

THE PATRIARCH ERA

Genesis 12-50

Introduction

- Abraham is chosen by God to “father” a people to reveal God to the world
- this begins with Abraham through whom God will begin to create a nation through which the world will know the one true God: Jahweh and through which a Saviour will come (Ro, 3:1-2)
- this era stretches from c. 2100 BC - c. 1450 BC
- the nation of Israel begins with Abraham and his family—70 people and ends at the time of Exodus with c. 2,000,000 people!

- Four major men of the Patriarch Era
 - Abraham—Gen. 12-23
 - Isaac—Gen. 24-26
 - Jacob—Gen. 27-35
 - Joseph—Gen. 37-50

1. Abraham: A Man Who Trusted God

- due to the fall of man, God had to develop a plan of redemption for mankind
- Abraham lived in Ur near the convergence of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers
- God promises him a country, descendants and blessings in Canaan

The covenant promises God made are commitments to Abraham. A special covenant-making ceremony was performed, which was done in ancient times to make agreements legally binding.

Some of God’s covenant promises have already been fulfilled. Others have been partially fulfilled and will be completely fulfilled at history’s end.

(taken from The Bible: The Smart Guide to the Bible Series by Larry Richards)

2. Isaac: The Son of Promise

- Abraham’s promises are passed down to him
- lives in the land of Abraham
- becomes prosperous and dies at an old age
- fathers two sons Jacob and Esau

3. Jacob: Father of the nation of Israel

- Jacob was Isaac’s second son
- Jacob was a scoundrel then through miracles and other encounters with God, changed his ways
- he had 12 sons
- each of his sons becomes the father of the 12 tribes of Israel

The Bible reports that Jacob had two wives and two concubines who all together bore him twelve sons. Muslims deduce from this that a man is allowed four wives. Christians teach that marriage is a relationship between one man and one woman. "A man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24 NKJV)

The jealousy and unhappiness depicted in Genesis 29:31 to 30:24 show that **polygamy** is not a healthy state.
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4. **Joseph: Leader in Egypt**

- Joseph was Jacob's 11th son
- Joseph was sold as a slave by his brothers
- taken to Egypt and because of his righteousness became a great leader
- he is reunited with his family in Egypt because of a great famine in Canaan
- after his death the Hebrews spent 400 years in Egyptian slavery

The story of Joseph is one of the most encouraging stories in the Bible. Joseph held on to his faith despite suffering and unfair treatment. His words to the brothers who had betrayed him sum up the lesson we can learn from his life: "You meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive" (Genesis 50:20 NKJV). The story of Joseph reads like an exciting novel.

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