

SCRIPTURES

Genesis 21:9-21, Hagar and Ishmael Sent Away
Genesis 22:1-19, Abraham Is Faithful
Genesis 25:19-34, The Birth of Jacob and Esau
Genesis 29:1-5, 13-30, Leah and Rachel
Genesis 32:22-32, Jacob Wrestles
Genesis 37:1-36, The Story of Joseph
Genesis 41:25-57; 42:1-5, Joseph Becomes Governor
Genesis 45:1-28, God Rescues Joseph's Family
Genesis 47:1-12, 27-31, Israel in Egypt

1. Genesis uses words to make a foundation that is solid and true. But we don't build the foundation. The foundation is given. The foundation is firmly in place.
2. **Genesis is a verbal witness to that rock:**
 - God's *creative* acts,
 - God's *intervening* and *gracious* judgments,
 - God's *call to a life* of faith,
 - God's *making a covenant* with us.
3. Genesis presents none of its material as an abstract, bloodless truth or principle. **We are given a succession of stories with named people**—people who loved and quarreled, believed and doubted, had children and married, experienced sin and grace.
4. God doesn't work impersonally from space; he works with us where we are, as he finds us.
5. It is critical that we come to understand that in scripture God is revealed as the initiator of all things regarding our relationship with the divine.
6. God has initiated a cosmic plan to bring creation back into a full relationship that is aligned with and committed to God's will and purpose. This plan is then built on a foundation of promises called covenants.
7. God navigates a relationship with humanity through covenants.
8. Covenants are agreements or promises made by God with humanity that creates a forward motion to God's supreme plan of reconciliation. God never breaks a covenant.
9. The Bible can be understood through a framework comprising six significant covenants. The Promises made to

- Adam
- Noah
- Abraham
- Moses
- David and
- New Covenant – Jesus Christ is the New Covenant (the promise to us)

These covenants illustrate the evolving relationship between God and humanity as revealed throughout Scripture. 9.

9. The Hebrew faith differed markedly from the religions of sedentary peoples of the Fertile Crescent. The Fertile Crescent is a crescent-shaped region in the Middle East, it encompasses the lands between the Nile River and the Persian Gulf, known for its fertile soil.

10. The sedentary people of the Fertile Crescent practiced religions that bound their deity to a sacred location, The “God of the ancestors” was not bound to a place.

11. The discovery at the heart of this session is that God’s promise of children, land, fame, and blessings is the primary theme connecting all the stories of Abraham and Sarah and their descendants.

13. Review Scriptures

14. Foundation is laid in these chapters for events that will take place over 400 years later in Egypt.

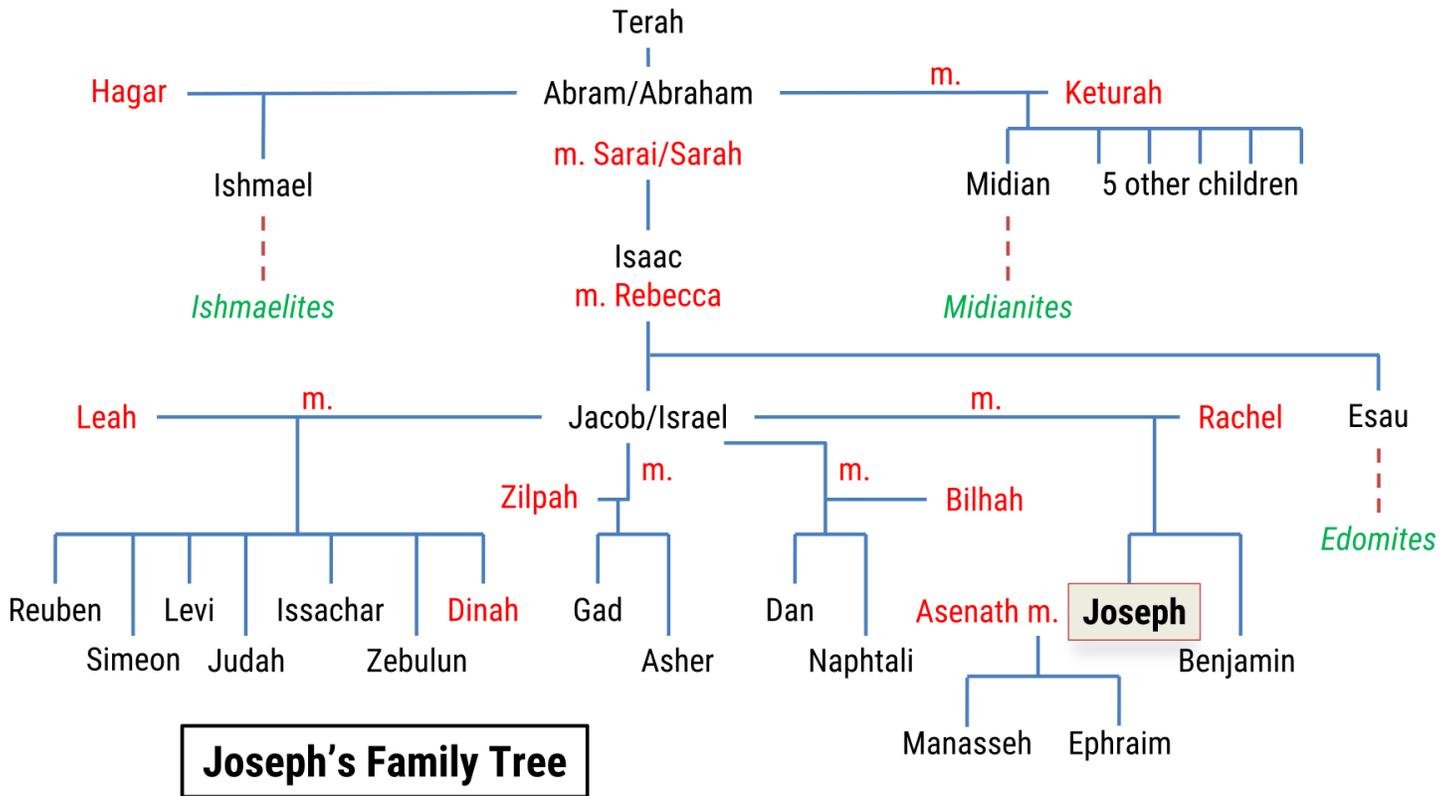
15. **These stories not only tell of God’s promise and ways in which it was fulfilled**, but also of the doubts and difficulties along the way.

16. Learning to take the original language of the Old Testament, which is called Biblical Hebrew or Classical Hebrew, into account when reading scripture, can enrich the meaning of the text. Because these meanings are so important to our knowledge of the Biblical texts, *they are often included in footnotes.*

Reflections:

1. Why do you think God uses covenants as a means of working with humanity?
- 2.. Talk about the importance of God’s covenant for the continuing story of the people of God.
3. What is the new covenant?
4. How is the New Covenant alike with the others and how does it differ?

3. Which story of the Genesis drama do you view as most significant? Why?
4. Which story in Genesis do you most relate to? Why?
5. How does knowing these stories shape and inform your faith today?



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