

Genesis 36-37

March 20, 2011

Introduction:

We are going to begin today with some questions about what we have studied over the past several weeks. Who was the first Patriarch (PAY-tree-ark) and the first Jew? [Abraham]

Does anyone know what the word “Patriarch” means?

- Patriarch means “ruling father”. The Patriarch was the one to whom God made the promises of His blessing, of making that person a great nation, and of giving to him the land of Palestine / Canaan.

Even though he was a man of faith, what mistake did the first Patriarch make that has implications even in our day?

- Trying to accomplish God’s will his way (having a son and birthing a people), Abraham gave birth to a son by a handmaid. Ishmael became the father of all of the Arab people. He is described in **Genesis 16:11-12**. (Turn to and read those verses.)

*11 And the angel also said, “You are now pregnant and will give birth to a son. You are to name him Ishmael (which means ‘God hears’), for the Lord has heard your cry of distress. 12 This son of yours will be a wild man, as untamed as a wild donkey! He will raise his fist against everyone, and everyone will be against him. Yes, he will live in open hostility against all his relatives.” **NLT***

- The entire Middle East conflict is based upon the Arabs and the Jews both claiming that Palestine / Canaan / Israel is their land because it was given to them by *their father Abraham*.

What sacrificial act earned this man the right to be the father of the Jews?

- His willingness to sacrifice the love of his life: his son born to him in old age - **Isaac**.

Who was the second Patriarch?

- Isaac

Isaac’s wife had twins. Who are they and what is their story?

- **Esau and Jacob were born to Rebekah**. Esau, being the oldest, was the rightful heir of his father. The “birthright” and the “blessing” both belonged to Esau. Jacob talked Esau out of his birthright for soup and later tricked his father Isaac into blessing him...thinking that he was blessing Esau.

Even though he swindled the birthright and blessing from his brother, whom did God select to be the third Patriarch?

- **Jacob**, whose name God changed to Israel.

What event seemed to “break” Jacob and change his life?

- Jacob wrestled with the preincarnate Jesus (THE angel of the Lord: Jacob says he saw God “face to face” – **Genesis 32:30**). His name is changed and his character is changed.

Read Exodus 3:6. *6 I am the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” When Moses heard this, he covered his face because he was afraid to look at God. **NLT***

What do you think is significant about this list of the first three Patriarchs?

- **Abraham lied** twice about who his wife was and conceived Ishmael trying to accomplish God's will by means of the flesh. **Isaac lied** about who his wife was and preferred his son Esau to his son Jacob, treating the boys differently. **Jacob was a conniving swindler** who deceived his father and stole the blessing from his brother. God is the God of *imperfect* people. God is the God of the "second chance". The Bible does seek to hide the flaws of its "heroes". God is a forgiving God.

36:1-43: In chapter 36 we have the genealogy of Esau. These genealogies sometimes have no rich meaning to us but they are very important historical documents. What are some of the significant things that are mentioned in this chapter? Some of them will have a part of Israel's history for hundreds of years to come.

- First, **Esau** married two Canaanite women (36:2. How would you like to be married to someone name Oholibamah {*oh-HO-lee-bah-mah*}?). He apparently married these pagan women to "stick it" to his parents. This may be a part of why God chose and blessed Jacob. For years to come the Jews will be at war with the Canaanite people.
- Second, **Esau** became known as Edom (*EE-dum* - 36:8) and the father of the Edomites (36:43). The Edomites will be at war with the Jews for years to come.
- Third, **Esau** had a grandson named Amalek (*AM-uh-leck*). The Amalekites (*uh-MAL-uh-kites*) would be at war with Israel for years to come.

Don't pass over the lists of names in the Bible, because sometimes there will be a hidden spiritual "gem" tucked away in the list. Do any of you recall the name Ahithophel (uh-HITH-uh-fee)?

- **Ahithophel was David's counselor. David considered Ahithophel's counsel to be God's counsel (2 Samuel 16:23). Ahithophel later turns against David, wants to track him down and kill him, and advises David's rebel son Absalom to have sex with all of David's concubines (harem) in order to "stick it" to his father David. When Absalom did not allow Ahithophel to track down and kill David, Ahithophel went and hung himself.**

What on earth happened to this one-time man of God who completely changes and ends up committing suicide?

- The answer is found in a couple of who-goes-with-who lists. **2 Samuel 11:3** tells us that Bathsheba was the daughter of Eliam (*EE-lee-um*). **2 Samuel 23:34** tells us that Eliam was the son of Ahithophel. David has his affair with Ahithophel's granddaughter and had the husband of his granddaughter (Uriah) murdered in an attempt to cover his sin. Ahithophel got bitter, never confronted David, and waited for his chance to get revenge. When Absalom wouldn't let Ahithophel track down and kill David, Ahithophel despaired and took his own life.

Always read the lists and look for some great truth tucked away in them.

37:1-4: Who can tell us what we learn in chapter 37 verses 1 to 4?

- At the age of 17, Joseph reports to his father some bad behavior in his brothers. We also learn that Jacob preferred Joseph to his other sons and make him a special coat. This resulted in Joseph's brothers resenting him.

What life principle do we learn in verse 2?

- Bad guys always blame the cops. Rather than accepting responsibility for bad behavior, people who sin usually try to put the blame on the person who catches them or holds them accountable. When an unhealthy person meets a healthy person, the unhealthy person always thinks that the healthy person is the unhealthy person.

What do you think about what is said of Jacob in [verse 3](#)?

- It was a huge mistake to show preference to one child over the others. They were sure to be resentful. In the future, we will see that Joseph is by far the better man of these boys, but at this point he doesn't seem to be rewarded for better behavior (choices and consequences), just preferred because he came along later in Jacob's life.

[37:5-11](#): What takes place in [verses 5 to 11](#)?

- Joseph has two dreams. In the first, his brothers bow down to him. In the second, his mother and father also bow before him. As a result of this, his brothers hated him even more. His father thought the dream to be absurd but he remembered it.

[37:12-36](#): What takes place in [verses 12 to 36](#)?

- Jacob sends Joseph to check on his brothers. They decide to kill him but Reuben talks them into throwing Joseph into a pit and plans to rescue him later. A caravan of Ishmaelites passes by on their way to Egypt. Judah recommends selling Joseph to them as a slave to avoid murder and having Joseph's blood on their hands. They do so and then tear Joseph's coat and cover it with blood. Reuben returns to find Joseph gone. They give the bloody coat to Jacob and he assumes that a wild animal has eaten Joseph. Jacob is heart-broken. Upon their arrival in Egypt, the Ishmaelites sell Joseph to a man named Potiphar (*PAH-ti-fur*) who was the captain of the Pharaoh's bodyguards.

What do you think of how Jacob grieved over losing Joseph?

- He said that he would grieve this loss to the grave. This is a true-life experience; you never "get over" losing someone you love: you just learn to go on.
- It also says here that he refused to be comforted. If we don't learn to "go on" when we lose someone we love, then those who love us *lose* us. If a mother loses a child and never goes on, then her other children lose a mother and her husband loses a wife.
- When we lose someone we love, we need to hold onto what we still have rather than keep grieving what we have lost. We can miss out on the blessing's (people) that are still ours by continuing to emotionally hover over what we no longer have (the loved one who is gone).

Joseph is [17 here](#). He will be [30](#) when his dream comes true, he rules in Egypt, and his family bows down to him. Jacob will grieve deeply until he know that Joseph is indeed alive. [See Genesis 45:27](#).

- *27 But when they repeated to Jacob everything Joseph had told them, and when he saw the wagons Joseph had sent to carry him, their father's spirits revived. [NLT](#)*