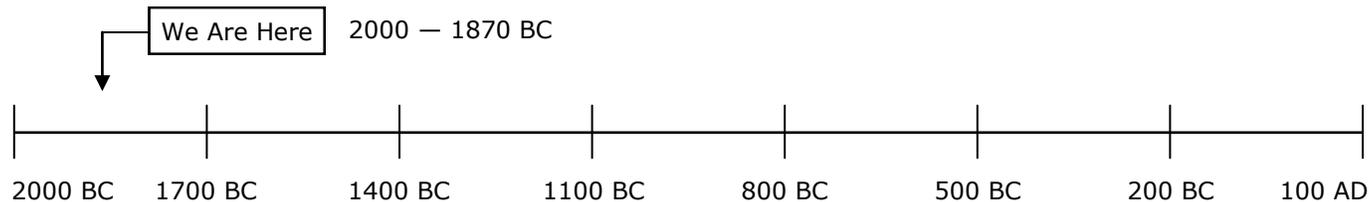


Spiritual Markers

BiAY.org | Weekly Reviews

Week 2: January 8-14 — *Genesis 25-39*

3.8% Complete — 351 Days to Go



Helpful Resources

Abraham's Family Tree (p.47), Twelve Sons of Israel (p.49), Map of Land of Canaan (p.99)
Overview of Bible History (p.37)

Making Sense of It All

- The Big Picture

With all of the action and whacky stories you read this week, it's important not to lose sight of the big picture — tracking the blood line of the Promised Seed (*3:15; 12:1-3; 22:18*). Though sinful people make a mess of things along the way, God preserves the lineage of His Son.

- The Patriarchal Period

The word "patriarch" is the word for "father." Thus, in the Patriarchal Period, we find the passing down or continuation of the covenant between the Hebrew Founding Fathers — Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. There are some key plot twists in the Patriarchal Period.

1. **Isaac vs. Ishmael:** God chose Isaac (son of Sarah), not Ishmael (son of Hagar), to carry the covenant torch. Ishmael would become the father of the Arab nations.
2. **Jacob vs. Esau:** God chose Jacob, the younger, to rule over Esau, the older. Although both became great nations (Esau is Edom), Jacob's people were the "Chosen Nation."
3. **Jacob's Marriages:** Esau married the pagans of Canaan (daughters of Heth) and ruined the Hebrew lineage; Jacob married the daughters of Laban and kept the line pure.
4. **Jacob or Israel:** Because of Jacob's struggle to know God's will and because of his wrestling match with His angel, Jacob's name was changed to Israel — "strives with God."
5. **Joseph's Survival:** Although Joseph was sold into slavery, God still used him as the next leader of the Hebrew family.

- Prophetic Passages

1. **Prophecy of Rebekah's Sons** (*25:23*) foretells of the struggle between Israel and Edom.
2. **Prophecy of Isaac** (*26:3-5, 24*) reaffirms him of God's promise to his father Abraham.
3. **Blessing of Jacob** (*27:28, 29; 28:13-15; 35:11, 12*) foreshadows the future of Israel.
4. **Blessing of Esau** (*27:39, 40*) tells the fate of the Edomites (his people, *2 Kings 8:20-22*).

- Pictures of Christ
 1. **Jacob's Ladder** (28:10-17), "gate of heaven," is representative of Christ's mediation.
 2. **Joseph's Life** (37-50) is a foreshadowing of the ministry of Christ (more to come).
 3. **A Seed Update** (38:1-30): Did you notice in the middle of the story of Joseph was inserted the strange story of Judah and Tamar? This interruption was not just to keep you in suspense regarding Joseph but it was a way to share "breaking news." God wanted the reader to be aware of what was happening with the seed line of the Savior. It had passed from Abraham to Isaac to Jacob (Israel) to Judah and now to Perez (*Matt. 1:3*).
- Personal Application
 1. **A Father's Walk:** A father's decisions affect his family and its future. A father's obedience and faithfulness to God can and will bless his children (Abraham and Isaac's example, 26:4, 5). A father's poor decisions or disobedience ultimately hurts his family (Laban's example of disrespect, 31:14-16; Leah and Rachel felt no loyalty to him). Jacob's example of deception (stealing Esau's birthright and blessing), was first repaid by Laban (29:21-28), then his deceitful kids (Simeon and Levi in 34:25, Reuben in 35:22, and all of his sons against Joseph in 37:31-34). Esau's example of disobedience and rebellion (25:29-34; 26:34, 35) caused his descendants to miss out on God's best.
 2. **Birthrights & Blessings:** During the Patriarchal Period, there is a great deal of emphasis on birthrights and blessings (*Gen. 25*). Birthrights dealt with family leadership and inheritance. A father's blessing was meant to be an encouragement, to give details regarding one's inheritance, and, in some cases, to prophesy future events. Blessings could be given regardless of birthright. As children of God, we are His heirs (*Rom. 8:16, 17; Gal. 3:29*). Fathers today can certainly "bless" their children, but no one has the prophetic power of the Old Testament patriarchs.
 3. **Spiritual Markers:** The Jews erected *massebah* (standing stones) to mark a significant event; they were reminders of God's faithfulness to future generations. Here are a few examples: Abraham's altars and other reminders (12:8; 13:18; 17:5; 18:1; 21:33), Isaac's altars (25:25), Jacob's stone at Bethel (12:8; 28:18, 19; 35:14, 15), and Joshua's rock and tree (later). List your spiritual highlights. What markers are in place to remind you of these events? If you have none, consider setting up your own *massebah*, not to become idols, but so that you will not forget what God has done.

The Bottom Line

Establishing *spiritual markers* helps to remind us of *what God has done* in our lives.

Questions to Consider

1. Why do you think God would allow a perverted story like that of Judah and Tamar to be included in the line of His Son? What about all the other sexual perversion?
2. Discuss how the decisions of your father or parents have affected the course of your life.
3. What encouragement do you find in the midst of Jacob's dysfunctional family?
4. What did your parents do (or not do) that you will alter or continue with your children?
5. Reflect upon your spiritual highlights. What *massebah* help you remember them?