

# PATRIARCHS

## GENESIS 12-36

### AN OVERVIEW



When humanity drifted further from God, His pursuit never wavered. He chose a family to carry His promise of redemption to the world, a family through whom the Saviour would come. Through their lives, we see God pursuing a promised people for Himself by calling them to specific tasks, making covenant promises and working for good in their acts of faith, adversity, and doubts.

At the heart of Israel's story stand Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the patriarchs. They are the physical and spiritual ancestors of a nation set apart. God walked so closely with them that He became known by their names: the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

#### ABRAHAM: THE FATHER OF THE PATRIARCHS

God called Abraham to leave behind everything he knew: his homeland, family, comfort, and journey to a land He would reveal. God made a covenant promise with Abraham to give him three things: land, descendants as numerous as the stars and that all nations would be blessed through him. With faith and moments of hesitation, Abraham obeyed. But doubt crept in as he and his wife, Sarah, struggled to have a child. In their impatience, they had a son, Ishmael, through Sarah's servant. Yet God's promise of a Redeemer was not dependent on human effort. Against all odds, Sarah gave birth to Isaac.

#### ISAAC: THE SON OF PROMISE

Isaac grew to be a man of faith, even trusting God in one of the most profound tests: when Abraham was asked to sacrifice him. Isaac's willingness to trust revealed deep faith. Later, when Abraham sent a servant to find a wife for Isaac, he trusted God's choice and married Rebekah. God reaffirmed His covenant with Isaac, promising to make his descendants a great nation and bless the world through them.

#### JACOB: THE DECEIVER

Isaac and Rebekah had twin sons, Esau and Jacob. Despite Isaac's preference for Esau, God chose Jacob to carry His promise. Jacob tricked Esau out of his birthright and blessing and fled in fear to his mother's family. In exile, Jacob experienced a transformative encounter with God, wrestling with Him in a crisis of faith. Refusing to let go without a blessing, Jacob was transformed, and God renamed him Israel, marking a new identity as one who wrestles with God.

#### JOSEPH: THE FAVOURITE

Jacob's family grew to include 12 sons, but Joseph, his favourite, stirred jealousy among his brothers. Betrayed and sold into slavery, Joseph endured hardship but trusted God. He rose to power in Egypt, saving countless lives during a famine, including his brothers. Joseph's life foreshadowed Jesus: one man through whom God brought rescue and salvation to many.

Through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, God prepared a family and a nation for the Saviour's arrival. Despite their struggles, His faithfulness never wavered, weaving redemption through ordinary lives to pursue humanity.

# FAMILY TREE: THE PATRIARCHS



Genesis 12-22: Abraham + Sarah

**ABRAHAM**

Following God into the unknown

**HAGAR**

**SARAH**

**KETURAH**

**ISHMAEL**

Genesis 23-27: Isaac + Rebekah

**ISAAC**

Trusting God's word over personal desires

**REBEKAH**

**ESAU**

Genesis 38-36: Jacob + Rachel

**JACOB**

Wrestling with God for His blessing

**LEAH**

**BILHAH**

**ZILPAH**

**RACHEL**

Reuben

Simeon

Levi

Judah

Issachar

Zebulun

Dinah

Dan

Naphtali

Gad

Asher

**JOSEPH**

Trusting God  
when life falls apart

Benjamin



# EACH PATRIARCH TOOK AN IMPORTANT STEP OF FAITH

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## ABRAHAM

Following God into the unknown

## ISAAC

Trusting God's word over personal desires

## JACOB

Wrestling with God for His blessing

## JOSEPH

Trusting God when life falls apart

## KEY THEMES

- 1 Covenant
- 2 God's Choosing and Purpose
- 3 God's Faithfulness in Adversity
- 4 Identity and Transformation
- 5 Breaking Family Patterns



## 1. COVENANT

God engages humanity through **covenants**:  
binding promises reflecting  
His unwavering commitment.

ABRAHAM'S COVENANT (GENESIS 12, 15, 17)

# 1

## LAND

The land of Canaan

# 2

## DESCENDANTS

A great nation (fulfilled in Israel)

# 3

## BLESSING

Abraham's offspring will be a blessing to all nations

THE COVENANT IS REAFFIRMED WITH ISAAC  
(GENESIS 26) AND JACOB (GENESIS 28)

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. How do you see God pursuing relationships with His people in this section of scripture?
2. Where do you see hints and promises of Jesus in these chapters?
3. What characteristics of God do you see in these chapters that give you hope and courage?

## THE PURSUIT

1. Which Patriarch do you most relate to—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, or Joseph—and why?
2. What do we learn about Abraham and his righteousness from Romans 4: 13-25 and Galatians 3:1-9?
3. How does the story of God's covenant in Genesis shape the way we understand His promises today?
4. How do we see God's patience with His people in the lives of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and their families?
5. How does Abraham's trust in God's promises challenge or encourage your faith today?
6. What does the story of Jacob's ladder (Genesis 28:10-17) teach about God's presence and accessibility?
7. What does Jacob's wrestling with God in Genesis 32 symbolize about his relationship with God?
8. How does Jacob's transformation from deceiver to Israel inspire you in your walk with God?
9. What steps of faith is God calling you to take?



### 3. GOD'S FAITHFULNESS IN ADVERSITY

The patriarchs all endured great challenges, yet God proves Himself **faithful**.

THEIR PERSEVERANCE REFLECTS TRUST IN GOD.

#### ABRAHAM AND SARAH

Endured famine and barrenness

#### ISAAC

Contends with famine and disputes over wells

#### JACOB

Wrestles with God and faces Esau's anger

#### JOSEPH

Survived slavery and imprisonment

#### 4. IDENTITY AND TRANSFORMATION

God changes the names of key figures to symbolize their **transformation** and His divine purpose for them.

LET GOD DEFINE YOUR IDENTITY, NOT OTHERS.

**ABRAM — ABRAHAM**

Exalted father transforms to Father of many nations (Genesis 17:5)

**SARAI — SARAH**

My princess transforms to The princess (Genesis 17:15)

**JACOB — ISRAEL**

Supplanter transforms to Strives with God (Genesis 32:28)

**JOSEPH — ZAPHENATH-PANEAH**

He will add transforms to God speaks and lives (Genesis 41:45)

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THESE NAME CHANGES FORESHADOW  
THE TRANSFORMATION BELIEVERS  
EXPERIENCE IN CHRIST:

**SAINTS** (ROMANS 1:7)

**OVERCOMERS** (1 JOHN 5:4)

**HEIRS OF GOD** (ROMANS 8:17)

**MORE THAN CONQUERORS** (ROMANS 8:38)

## 5. BREAKING FAMILY PATTERNS

Negative patterns in the patriarch's families are **broken** and **healed**.

### FAVOURITISM

**ABRAHAM** — **ISAAC** **ISHMAEL**

Abraham favours Isaac over Ishmael

**ISAAC** — **ESAU** **REBEKAH** — **JACOB**

Isaac favours Esau, while Rebekah favours Jacob

**JACOB** — **JOSEPH** **11 BROS**

Jacob favours Joseph over his other sons

### FAVOURITISM AND DECEPTION

**THESE ARE HEALED THROUGH  
JOSEPH'S TRUST IN GOD.**

### DECEPTION

**ABRAHAM** — **ISAAC**

Abraham and Isaac lie about their wives being their sisters

**JACOB**

Jacob deceives his father-in-law Laban about breeding sheep

**11 BROS**

Joseph's brothers lie about their betrayal

Joseph shows no favouritism to his sons but honours each appropriately. Joseph uses deception to bring truth and healing to his brothers through sharing what God has done for good, leading to reconciliation.

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