

## REL 1310 – Christian Scriptures

Hello and welcome to the weekly resources for REL-1310!

These resources are structured a bit differently from other online study guides on the Baylor Tutoring website because the content in these courses are organized largely around biblical histories and narratives. Please take a look at other weekly resources listed on our website for additional topics from Christian Scriptures throughout the semester. Your professor might be discussing these topics in a different order than presented here.

We also invite you to take a look at the group tutoring chart on our website to see if this course has a group tutoring session offered this semester.

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## Ancestral Narratives

### Genesis 12-50



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### Terms

- **Barrenness:** Inability to bear children; a trait held by Sarai/Sarah, Rebekah, and Rachel
- **Covenant:** A formal agreement. In Genesis, the Lord offered Abraham land, prosperity, and descendants if he displayed faith.
- **Birthright:** The greatest form of inheritance given to a child in the Ancient Near East. The firstborn son received a birthright, which is a double inheritance.

### Notable Characters

- **Abram/Abraham:** The first patriarch of the Hebrew people. **Made a covenant with the Lord.** Husband to Sarah, father of Ishmael & Isaac. Abram means "Great Father." Abraham means "Father of Many."
- **Sarai/Sarah:** The first matriarch of the Hebrew people. Wife to Abraham & mother of Isaac.
- **Lot:** Abraham's nephew. Abraham loved him like a son because, before Ishmael was born, he did not have any sons.
- **Hagar:** Servant of Abraham & Sarah. She was forced to have a child with Abram. This child was Ishmael.
- **Ishmael:** First son of Abraham. His mother was Hagar.
- **Isaac:** Second patriarch of the Hebrew people. Second son of Abraham. His mother was Sarah. Husband to Rebekah & father of Jacob & Esau. **Carrier of the covenant.**
- **Rebekah:** Second matriarch of the Hebrew people. Wife to Isaac & mother of twins Esau & Jacob.
- **Esau:** Firstborn twin of Isaac & Rebekah. Isaac's favorite child. Sold his birthright to his brother Jacob.
- **Jacob/Israel:** Third patriarch of the Hebrew people. Younger twin of Isaac & Rebekah. Rebekah's favorite child. Deceived his brother Esau into giving away his birthright & deceived his father Isaac into blessing him instead of Esau. **Carrier of the covenant.**

### Themes

- Preference of the younger son
  - o **Isaac > Ishmael**
  - o **Jacob > Esau**
  - o **Joseph > his 10 older brothers**
- Famines
  - o **Abraham** goes to Egypt to escape famine. (12:10-20)
  - o **Isaac** goes to Gerar instead of Egypt to escape famine. (26:1-5)
  - o The whole family of Israel goes to Egypt to escape famine. (chapters 42-47)

### Abraham (aka Abram) and Sarah (aka Sarai)'s Story

- Genesis 12:
  - o The Lord promised **Abram** and his family **land, protection, and descendants.**
  - o This promise of descendants would be challenging since his wife, **Sarai**, was barren.
  - o **Abram** and **Sarai** journey through Egypt due to a famine. Pharaoh saw that **Sarai** was beautiful and wanted her for himself. **Abram** endangered **Sarai** by telling her that she was to pretend to be his sister, not his wife, because he was afraid that Pharaoh would kill him so that he could take **Sarai** from him.

- This is an example of **Abram** not trusting the Lord to protect him, even though his protection was promised.
- Genesis 13 &14:
  - **Abram** and **Lot's** families split.
- Genesis 15:
  - The Lord promises **Abram** a son.
  - His reward will be great.
  - **Abram** wonders how this will be since he is childless.
  - He will have many descendants.
- Genesis 16:
  - **Sarai** gives **Hagar**, her slave, to **Abram**, so that they can have a child together.
  - This is an example of **Sarai** not trusting the Lord to deliver offspring to her and Abram.
  - **Hagar** gives birth to **Abram's** son. She names him **Ishmael**.
- Genesis 17:
  - God appears to **Abram** and **Sarai**.
  - **Abram's** name is changed to **Abraham**.
  - **Sarai's** name is changed to **Sarah**.
  - Circumcision became a signal of God's covenant with **Abraham**.
- Genesis 21:
  - **Isaac** is born to **Abraham** and **Sarah**.
  - **Hagar** & **Ishmael** sent away.
- Genesis 22:
  - God tested **Abraham** by telling him to sacrifice his son **Isaac**.
  - This creates tension between the promise and command of God.

### Isaac's Story

- Genesis 25:
  - **Isaac's** wife, **Rebekah**, is barren.
  - After **Isaac** prays, they have twins.
  - Their twin sons, **Esau** and **Jacob**, struggle with each other in the womb. This foreshadows a lifelong struggle that the two brothers will have.
  - **Isaac** loved **Esau**.
  - **Rebekah** loved **Jacob**.
  - **Jacob** was a civilized man who lives in tents.
  - **Esau** was a skilled hunter.
  - Once the brothers are born and grow old, **Esau** sells his birthright to his brother **Jacob** in exchange for red food. In doing this, **Esau** is portrayed as careless and not fit to carry the covenant.
- Genesis 27:

- **Jacob**, along with his mother **Rebekah**, deceive a blind **Isaac** into blessing him by disguising as his brother. He did this by covering his arms with animal hair to appear as hairy as his brother.
- The covenant that was passed from **Abraham** to **Isaac** was passed to **Jacob** through this blessing.
- **Esau** vowed to kill **Jacob**.

### Jacob (Israel)'s Story

- Genesis 28:
  - **Jacob** flees to his uncle Laban's household.
  - While on his journey, he received a vision that promised him the Abrahamic Covenant.
  - **Jacob** named the place where he received this vision Bethel (Hebrew for 'House of God').
- Genesis 29-31:
  - While living with Laban's household, **Jacob** sees that Laban's daughter **Rachel** is beautiful and he wants to marry her.
  - **Jacob** bargained with Laban, ultimately agreeing to work for him for 7 years. He would receive **Rachel** as his wife in return.
  - **Jacob** felt that these 7 years were only a few days because of his love for **Rachel**.
  - **Jacob** is deceived into taking **Rachel's** older sister **Leah** as a wife instead.
  - **Jacob** works 7 more years for Laban. After these 7 years, Laban gives **Rachel** to **Jacob** to be his wife.
  - **Jacob** has 11 sons and 1 daughter.
- Genesis 32-33:
  - **Jacob** hears **Esau** is coming to meet him. **Jacob** thinks this means **Esau** will kill him.
  - Because of this, **Jacob** split his camps to put **Leah** and her children closer to **Esau**, while **Rachel** and her children were placed further from **Esau**.
  - **Jacob** wrestled with an unnamed man all night.
  - While wrestling, the man told **Jacob** his name is changed to **Israel** (Hebrew for "he struggles with God").
  - Instead of killing **Jacob**, **Esau** embraces him.
  - **Jacob** believed his struggle was with **Esau**, but his struggle was really with God.

### Joseph's Story

- Genesis 37:
  - **Joseph** is **Jacob's** favorite and youngest son.

- **Jacob** gave **Joseph** a colorful coat.
- **Joseph** has dreams that portray his siblings bowing down to him.
- Because of this, **Joseph's** brothers want to kill him.
- Judah, one of **Joseph's** brothers, suggested that they sell him into slavery instead of killing him.
- **Joseph** is sold into slavery in Egypt.
- **Joseph's** brothers covered his robe in blood and told their father, **Jacob**, that he had been devoured by an animal.
- Genesis 39:
  - **Joseph** serves Potiphar in Egypt and becomes one of Potiphar's most prized servants.
  - Potiphar's wife wanted to sleep with **Joseph**, but he refused.
  - When **Joseph** refused, Potiphar's wife claimed that **Joseph** tried to force himself on her.
  - **Joseph** was imprisoned for this.
- Genesis 40-41:
  - While **Joseph** is in prison, he interprets many dreams.
  - He interprets the dreams to tell the chief cupbearer that his job will be restored. He tells the chief baker that he will be killed.
  - **Joseph** interprets Pharaoh's dream to mean that there will be 7 years of prosperity in Egypt followed by 7 years of famine.
  - Because of his success in interpreting dreams, Pharaoh makes **Jacob** a ruler in Egypt.
- Genesis 42-45
  - **Joseph's** brothers come to Egypt seeking relief from the famine.
  - **Joseph** ultimately treats them kindly.
- Genesis 50:
  - **Jacob** dies.
  - **Israel's** family winds up settling in Egypt, and they begin to fill the land.

### Themes in the Joseph Story

- Recognition
  - **Jacob** must recognize **Joseph's** robe. (37:32)
  - **Joseph** recognizes his brothers, but they don't recognize him. (42:7)
- Rising & falling
  - **Joseph** goes from beloved son who was given a coat to being sold into slavery and stripped of his coat.
  - He goes from a beloved servant to a prisoner. (He loses his coat in this story as well when fleeing Potiphar's wife.)
  - The cycle comes to an end when **Joseph** goes from favored prisoner to receiving power. (He receives a royal coat.)

## **Test your knowledge!**

Answers are at the bottom of the document.

- 1) Which woman in Genesis is initially barren, but God later blesses her with a child?
  - a. Sarah
  - b. Rebekah
  - c. Rachel
  - d. All the above

- 2) Who stole the birthright from whom in exchange for red stew?
  - a. Isaac stole Ishmael's birthright
  - b. Jacob stole Esau's birthright
  - c. Laban stole Rachel's birthright
  - d. Abraham stole Lot's birthright
- 3) Which of Joseph's brothers suggested that they should sell him into slavery instead of killing him?
  - a. Benjamin
  - b. Dan
  - c. Simon
  - d. Judah
- 4) Which is NOT a correct name change that occurs in Genesis?
  - a. Abram -> Abraham
  - b. Jacob -> Israel
  - c. Isaac -> Ishmael
  - d. All of these name changes occur in Genesis.
- 5) Select the answer that correctly matches spouses together.
  - a. Abraham & Sarah, Isaac & Rebekah, Jacob & Rachel
  - b. Abraham & Rebekah, Isaac & Rachel, Jacob & Sarah
  - c. Abraham & Rachel, Isaac & Sarah, Jacob & Rebekah
  - d. Abraham & Sarah, Isaac & Rachel, Jacob & Rebekah

Answers: 1) d. 2) b. 3) d. 4) c. 5) a.