



ESSENTIAL GUIDE

————— to the —————

GENEALOGY OF JESUS



GENESIS: THE BOOK OF BEGINNINGS

You will notice that ten of the major genealogies in the Old Testament listed in the table above are in the book of Genesis. The word *genesis* means beginning, origin, or even, generation. Origins, births, and descents are at the heart of the first book of the Bible.

In fact, the entire book of Genesis can be divided into a series of genealogies. Each genealogy begins with the following, or similar, phrase: “This is the account [or “generation”] of . . .”

Genesis 2:4 “This is the account of the heavens and the earth . . .”

Genesis 5:1 “This is the written account of Adam’s family . . .”

Genesis 6:9 “This is the account of Noah . . .”

Genesis 10:1 “This is the account of Shem, Ham and Japheth . . .”

Genesis 11:10 “This is the account of Shem’s family . . .”

Genesis 11:27 “This is the account of Terah’s family . . .”

Genesis 25:12 “This is the account . . . of Abraham’s son Ishmael . . .”

Genesis 25:19 “This is the account of . . . Isaac”

Genesis 36:1 “This is the account of . . . Esau . . .”

Genesis 37:2 “This is the account of Jacob’s family . . .”

The focus of the book of Genesis narrows down progressively, from interest in the whole universe—creation—to interest in one family in particular—Abraham, and God’s call of, promise to, and covenant with him. Through Abraham’s family, God would deal with the problem of human sin. Through this family, God’s wonderful plan of salvation would come about in time. If we are to understand how God’s plan unfolded, we must pay attention to this particular human family.



Expulsion from the Garden of Eden

Genesis is not only a book of genealogies. It's a book of stories. The genealogies tell us the characters' names and family relations. They tell us where each person fits on the family tree. But the stories tell us *who* these people were—their triumphs and downfalls, their faith and their sins. Each genealogy in Genesis sets off a series of stories about people in the genealogy. The stories in Genesis are not random tales. They are purposeful histories about the individuals who shaped and revealed God's plans for humanity.

FAMILY PROBLEMS

Genesis reveals that God made us in his image, which means that God made us to be his representatives on earth so that we might proclaim his lordship over creation. He made us to relate in love and openness to him, to each other, and to the good creation he made. But humans became dissatisfied with being made in God's image and wanted to be *like* God, and so they rebelled against God. Because of this rebellion, humanity's relationship with God was broken. We became separated from God.

The effects of sin are powerful and deep. Sin has shattered our relationships with God, with each other, and with creation. We long for true and intimate connections, but sin, evil, and death constantly get in the way. Relationships that should be nurturing, loving, joyful, and intimate can turn destructive, hateful, sorrowful, and divisive. The way we relate to God, to other humans, and to our world is not the way it is supposed to be.

You might find it difficult to accept that we are incapable of fixing this problem, this separation from God and the sin that results. We can fix many things around us to make them and our lives better, but the core of the problem is beyond our abilities. Only God can repair our brokenness—and God has a plan to do exactly that. We find out about this plan in the Scriptures.





CHAPTER FIVE

A FAMILY TRANSFORMED

The life of Jacob marks a transition in the story of Jesus' ancestors. After Jacob, the story is no longer about individuals—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—but about Jacob's children, about a people. Through their stories we continue to witness God's faithfulness to his words and his promises. God's promised blessings continue to unfold in the lives of this family. Their lives were filled with uncertainty, fears, doubts, foolishness, rebellion, struggles, lies, and deceits. But they also experienced profound growth in faith, trust, and knowledge of the God who called Abraham to begin a journey of redemption and renewal that would end in Jesus Christ.

We know much about some of the people in Jesus' genealogy (such as the patriarchs) and very little about others. Some important individuals, like Judah, we only know about indirectly through the life of other people. Judah is the central person in the story of Jacob's children. Near the end of Jacob's life, when he blessed his children, Judah received the blessing that belonged to the eldest son, Reuben. This placed Judah in the position of ruling over his brothers: "The scepter will not depart from Judah" (Gen. 49:10).

THE LIFE OF JACOB

The story of Jacob spans ten chapters in the middle of the book of Genesis. In these chapters, Jacob struggled with people, experienced the consequences of his actions, encountered God, and was reassured that God would be with him as he had been with

*Jacob's
name means
"supplanter" or
"deceiver."*

Abraham and Isaac. Jacob did not have Abraham's deep trust or Isaac's peaceful character. Jacob was determined; he used any means necessary to reach his goals, and often those means created conflict with those around him. Jacob's life began in turmoil, and turmoil followed him all his life and influenced the lives of his descendants.

*"Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger."
—Genesis 25:23*

Jacob starts out as one of the least likable characters in the Bible. He is deceitful, conniving, and a thief. Yet the stories of Jacob's life show us a man who matures as a person and grows in his relationships with others and with God.

EVENTS IN JACOB'S EARLY LIFE

- ✿ Jacob fought with his brother Esau in Rebekah's womb (Gen. 25:22).
- ✿ Jacob held Esau by the heel at birth (25:26).
- ✿ Jacob convinced Esau to sell his birthright for a bowl of stew (25:29–34).
- ✿ Jacob deceived his father, Isaac, and stole the patriarchal blessing that should have gone to Esau (27:1–40).
- ✿ Jacob went away to his uncle's home in Paddan Aram to escape Esau's anger (28:1–21).
- ✿ At Paddan Aram, Jacob stayed with his uncle Laban, Rebekah's brother. There, he fell in love with Laban's youngest daughter, Rachel (29:18).

SECTION TWO — BEGINNINGS OF A FAMILY

- ✿ Laban skillfully outplayed the trickster, Jacob. They had agreed that Jacob would work for Laban seven years for the hand of Rachel. However, Laban tricked Jacob and married him to Leah, his oldest daughter. Undeterred, Jacob worked another seven years so that he could marry Rachel, too (29:15–30).
- ✿ Jacob had an argument with his father-in-law about the payment they had agreed on for Jacob’s labor. Laban tried to trick Jacob again, but this time Jacob tricked Laban with the sheep that would be the payment for the many years of work (31:7). As a result, Jacob had to flee from Paddan Aram with his wives, Leah and Rachel, his sheep, and all of his possessions.
- ✿ On the way, Jacob encountered God with whom he wrestled throughout the night seeking his blessing. God changed Jacob’s name to Israel, which could mean “he struggled, or wrestled, with God” (32:22–32).
- ✿ Back in the Promised Land, Jacob prepared to encounter his brother Esau. Jacob expected his brother to seek revenge for old wounds. In fact, when Jacob’s scouts reported that Esau was coming with four hundred men to meet Jacob, conflict seemed inevitable (32:6).
- ✿ Jacob approached the dreaded meeting with many precautions and great fear. However, “Esau ran to meet Jacob and embraced him; he threw his arms around his neck and kissed him. And they wept” (33:4).
- ✿ Conflict in Jacob’s life continued into the lives of his children. His older sons could not get along with Joseph, Rachel’s only son and Jacob’s youngest and preferred son. From this conflict, Jacob’s life would unravel—but God would turn it into a magnificent story of his own grace, faithfulness, and love.

SECTION TWO — BEGINNINGS OF A FAMILY

The story of the birth of Jacob’s children ends with Joseph, whose story is told in the remaining chapters of the book of Genesis. Even though he was not part of Jesus’ genealogy, Joseph’s story illustrates ways in which God was shaping and transforming lives and events to bring his promises to pass. Joseph’s story is also the method by which the Scriptures tell the story of Judah, and shows why Judah became so important in the future story of Israel, including the reason why the Messiah, Jesus, would come from the tribe of Judah.

BIRTH STORY	CHILD	MEANING	JACOB’S BLESSING
God saw and opened Leah’s womb Gen. 29:31–35	1. Reuben	“He has seen”—wordplay with “He has seen my misery.”	Chastised for his instability
	2. Simon	“The one who hears”—wordplay with Leah’s expression, “The LORD has heard that I am not loved.”	Reproved for his anger
	3. Levi	“To be joined, attached”—wordplay with Leah’s affirmation, “Now at last my husband will become attached to me.”	Reproved for his anger
	4. Judah	“Praised”—wordplay with Leah’s words, “This time I will praise the LORD.”	Granted ruling
Rachel gave Bilhah to Jacob Gen. 30:1–8	5. Dan	“To judge, vindicate”—wordplay with Rachel’s words, “God has vindicated me.”	A judge to his people
	6. Naphtali	“My struggle”—wordplay with Rachel’s “great struggle with my sister.”	A deer let loose, independent

ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS

BIRTH STORY	CHILD	MEANING	JACOB'S BLESSING
Leah gave Zilpah to Jacob Gen. 30:9–13	7. Gad	“Fortune, or tribe”—wordplay with Leah’s expression, “What good fortune!”	Warned of being attacked
	8. Asher	“Happy”—wordplay with Leah’s happiness: “How happy I am!”	Will enjoy riches and joy
God listened to Leah Gen. 30:17–21	9. Issachar	“Reward”—wordplay with Leah’s affirmation, “God has rewarded me for giving my servant to my husband.”	Fated to become a slave
	10. Zebulun	“Dwelling or glory,” both related to the idea of exalting—wordplay with Leah’s affirmation, “God has presented me with a precious gift. This time my husband will treat me with honor, because I have borne him six sons.”	Will dwell by the sea
	Dinah	No wordplay—a simple name meaning “judged” or “vindicated.”	
God remembered and opened Rachel’s womb Gen. 30:22–24	11. Joseph	“May he add”—wordplay with Rachel’s desire, “May the LORD add to me another son.”	A fruitful vine

GOD IS WITH JACOB

Jacob's life is framed by two challenging events that are sandwiched between two of the most spiritually significant events in his life and the future of God's people, Jacob's descendants.

Jacob's challenges:

1. Jacob's final encounter with his brother Esau (Gen. 33).
2. Events surrounding the rape of Jacob's daughter, Dinah, and the revenge of his sons (Gen. 34).

God's assurance:

1. The encounter of Jacob with God at Peniel (Gen. 32:22–32).
2. Jacob's return to Bethel where God blessed him a second time (Gen. 35:1–15).

God's encounters with Jacob frame the stories that challenged his faith. Jacob naturally approached those events with fear and his usual craftiness, hoping to negotiate them well. But God used those events to show Jacob that he could rely on the God of Abraham and Isaac, that God's wisdom and designs were a better alternative than Jacob's own.

TWO ENCOUNTERS WITH GOD

At Peniel, Jacob was anxiously preparing himself and his camp to meet Esau. In Jacob's mind, Esau's threat to kill him remained a real prospect. In the dead of the night, a man confronted Jacob. The lack of description of this man is curious.

We later learn that the man is in fact God when Jacob identifies him (Gen. 32:30). (The prophet Hosea identifies the man as an angel in Hosea 12:4. Either way, the man was a divine being, a divine agent acting on behalf of God, or was God himself). The fact that the man

ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS

asked Jacob his name serves to highlight the wordplay when the man changes Jacob's name; it does not mean that God did not know Jacob's name.

*“Jacob said, ‘I will not let you go unless you bless me.’”
—Genesis 32:26*

Why was Jacob so insistent on getting a blessing from this man? God had already blessed Jacob at Bethel (Gen. 28:13–15). Notably, up to this point, every time God blessed someone, the content of the blessing was expressed clearly. However, in this case we read that the man blessed Jacob but we do not know what the content of the blessing was.

Besides the blessing, the man also changed Jacob's name. A change of name not only indicated a change of identity, but it also expressed that the man was claiming Jacob as his own. Just as God had done with Abraham, God was now claiming Jacob, his identity and his life, for his own purposes. Jacob's life was now aligned with God's plans to redeem humanity and the world. It would not be Jacob, “the deceiver,” who would give rise to God's people, but Israel, “the struggler,” through whom God would bring about his plans.

The Central Character

The Hebrew text uses word- and sound-plays to highlight what is important in the story. The name of Jacob (*ya'aqob*) sounds similar to:

- The name of the ford, “Jabbok” (*yabboq*), that separates Jacob from his family
- Jacob's wrestling (*ye'abeq*) with the man
- Jacob's hip (*yereko*) that is struck by the man
- The blessing (*yebarek*) that the man eventually grants to Jacob

The name change from Jacob, the deceiver, to Israel (*yisra'el*) is because he had struggled (*sarita*). It is possible that the name *Israel* comes from the verb *sara*, which likely means “to struggle.” Thus, the center of the story is Jacob.



Jacob wrestling with
the angel

“I am God Almighty; be fruitful and increase in number. A nation and a community of nations will come from you, and kings will be among your descendants. The land I gave to Abraham and Isaac I also give to you, and I will give this land to your descendants after you.”

—Genesis 35:11–12

Notice that God blessed Jacob a second time at Bethel (Gen. 28 and 35), and the name change is repeated (35:9–13). This time, the content of the blessing is expressed: It is a combination of the blessing God pronounced to all humanity all the way back in Genesis 1:28 and the one to Abraham in Genesis 17 that is part of the covenant.

Thus, the two blessings at Peniel (Gen. 32) and at Bethel (Gen. 35) make a “sandwich,” that contains Genesis 33 (Jacob’s final encounter with Esau) and Genesis 34 (the rape of Dinah). The “sandwich” helps us visualize Jacob’s growing trust and assurance of God’s blessing, rather than his previous trust in his own craftiness and deceitfulness, to find a solution or a way out.

Gen. 32 —Encounter: Jacob wrestles with God and is blessed by God.

Gen. 33 —Conflict: Jacob confronts Esau.

Gen. 34 —Conflict: Jacob’s daughter is assaulted and his sons take revenge.

Gen. 35 —Encounter: God blesses Jacob at Bethel.

TWO CONFLICTS

Two challenging events in Jacob's life—his meeting with Esau and the rape of Dinah—are significant because they had the potential to destroy the very heart of God's promises to Jacob and his ancestors: a nation (fruitfulness) and keeping the land that God had promised.

Jacob was about to meet his brother Esau. Jacob's entire story, from his youthful deception of Isaac, stealing the blessing from Esau, and fleeing his brother's anger, has been moving to this climactic moment: the confrontation between Jacob and Esau.

“Jacob looked up and there was Esau, coming with his four hundred men.”—Genesis 33:1

If we were to stop reading there, we would probably imagine the horrible massacre that Esau's army inflicted on Jacob's camp, which was Jacob's fear. But the climax turns a bit disappointing. There is no clash or battle; rather, the meeting has a surprising ending: “But Esau ran to meet Jacob and embraced him; he threw his arms around his neck and kissed him. And they wept” (33:4).

The deceiver did not have to deceive his way out of this conflict. God protected Jacob; God showed that he was with Jacob. To commemorate the event, Jacob set up an altar and called it, “*El Elobe Israel*,” which means “mighty is the God of Israel”.

The next episode is a sad and terrible story of violence and revenge. Shechem, a Canaanite, raped Jacob's daughter Dinah (34:2). According to Hamor, his father, Shechem wanted to marry Dinah. Hamor proposed to Jacob, “Intermarry with us; give us your daughters and take our daughters for yourselves” (34:9). However, Jacob and his sons recognized that such a proposal ran afoul of their very blessing and covenant with God. (Let us remember the story of Isaac and Jacob: both had to go out of the land to find wives so as not to marry Canaanite women.)

SECTION TWO — BEGINNINGS OF A FAMILY

Following Jacob's example, his sons "replied deceitfully as they spoke to Shechem and his father Hamor" (34:13). Jacob stayed in the background and allowed his sons to deal with the issue. Hamor and his people agreed to be circumcised so that Shechem could marry Dinah. Simeon and Levi, the sons of Jacob and Leah, "took their swords and attacked the unsuspecting city, killing every male" (34:25). Jacob, pragmatically, condemned their actions not on moral but on

political grounds: "You have brought trouble on me by making me obnoxious to the Canaanites and Perizzites, the people living in this land. We are few in number, and if they join forces against me and attack me, I and my household will be destroyed" (34:30). Later on, Jacob would bring up this event again for Simeon and Levi (49:5–7): their actions disqualified them from receiving the blessings for the eldest son and the leadership responsibilities that came with that blessing.

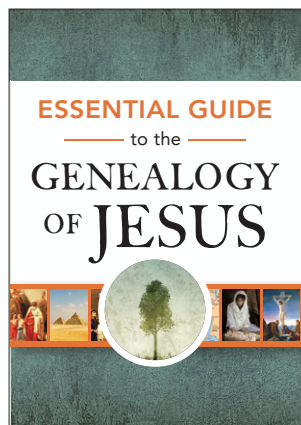


Esau and Jacob reconcile

As in the meeting with Esau, Jacob was once again afraid. He now feared the people of the land. And again, Jacob's fears were put to rest through God's blessings on him, by the changing of his name (which meant that Jacob

was now God's special instrument), and by the confirmation of the covenant with Abraham and Isaac. Jacob needed to learn to have the faith of Abraham. God's blessings encouraged him to surrender himself to God's protection.

These stories, the encounters with God at Peniel and Bethel, and the two challenges, the meeting with Esau and the rape of Dinah, illustrate the journey of faith and transformation that Jacob experienced. They show a changed man. After trusting his own craftiness and wit, Jacob learned that the God of Abraham and Isaac is faithful to his promises and worthy of his trust.



Learn More

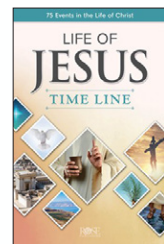
Essential Guide to the Genealogy of Jesus

From Adam and Abraham to King David and King Solomon, this book gives you a fantastic overview of the key people in the ancestry of Jesus with charts, diagrams, and summaries.

Glancing at the dozens of names listed in the genealogy of Christ can be overwhelming. You may wonder: *Where do I begin? What do I really need to know?* Dive into the compelling lives of the people in Jesus' family tree, including Noah, Jacob, Ruth, Solomon, Joseph and Mary, and more.

Essential Guides to the Genealogy of Jesus is a compact-size biblical resources easy to take with you wherever you go!

Hardcover 978-1-64938-030-2 \$9.99

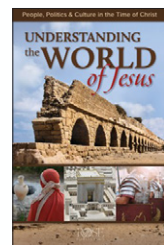


Learn More

Life of Jesus Timeline, Pamphlet

Easily see the stories of Jesus in the four Gospels in a fresh new way by looking at them in the order they happened with this full-color time line. From the birth of Christ in Bethlehem to his ascension into heaven, see helpful Bible references for 75 key events, including Jesus' ministry, the Transfiguration, the Last Supper, and more at a glance!

Pamphlet 978-1-59636-189-8 \$4.99

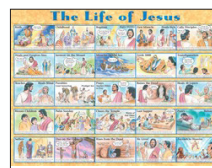


Learn More

Understanding the World of Jesus, Pamphlet

Experience reading the stories of Jesus in the Gospels in a whole new way! *Understanding the World of Jesus* is a slimline pamphlet packed with simple summaries, charts, diagrams, and key information about the fascinating time in which Jesus lived. This pamphlet's high-gloss coating makes it a durable, convenient resource you're sure to keep with you and use time and again.

Pamphlet 978-1-62862-943-9 \$4.99



Learn More

The Life of Jesus, Wall Chart

This wall chart for kids displays the greatest story ever told at a child's level. In 25 illustrations and Scripture verses, Jesus' life becomes more real to children. These pictures from Jesus' life are perfect for Sunday school lessons, classrooms, and homeschool curriculum. And the lamination provides durability for children's rooms.

Wall Chart 978-1-89094-718-7 \$14.99



www.hendricksonrose.com | csresponse@tyndale.com
or call 1-855-277-9400



Money Back Guarantee!

