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.

If you have any questions about these study guides, group tutoring sessions, private 30-minute tutoring appointments, the Baylor Tutoring YouTube channel or any tutoring services we offer, please visit our website www.baylor.edu/tutoring or call our drop-in center during open business hours, M-Th 9am-8pm on class days, at 254-710-4135.

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**.


- **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.
o **Jacob** gave **Joseph** a colorful coat.

o **Joseph** has dreams that portray his siblings bowing down to him.

o Because of this, **Joseph’s** brothers want to kill him.

o Judah, one of **Joseph’s** brothers, suggested that they sell him into slavery instead of killing him.

o **Joseph** is sold into slavery in Egypt.

o **Joseph’s** brothers covered his robe in blood and told their father, **Jacob**, that he had been devoured by an animal.

- **Genesis 39**:
  
  o **Joseph** serves Potiphar in Egypt and becomes one of Potiphar’s most prized servants.
  
  o Potiphar’s wife wanted to sleep with **Joseph**, but he refused.

  o When **Joseph** refused, Potiphar’s wife claimed that **Joseph** tried to force himself on her.

  o **Joseph** was imprisoned for this.

- **Genesis 40-41**:
  
  o While **Joseph** is in prison, he interprets many dreams.

  o 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.

  o Joseph interprets Pharaoh’s dream to mean that there will be 7 years of prosperity in Egypt followed by 7 years of famine.

  o Because of his success in interpreting dreams, Pharaoh makes Jacob a ruler in Egypt.

- **Genesis 42-45**

  o **Joseph’s** brothers come to Egypt seeking relief from the famine.

  o **Joseph** ultimately treats them kindly.

- **Genesis 50**:
  
  o **Jacob** dies.

  o **Israel’s** family winds up settling in Egypt, and they begin to fill the land.

**Themes in the Joseph Story**

- **Recognition**

  o **Jacob** must recognize **Joseph’s** robe. (37:32)

  o **Joseph** recognizes his brothers, but they don’t recognize him. (42:7)

- **Rising & falling**

  o **Joseph** goes from beloved son who was given a coat to being sold into slavery and stripped of his coat.

  o He goes from a beloved servant to a prisoner. (He loses his coat in this story as well when fleeing Potiphar’s wife.)

  o 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.