

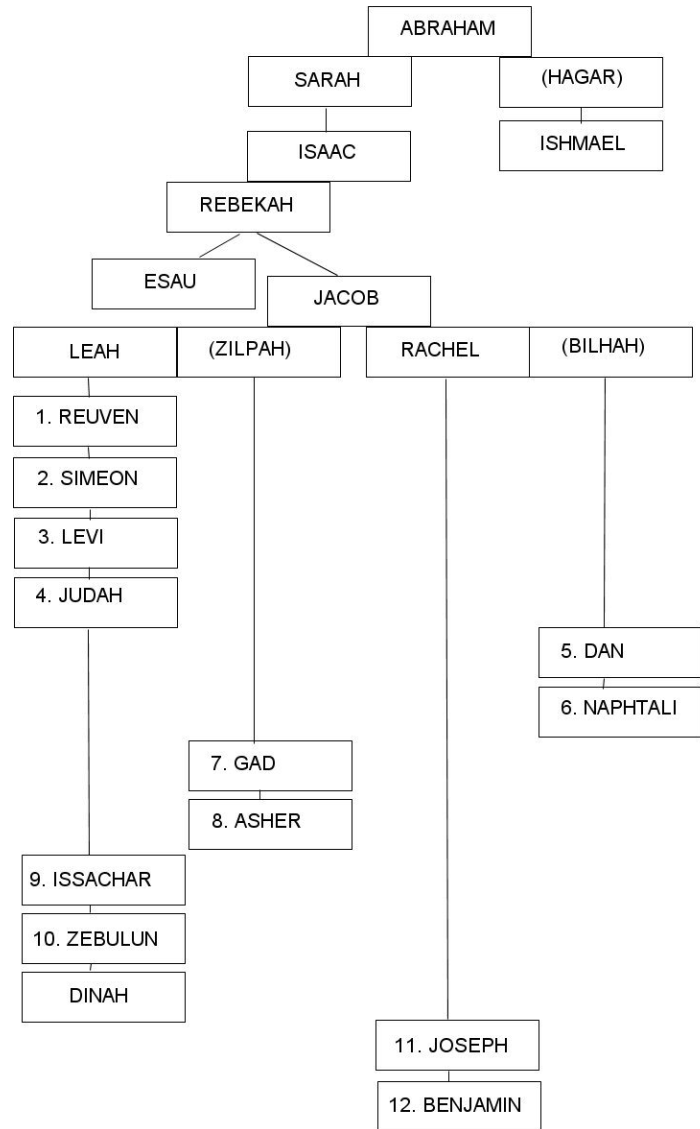
From Jacob to Joseph: The Patriarchal Narrative, continued

1. Sibling rivalry in Gen 12-36, continued

Esau vs. Jacob – Rivalry over Jacob's usurpation of Esau's birthright and blessing leads to Esau to wish to kill Jacob (cf. Cain and Abel); Jacob must flee to Haran (i.e., he receives the right to Abrahamic promises of Land and Progeny yet is ironically forced to leave the Promised Land for the very place that Abraham was divinely called to leave in Gen 12:1).

Leah vs. Rachel – In an amusing reversal of he and his mother's tricks on Esau and his father, Jacob himself is tricked by Laban into marrying the elder daughter Leah after working seven years for the right to marry the younger daughter Rachel; Laban thus gets another seven years out of him, since it is the younger one, Rachel, whom he loves. Like parental favoritism, so his conjugal favoritism results in rivalry: in this case, competitive childbirth between the unloved yet fertile Leah and the loved yet barren Rachel (cf. Sarah), involving their two handmaids, Zilpah and Bilhah (cf. Hagar).

Resolution –The rivalry of Leah and Rachel results in 12 sons for Jacob. Upon Jacob's return to the Promised Land, he wrestles with an angel and earns the new name Israel. Esau and Jacob are reunited and reconciled.



2. Jacob and his sons as eponymous ancestors of Israel and its 12 tribes

- From Abraham to Jacob, a single son was chosen to carry on the chosen line and to receive the promises given by God to Abraham (hence the rivalry between Ishmael and Isaac, Esau and Jacob).
- With Jacob/Israel, all of his sons belong to the chosen line: just as he himself is the eponymous ancestor of the people Israel, so his sons are identified with tribes of Israel, each with their own pieces of the Promised Land (see map on next page, which reflects the situation ca. 1400-1100 BCE). Exceptions are explained by bad deeds: the tribes of Simeon and Levi do not have land-portions of their own, due to their actions against Shechem in Gen 34 (Rape of Dinah), which lead Jacob to curse them. Their places are taken by Joseph's two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. These are the tribes that would be united under the monarchy of Saul, David, and Solomon from ca. 1030-931 BCE.
- *Southern tribes*: Judah and Benjamin (plus Simeon at an early stage) + some Levites; after the split of the united Israelite kingdom into two after the death of Solomon (931 BCE), these tribes formed the Southern Kingdom of Judah. According to the Documentary Hypothesis, this is the cultural context that J reflects.
- *Northern tribes*: Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, Dan, Manasseh, Ephraim, Reuben and Gad. Together with some Levites, these split off into the Northern Kingdom after Solomon's death. According to the Documentary Hypothesis, this is the cultural context that E reflects. These tribes were scattered in 722 BCE after the Assyrian invasion of the Northern Kingdom (thus they are now called the "lost tribes of Israel").

3. Genesis 37-50 according to the Documentary Hypothesis

- Mostly woven out of J + E, with only short passages from P.
- E tends to exalt the ancestors of the Northern tribes, while J exalts those of the Southern tribes.
- Key figure in E is Joseph, while key figure in J is Judah. In the redacted form of Genesis, the role of the chosen son (always singular up to this point in Genesis) is split into two.
- J and E depict different images of Shechem, the capital of the Northern Kingdom during the time of the Divided Monarchy. E notes simply that Jacob bought Shechem (Gen 33:18-20). J tells of how Dinah's rape led to the massacre of the inhabitants and looting of the city by the brothers under the leadership of Simeon and Levi, whom Jacob curses on this account (Gen 34).
- Small contradictions remain even when E and J are intertwined:

EXAMPLE: The Sale of Joseph into Slavery in Gen 37		
	E	J
<i>Who saved Joseph from the rest of his brothers' wish to kill him?</i>	Reuben: 21-22, 24: But when Reuben heard it, he delivered him out of their hands, saying, "Let us not take his life." Reuben said to them, "Shed no blood; throw him into this pit here in the wilderness, but lay no hand on him" that he might rescue him out of their hand and restore him to his father... and they took him and threw him into a pit. The pit was empty; there was no water in it.	Judah: 25-27: Then they sat down to eat; and looking up they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, with their camels carrying gum, balm, and resin, on their way to carry it down to Egypt. Then Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and not lay our hands on him, for he is our brother, our own flesh." And his brothers agreed.
<i>How did Joseph get sold into slavery?</i>	Midianites found him: 28a, 29: When some Midianite traders passed by, they drew Joseph up, lifting him out of the pit... and they took Joseph to Egypt. When Reuben returned to the pit and saw that Joseph was not in the pit, he tore his clothes.	Brothers sold him to Ishmaelites: 28b: They sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver

4. Reversals of fortune in the Joseph story

Negative circumstance	Positive result
37: Due to Jacob's favoritism towards Joseph and Joseph's own dreams foretelling his greatness, his brothers plot against him, resulting in his sale into slavery in Egypt. Since the brothers bring back a bloody coat to explain his absence, Jacob thinks Joseph is dead and mourns.	39:1-6a: Joseph flourishes in the house of Potiphar: "The LORD was with Joseph, and he became a successful man... His master saw that the LORD was with him, and that the LORD caused all that he did to prosper in his hands. So Joseph found favor in his sight and attended him; he made him overseer of his house and put him in charge of all that he had. From the time that he made him overseer in his house and over all that he had, the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake...."
39:6b-20: Potiphar's wife makes advances towards Joseph and when he refuses her, she accusing him of trying to seduce her. Joseph is thrown into jail.	39:21-40:57: Joseph flourishes even in jail: ("But the LORD was with Joseph and showed him steadfast love; he gave him favor in the sight of the chief jailer. The chief jailer committed to Joseph's care all the prisoners who were in the prison, and whatever was done there, he was the one who did it. The chief jailer paid no heed to anything that was in Joseph's care, because the LORD was with him; and whatever he did, the LORD made it prosper...") Then, his dream interpretation skills lead him to interpret dreams of the Pharaoh; this leads him to rise to a position of great power in Egypt, second only to Pharaoh.
40:53ff: Seven years of famine	42-45: Jacob sends Joseph's brothers to Egypt, resulting in the reunion of brothers and later of Jacob and the beloved son that he thought dead.
46ff: Jacob and his family descend into Egypt	