades before in this very spot. It is a time of renewal and closeness to God.

- **35:9-15 – God _____ and Jacob _____**

In response to Jacob’s rededication, God blesses Jacob. God identifies himself this time as *El Shaddai* (“_____”), a title God used first when he revealed himself to Abraham (17:1) and repeats here (as well as in 43:14; 48:3; and 49:25). The command to “be _____ and _____” is reminiscent of God's first command to Adam and Eve (Genesis 1:28) as well as to Noah (Genesis 9:1). The promises of a great people and the land are part of the blessing that Jacob’s father and grandfather had received before him.

Jacob responded this time as he had responded the first time God had appeared to him at Bethel. He memorialized the event by setting up a monument to Yahweh and anointing it. But here he performs another act of worship, pouring out a _____ on it. This is the first time in Scripture that we see the drink offering (libation) poured out before the Lord. Although it was not a primary part of the sacrificial system, drink offerings would be offered frequently as gifts of extra devotion, consecration, and sacrifice (see Philippians 2:17).

- **35:16-29 – Four _____ of Jacob**

1) _____, Rebekah's nurse, dies near Bethel (35:8).

2) _____, Jacob’s beloved wife, dies in childbirth (35:16-20).

3) _____, the firstborn son, has relations with Jacob's concubine Bilhah (35:22).

4) _____, Jacob’s father, dies at the family home in Hebron at the age of 180 (35:29).

GENESIS 37-50 –Joseph’s Journey and Israel in Egypt

The final 14 chapters of Genesis highlight the life of Jacob’s oldest son by Rachel and his most favored son, Joseph (Gen. 30:22-24). Joseph was spoiled by Jacob (Israel) and hated by his brothers who were primarily the sons of Jacob’s concubines. Because of their jealousy (and Joseph’s dreams), the brothers carried out a horrible act of vengeance. This singular act initiated a chain of events that would determine the future of God’s people for hundreds of years.

Genesis 37:12-36 – Joseph’s brothers sell him into _____, and he becomes a servant to an official of Pharaoh, named Potiphar.

Genesis 39 – Joseph becomes Potiphar’s _____ in charge of his whole house, but Potiphar’s wife falsely accuses him of attempted rape.

Genesis 40 – Joseph is thrown into _____ where he comes to Pharaoh’s attention because he interprets dreams.

Genesis 41:1-38 – Joseph wins _____ confidence by giving him good advice about an approaching _____.

Genesis 41:39-42:5 – Joseph becomes _____ in the kingdom of Egypt, and his brothers come to him for food during the famine.

Genesis 42:6-50:26 – Joseph reestablishes contact with his _____ and moves them to Egypt.

Two Take-Aways from Joseph’s Life

- 1) _____ do not determine our choices; they simply give us opportunities. It is our inward character in _____ to these external circumstances that determine our choices (James 1:12-14).
- 2) Neither God’s sovereignty nor His will _____ due to our circumstances. They are mere opportunities for His omnipotence.

GENESIS 49 – Jacob’s Prophetic Blessings on His 12 Sons

When Jacob was about to die, he called his 12 sons to his side to tell them what would happen “in days to come” (Genesis 49:1). We will look at the whole of what he said to them as recorded in the Bible (Genesis 49: 3-27).

- **To _____ (49:3-4).** Jacob remembers Reuben laying with his concubine, Bilhah (Gen. 35:2). As a result, his blessing went to Joseph’s two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. Indeed, the tribe of Reuben never provided a leader of any kind for the nation as a whole. In the later journeys to the Promise Land, the Reubenites were the first to ask for a place to settle before ever crossing the Jordan (Numbers 32). They participated in erecting an unauthorized place of worship (Joshua 22:10-34). And during the times of the Judges, the tribe of Reuben failed to answer the call to arms (Judges 5:15-16).
- **To _____ and _____ (49:5-7).** It was Simeon and Levi who led the charge of the brothers to kill the men of Shechem after the ruler’s son defiled their sister, Dinah (Gen. 33:18-34:31). Simeon was given an inheritance “within the inheritance of the children of Judah” (Joshua 19:1), but some of the sons of Simeon were captured and dwelled in the lands of the Edomites and Amalekites (1 Chronicles 4:39-43). During the divided kingdom, many of the tribe left Israel to join the nation of Judah (2 Chronicles 15:9). Apparently they were eventually either mostly assimilated by Judah or scattered outside of Israel since little is heard from them after the days of King Asa (1 Kings 15-16).
As for the descendants of Levi, none ever had an inheritance of their own in the land. Rather only cities scattered throughout all the other tribes were settled by the Levites (Joshua 21:1-3). However, the Levites largely redeem themselves by God choosing them as Israel’s priestly tribe. Indeed, Moses was a Levite.
- **To _____ (49:8-12).** The most important aspect of Jacob’s blessing is in verse 10, where Jacob assured him that the scepter (*shebet*, first mentioned here, a symbol of rulership) would never depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver (*chaqqaq*, first mentioned here, “the one who decrees”) from between his feet, until the coming of “Shiloh” (“to whom it belongs”). Jesus is called the “Lion of the Tribe of Judah.” The lineage leading to Jesus goes through Judah. Jacob spoke prophecy in blessing Judah.
- **To _____ (49:13).** In Joshua 19:11, a brook from Zebulun’s territory extends to the sea, fulfilling this blessing.
- **To _____ (49:14-15).** Issachar’s tribe was hard-working, tough, vigorous, and unfaltering, living up to this blessing. Historically, Issachar had rich lands and rich crops, which attracted marauders and captors.

- **To _____ (49:16-18).** Dan's tribe indeed judged but was not known for their moral standing or religious righteousness. While the tribe was unimpressive in appearances (it occupied the smallest area of any of the tribes), it was a dangerous adversary, well able to protect Israel's northern borders. On the other hand, the Danites are the ones who officially introduced idolatry into the land of Israel (Judges 18:30-31), and King Jeroboam set up a pagan altar on the tell of Dan.
- **To _____ (49:19).** The Gadites were known as mighty men of valor, well capable of protecting Israel's eastern border along the Jordan.
- **To _____ (49:20).** Asher's lot fell on the rich northern seacoast north of Mount Carmel, all the way to Tyre and Sidon. However, they failed to take possession of the region and soon became insignificant.
- **To _____ (49:21).** The tribe would be known for their swiftness as warriors, but also as composers of eloquent speech and literature. The best-known of this tribe was Barak, who, with Deborah, won a mighty victory over the Canaanites (Judges 4:6, 15). The prediction of his "goodly words" was clearly fulfilled in measure by his victory song (Judges 5:1-31).
- **To _____ (49:22-26).** Joseph received the lengthiest blessing from his father. No other son received such direct references to our sovereign God, whom Joseph revered in all his ways. The prophecies of Jacob on Joseph were fulfilled in the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, especially the former. Many of Israel's leaders were from these tribes, including Joshua, Deborah, and Samuel (Ephraim), as well as Gideon and Jephthah (Manasseh). It is significant that Jacob's blessings centered especially on Joseph and Judah, for these two eventually became the two dominant divisions of Israel. It is also significant that only physical blessings were promised to Joseph, whereas spiritual blessings were promised to Judah (namely being the ancestor of the Messiah), as well as physical blessings and political leadership.
- **To _____ (49:27).** Benjamin's small tribe was war-like. However, they made a shameless defense of their evil in Gibeah which almost cost them their identity as one of the twelve tribes (Judges 19; 20). Israel's first king (Saul, 1 Samuel 9:1-2) was of the tribe of Benjamin, as was the apostle Paul (Philippians 3:5).^{iv}

Why Is the Number 12 Important in the Bible?

12 princes (Genesis 17:20), 12 sons of Jacob (Genesis 35:22), 12 tribes of Israel (Genesis 49:28), 12 springs of water at Elim (Exodus 15:27), 12 pillars erected by Moses, according to the 12 tribes of Israel (Exodus 24:4), 12 jewels in the high priest's breastplate (Exodus 28:21), 12 bulls (Numbers 7:84), 12 silver plates (Numbers 7:87), 12 apostles (Matthew 10:2), 12 gates (Revelation 21:21). This is only a portion of the 161 times the number 12 is mentioned in Scripture. The "notable 12s" list starts with the 12 sons of Jacob who became the 12 tribes of Israel and ends with 12 kinds of fruit on the tree of life (Revelation 22:2). Only the numbers three (388 times), seven (373 times), and one (cf. John 10:30: 345 times) are recorded more. From a look at Scripture, here's what we can conclude about its significance:

- 12 is simply the number God _____.
- It represents God's _____.

What Can We Learn from the Sons of Jacob?

- **Choices have _____.** Reuben defiled his father's bed and forfeited his rights as the eldest son. Simeon's and Levi's tribes were scattered because of their willful massacre of the men of Shechem. A look at each son's history shows the consequences.
- **Don't play _____ with your children.** Jacob learned this through his sons' scorn of Joseph. They sold him into slavery out of spite and jealousy (Genesis 37:25).
- **God draws _____ lines with crooked _____.** Joseph, though scorned and abandoned to slavery by his brothers was used mightily by God in the redemption of the nation of Israel (Genesis 39-50). Judah and Tamar are in the lineage of Jesus, despite Judah's sinful action toward her (Genesis 38).^v

ⁱ Ralph F. Wilson, "Discipleship Lessons from the Life of Jacob: #5, Jacob Returns to Bethel (Genesis 33:17-35:29), *Jesus Walk Bible Study Series*, 2023. https://www.jesuswalk.com/jacob/5_bethel.htm. Accessed May 6, 2023.

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ John Phillips, *Exploring Genesis* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 272-273.

^{iv} Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Record: A Scientific & Devotional Commentary on the Book of Beginnings* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1976), 651-661.

^v Wilson, "Discipleship Lessons from the Life of Jacob."