

Revenge?

SESSION 13

Genesis 50:15-26

Memory Verse: Genesis 50:20

Followers of God faithfully remember His plans and purposes.

If you're honest, you've probably said (or thought) something like this: "I won't get mad; I'll get even." After all, when someone offends us or hurts us, settling the score just seems natural. In contrast, Jesus replaced this concept of revenge with His principle of turning the other cheek (Matt. 5:38-42). What's more, He practiced what He preached. Jesus dealt with unjust treatment not by retaliating, but by forgiving those who wronged Him.

Centuries prior to Jesus's crucifixion, Joseph dealt with injustice by forgiving his brothers. He could do that only because he focused on God's greater plan for his life. He recognized how God used his brothers' evil deeds for good.

As you prepare to teach this Bible study, ask God to reveal what's holding you back from forgiving people in your life. Pray that instead of being consumed by hurt, you can find a way to forgive them by focusing on God's plans and purposes. Pray the same for the adults in your group.



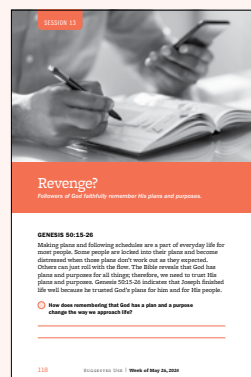
Weekly Podcast: Group Leader Training

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Making plans and following schedules are a part of everyday life for most people. Some people are locked into their plans and become distressed when those plans don't work out as they expected. Others can just roll with the flow. The Bible reveals that God has plans and purposes for all things; therefore, we need to trust His plans and purposes. Genesis 50:15-26 indicates that Joseph finished life well because he trusted God's plans for him and for His people. (PSG, p. 118)

How does remembering that God has a plan and a purpose change the way we approach life?



Understand the Context (Genesis 47:1-50:26)

With the arrival of Joseph's family in Egypt, Pharaoh assigned them the land of Goshen (Gen. 47:11). As the severe famine continued, Joseph collected silver from the Egyptians in exchange for the grain he had stored. Then he provided food in return for their livestock. Finally, the people offered to sell their land and themselves as slaves to Pharaoh in order to survive. Joseph established a law that a fifth of the produce from the land belonged to Pharaoh. He permitted the people to keep the remaining four-fifths as seed and as food for themselves (47:24-26).

Joseph's father, Jacob, lived the final seventeen years of his life in Egypt. Before he died at 147, he asked Joseph to bury him with his ancestors in Canaan. Prior to his death, Jacob also blessed Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. Although Manasseh had been born first, Jacob deliberately bestowed the blessing of the firstborn on Ephraim. Jacob also told Joseph that one day God would bring the family back to Canaan (48:21).

Genesis 49 records Jacob's final blessings on his twelve sons. He based most of these prophecies on the characteristics of each son's behavior. Of the various blessings, the one on Judah is perhaps the most significant. Judah is portrayed as a young lion, symbolizing sovereignty, strength, and courage. Although Judah had sinned, he had repented and demonstrated leadership. His tribe was declared the royal tribe through whom King David and the Messiah would come.

When Jacob died, he was embalmed according to Egyptian custom. His family carried his body to

Canaan and buried him in the ancestral tomb at Machpelah (49:29-32). Abraham had purchased that burial site located near Hebron from Ephron the Hethite.

With the death of their father, Joseph's brothers began to fear that Joseph would seek revenge for the way they had treated him. Joseph wept when he learned of their fears. He may have wept because of their failure to understand his forgiveness or because he realized he should have reassured them long before their father's death.

In any case, Joseph reminded them of his earlier words when he had first revealed his identity (see 45:5-8). Joseph held the deep conviction that although the brothers had plotted evil, God had orchestrated events to bring about the survival of His people (50:19-20).

Before he died, Joseph expressed confident faith that God would eventually come to His people's aid in Egypt and lead them back to Canaan. He insisted they swear that when that happened, they would carry his bones back to the promised land for burial. Thus Joseph's coffin in Egypt served as a visible reminder to Jacob's descendants that one day God would bring them back home (Heb. 11:22).

As you read Genesis 50:15-26, look for ways that remembering God's plans and purposes impacted how Joseph thought and lived. (PSG, p. 119)

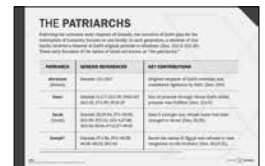


PRIOR TO THE SESSION: Display **Pack Item 1** (*Map: The Travels of Jacob*) and **Pack Item 3** (*Poster: The Patriarchs*) for reference during the session. Write the following words on the board: *mailed birthday card, email, tweet, voice mail.*



INTRODUCE: As adults arrive, direct attention to the words on the board. Encourage the group to suggest what these items have in common. Share that they are all messages sent without seeing the person face to face. Note that this kind of message plays an important role in today's session.

EXPLAIN: Using **Pack Item 1** (*Map: The Travels of Jacob*), point out that Jacob's final journey was to Egypt to be reunited with Joseph. Share that when Jacob died, Joseph and his brothers buried him in Canaan. Use **Pack Item 3** (*Poster: The Patriarchs*) and Understand the Context to provide the additional background for the session. In addition, provide a copy of **Pack Item 9** (*Handout: Background of the Patriarchs*) for anyone who does not already have a copy.



READ: Allow a volunteer to read the introduction on page 118 of the PSG. Encourage a few adults to rate themselves on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being “hard-core planner” and 5 being “go with the flow.” Direct them to explain their rating.



ASK: **How does remembering that God has a plan and a purpose change the way we approach life?** (PSG, p. 118)

NOTES

Group Activity Option

Music

For Engage, provide several copies of the *Baptist Hymnal 2008* and direct attention to No. 96, “Great Is Thy Faithfulness.” Sing or read aloud the words. Review the ways God revealed His faithfulness to the patriarchs in Genesis. Allow volunteers to share ways God has been faithful in their lives. During Challenge, close the session by singing the chorus together again just before the closing prayer.

Message Sent (Genesis 50:15-18)

15 When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said to one another, "If Joseph is holding a grudge against us, he will certainly repay us for all the suffering we caused him." **16** So they sent this message to Joseph, "Before he died your father gave a command: **17** 'Say this to Joseph: Please forgive your brothers' transgression and their sin — the suffering they caused you.' Therefore, please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father." Joseph wept when their message came to him. **18** His brothers also came to him, bowed down before him, and said, "We are your slaves!"

(v. 15) Holding a grudge: The Hebrew wording conveys feelings of animosity and indicates the tragic results of living with an unforgiving heart. The brothers mistakenly felt unsure of Joseph's loyalty to them. They feared that following Jacob's death, Joseph would seek revenge, even though he had already assured them of his forgiveness (45:5-7). The same verb appears in Genesis 27:41 to identify the deep-seated anger and hatred that Esau bore against Jacob after Jacob stole his father's blessing.

(v. 15) Repay us: The brothers feared that Joseph would retaliate for the way they had treated him. The common Hebrew verb rendered **repay** basically means "turn" or "return." Interestingly, it is often used of repentance. However, in the context of Genesis 50:15 it means "to cause to return."

The brothers' guilty consciences led them to think that Joseph, who had ascended to a dominant position in Egypt, would use his power to get revenge for the way they had treated him. The construction of the phrase in the original language emphasizes the dread of the consequences they knew they deserved.

(v. 15) Suffering: This Hebrew term basically means "evil" (see v. 20). It also can be translated "misery," "distress," "injury," or "wickedness." God's own character defines something or someone as good or evil. Thus, the word deals primarily with moral qualities from God's perspective. However, human beings tend to evaluate things as good or evil in terms of the pain they are experiencing. From that perspective, the brothers clearly understood their guilt.

(vv. 16-17) Your father: Why did Joseph's brothers refer to Jacob as **your father** when he was also their father? This expression draws attention to Joseph's responsibility as a son rather than as a brother. We have no way of knowing whether the brothers fabricated their message. Joseph apparently accepted it.

(v. 17) Transgression . . . sin: These two terms identify two of the three main Hebrew words for **sin**. The term rendered **transgression** can also be translated "rebellion." It expresses deliberate revolt. While often designating rejection of God's authority, in Genesis 50:17, the word denotes violation of others' personal and property rights. However, as the Old Testament makes clear, violation of others' rights is rebellion against God. (For example, see the Ten Commandments in Ex. 20:1-17).

The word for sin means "missing the mark." While people could sin unintentionally (see Lev. 4:2; Num. 15:27), far too often they missed the right mark or goal by choosing to aim at the wrong target.

Key Word

Forgive

This Hebrew verb has three basic categories of meaning. The first category ("lift up") occurs both literally and figuratively in the Old Testament. The second category ("carry") is used especially of bearing the guilt or punishment for sin. The third category ("take away") stresses the pardon or forgiveness of sin. This latter action of taking away sin appears as one of God's attributes in Exodus 34:6-7 and Micah 7:18.

God's gracious nature in forgiving sin is graphically pictured in the Day of Atonement. In that ceremony, Aaron placed his hands on the head of a live goat and confessed all the Israelites' sins. This "scapegoat" symbolically carried the people's sins into the wilderness (Lev. 16:20-22). Joseph's brothers wanted him to demonstrate such grace toward them.

(v. 18) Bowed down: This emphasis on the brothers' bowing before Joseph signals the final fulfillment of the dream (Gen. 42:6; 43:26; 50:18; see 37:7).

EXPLORE Genesis 50:15-18

1



APPLICATION POINT: Believers can accept forgiveness from others.

READ: Invite a volunteer to read **Genesis 50:15-18** while the group listens for the brothers' actions and Joseph's response. Guide the group to identify how remembering God's plans and purposes shaped Joseph's thoughts and life.

EXAMINE: Instruct adults to gather in teams of two or three. (*For smaller groups, individuals can be a team.*) Encourage the teams to read the content for Genesis 50:15-18 on pages 120-122 of the PSG and to identify some key points from these verses. After a few minutes, allow volunteers to share what they discovered and why those observations resonated with them. Write those points on the board. Use information from page 144 of the Leader Guide to supplement the discussion.

ASK: **What impact does guilt have on our ability to relate to others?** (PSG, p. 122)

TRANSITION: *After sending the message, Joseph's brothers came to him in person. This gave him the chance to reinforce what he had been telling them all along.*

NOTES

Group Activity Option

Personal Experience

Prior to the session, print a picture of an empty jury box in a courtroom. During the session, show adults the picture of the jury box. Ask: **How many of you have been called for jury duty?** Allow a few volunteers to share their experiences. If appropriate, be prepared to share your experience, as well. Point out that many times, potential jurors are dismissed, but those who actually sit on a jury carry a heavy responsibility. Encourage adults to imagine sitting as defendants facing the verdict. Point out that Joseph's brothers may have felt this way in Genesis 50. They were guilty of mistreating Joseph and, despite his assurances, they were sure he would be seeking revenge.

Truth Declared (Genesis 50:19-21)

19 But Joseph said to them, “Don’t be afraid. Am I in the place of God? **20** You planned evil against me; God planned it for good to bring about the present result — the survival of many people. **21** Therefore don’t be afraid. I will take care of you and your children.” And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

(v. 19) Don’t be afraid: Joseph repeated this gentle prohibition twice within verses 19-21. He expressed these words as a comforting phrase. Joseph’s brothers had good reason to **be afraid** after their father died. They anticipated that Joseph would then seek revenge. Instead Joseph assured them that Jacob’s death would not change his benevolence toward them.

(v. 19) Am I in the place of God?: This question echoes that of a frustrated Jacob responding to Rachel’s complaint (30:2). However, Joseph employed the question to reassure his brothers. Even if he wanted to, Joseph knew it was God’s role, not his, to exact vengeance (Deut. 32:35; see Rom. 12:19).

Key Concept

God’s Control

In verse 20, Joseph wisely acknowledged that God had reversed his brothers’ plot for calamity. The basic idea of the Hebrew wording involves the use of the mind in the thinking process. The concept is not so much that of understanding as it is the creating of new ideas. The brothers concocted their plans in their own minds, but God sovereignly overcame their mischief to fulfill the plans of His own mind.

The two parts of Joseph’s statement parallel one another, which heightens the contrast between humans’ evil intentions and God’s good purposes. This theme of the contrast between good and evil appears throughout Genesis and makes its final appearance in Joseph’s interpretation of his experiences.

(v. 20) Survival of many people: The Hebrew word translated **survival** is actually a verb meaning “to preserve.” Throughout the Old Testament the possession of physical life is a basic or innate good (Job 2:4; Eccl. 9:4). Joseph recognized a correlation between God’s plan to preserve many lives and his own work of providing for his family (Gen. 45:11; 47:12).

Joseph’s faith led him both to believe that God had a plan and to accept his responsibility in carrying out that plan. His faith in action resulted in the survival of

the descendants of Jacob/Israel. Through this group of immigrants, God eventually sent His Son as Messiah and Savior. The expression **many people** also appears to include Egyptians, as well as anyone from other nations who had sought refuge in Egypt.

(v. 21) I will take care of you: Rather than seeking revenge, Joseph offered care and comfort to his brothers and their families, from the youngest to the oldest. He could do this because he recognized God at work for good through his own adverse circumstances.

(v. 21) Comforted: The verb can also mean “to repent.” The basic idea seems to be that of breathing deeply, which is associated with the physical display of one’s emotions—especially sorrow, compassion, or comfort. The term was well-known to the Jews in exile who remembered the prophet’s words of comfort in Isaiah 40:1.

For the brothers who feared they had permanently alienated themselves from Joseph, his expression of comfort served as an exile-ending pronouncement. He had taken the initiative to restore the broken relationship. Human beings can comfort one another (Isa. 66:13). Even more wonderfully, God comforts His people (49:13; 52:9).

(v. 21) Spoke kindly to them: These words translate the literal Hebrew expression “spoke to their heart.” Few usages of the term heart in the Old Testament designate the physical organ. Most refer to people’s inner or immaterial nature in general or to one of three personality functions: emotion, thought, or will. The idiom “spoke to their heart” conveys comfort.

Key Doctrine

The Scriptures

All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation. (See Luke 24:27; John 5:39.)

EXPLORE Genesis 50:19-21



APPLICATION POINT: Believers can faithfully exhibit God's character to others.

READ: Read aloud **Genesis 50:19-21** as the group underlines key words or phrases in their Bibles or on page 122 of the PSG.

EXAMINE: Direct the group to read and reflect on the information from pages 122-123 in the PSG. Highlight this statement from the middle of page 123: "Joseph's response to his brothers in verses 19-20 summarizes the entire message of the Joseph narrative: do not be afraid but trust in God because He is faithful to accomplish His plans and purposes in the lives of His covenant people."

ASK: **How does staying focused on God's faithfulness help us demonstrate faithfulness to others?** (PSG, p. 123)

TRANSITION: *Once they finally embraced Joseph's mercy and forgiveness, his brothers and their families were able to settle peacefully in Egypt. But while Joseph was busy taking care of the present, he also had an eye toward the future—and God's ultimate fulfillment of his promises.*

NOTES

Group Activity Option

Physical

Prior to the session, write these words on separate sheets of paper: *Pit, Dream, Potiphar, Prison, Interpretation, Ruler, Forgiveness*. Distribute the cards randomly. Direct each person with a card to stand before the group. Instruct rest of the adults to put the cards in the sequence they occurred in Joseph's life. Reread Genesis 50:20, highlighting the sovereignty of God and His faithfulness each step of the way. Emphasize how God had been with Joseph and used him to save Jacob's family—and protect the covenant promise made to Abraham.

Promises Assured (Genesis 50:22-26)

22 Joseph and his father's family remained in Egypt. Joseph lived 110 years. **23** He saw Ephraim's sons to the third generation; the sons of Manasseh's son Machir were recognized by Joseph. **24** Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die, but God will certainly come to your aid and bring you up from this land to the land he swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." **25** So Joseph made the sons of Israel take an oath: "When God comes to your aid, you are to carry my bones up from here." **26** Joseph died at the age of 110. They embalmed him and placed him in a coffin in Egypt.

(v. 22) Remained in Egypt: Jacob's extended family who journeyed to Egypt during the famine would remain in Egypt. Eventually, his descendants would become enslaved (Ex. 1:1-14). Exodus 12:40-41 identifies the Israelites' length of stay in Egypt as 430 years.

Key People

Ephraim and Manasseh

These were Joseph's sons who were born in Egypt. Each produced one of the tribes of Israel, giving Joseph's family a double portion in the land. The name Ephraim, who was the younger son, means "two pasture lands" or "two fruit land." He received precedence over his older brother when Jacob blessed them. Later, Ephraim's descendants became the leading tribe of the Northern Kingdom. Beginning in the eighth century BC, Ephraim often served as an alternate name for the entire Northern Kingdom of Israel.

The name Manasseh, who was Joseph's older son, means "God has caused me to forget." Although Manasseh was the older son, he did not receive the blessing typically belonging to the firstborn son. In fact, Jacob resisted when Joseph tried to correct his father during the blessing (Gen. 48:13-20).

(v. 24) God will certainly come to your aid: Joseph uttered these words of faith prior to his death. In the original Hebrew language this statement more literally reads: "God will certainly visit you." The Old Testament records that God came to His people with both blessings and judgments. Joseph referred to a future visitation of God's blessing. That particular blessing occurred when He called Moses to bring His people out of Egyptian bondage and lead them to the promised land.

(v. 24) The land he swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: This expression calls to mind the Lord's promises to the patriarchs, beginning with Abraham

(Abram) in Genesis 12:1-3. The Lord renewed that promise with Abraham's son Isaac and again with Isaac's son Jacob (see Ex. 6:8; 33:1; Num. 32:11; Deut. 6:10; 9:5; 30:20; 34:4). This land is variously identified in the Old Testament as Canaan and Israel.

(v. 25) Take an oath: This verb basically means "to swear." It is identified in the unpointed (without vowels) Hebrew text with the number seven. A relationship between the number seven and oath taking also appears in Genesis 21:22-34. There, Abraham required Abimelech to swear that a certain well belonged to Abraham. Abraham sealed the agreement by presenting seven ewe lambs to Abimelech. The well was called Beer-sheba, meaning "Well of the Seven Oaths." To take an oath in the Old Testament meant to give your sacred word that you would faithfully keep your promise.

(v. 25) Carry my bones: Joseph required the Israelites to give their sacred word that they would return his bones to Canaan. The writer to the Hebrews celebrated Joseph's act of faith in requiring this oath (Heb. 11:22). When Moses led the Israelites in their exodus from Egypt, they fulfilled Joseph's instructions by taking his bones with them (Ex. 13:19).

(v. 26) Embalmed: This process of preserving bodies from decay originated in Egypt. The Hebrews seldom practiced embalming. The embalming of Jacob's and Joseph's bodies (Gen. 50:1-3,26) highlights their importance to the community and to the plans to return their remains to Canaan for burial.

(v. 26) Coffin: The Hebrew word for coffin basically means "chest" or "ark." Although it differs from the term used to describe Noah's ark, it designates a box used for various purposes. For example, the word identified the chest used to collect money for the temple's repair (2 Kings 12:10). It most commonly appears in the expression the "ark of the covenant."



APPLICATION POINT: Believers can assure others of God's eternal faithfulness to His people.

READ: Invite a volunteer to read **Genesis 50:22-26** as the group listens for Joseph's last request.

ASK: **How did Joseph's forgiveness and faithfulness to God impact future generations of his family?**

MINI LECTURE: Use information from pages 124-125 of the PSG to highlight Joseph's final request. Highlight the blessings he received in seeing and knowing his descendants, as well as his prediction that God would eventually move His people back to the promised land. Read Exodus 13:19. Share that more than four centuries later, God fulfilled this promise through Joseph, and Moses made sure Joseph's bones went with them. Briefly discuss how the presence of Joseph's coffin would affect future generations of Hebrews in Egypt.

ASK: **What responsibility do we have to share God's faithfulness to future generations?** (PSG, p. 125)

TRANSITION: *Joseph's narrative closes the book of Genesis and the story of the patriarchs. Times have changed since Joseph lived, but, as believers, we serve the same God. And we are called to faithfully remember His plans and purposes for His people.*

NOTES

Group Activity Option

Object Lesson: Binoculars

Show adults the binoculars you brought to the session. Ask: **When might we want to use a pair of binoculars?** Point out that binoculars help us see things in the distance. (*Possible uses: ballgames, bird watching, soldiers on a battlefield, and so forth.*) Encourage the group to imagine a pair of binoculars that could allow them to see the future. Share that while that's not possible, Joseph was able to catch a glimpse of what would happen to the children of Israel. The man who had dreams about the future as a boy was able to provide comfort to his descendants before he died.

CHALLENGE

SUMMARIZE: Review these points from Apply the Text on page 126 of the *Personal Study Guide*:

- *Believers can accept forgiveness from others.*
- *Believers can faithfully exhibit God's character to others.*
- *Believers can assure others of God's eternal faithfulness to His people.*

REVIEW: Lead the group to identify at least three-character traits exhibited by Joseph in Genesis 37–50. (*Examples: leadership, forgiveness, faithfulness, purity, patience, trust*) Record the traits on the board. Encourage adults to reflect on these qualities and to silently evaluate themselves in these areas.

REREAD: Read aloud Genesis 50:20 as a group. Note that it is the memory verse for the session.

ASK: **What does Genesis 50:20 reveal about God's purpose for your life? How does it impact the way you relate to others?** (PSG, p. 126)

PRAY: Close in prayer, thanking God for His blessings. Pray specifically for adults to accept forgiveness, exhibit God's character, and assure others of God's eternal faithfulness.

After the Session

Reinforce the session by reflecting on true forgiveness. As the group anticipates moving to a new Bible study, send them a text or email that offers an invitation to people they know that are not involved in a Bible study group. Be sure to follow up with adults who may be on your roll but have not attended recently.

LEADER EXTRAS



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LEADER PACK IDEAS

Pack Item 1

Map: The Travels of Jacob
Sessions 3-4, 6-8, 12-13

Use the map on the inside back cover of this resource or locate a map that shows the journeys Jacob took in the book of Genesis.

Pack Item 2

Poster: Outline of Genesis 20–50
Sessions 1-13

Refer to the outline of the book of Genesis found on page 9 of the *Personal Study Guide* (PSG).

Pack Item 3

Poster: The Patriarchs
Sessions 1-13

Create a chart listing the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and his brothers), along with where they appear in the book of Genesis and some key highlights from their lives.

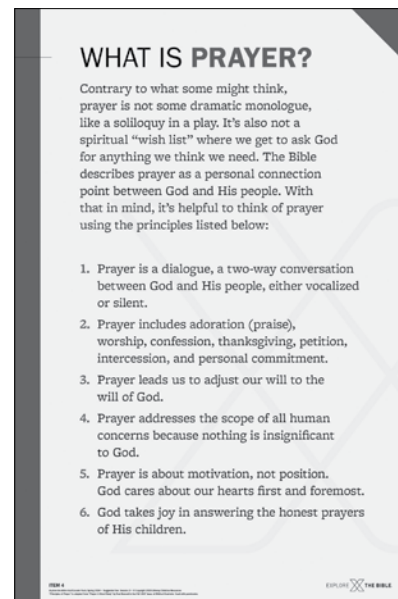
PATRIARCH	GENESIS REFERENCES	KEY CONTRIBUTIONS
Abraham (Abram)	Genesis 12:1-25:7	Original recipient of God's covenant and considered righteous by faith (Gen. 15:6)
Isaac	Genesis 25:19; 27:1-28:22; 35:1-35; 37:1-39; 42:1-47:34	Son of promise through whom God's initial promise was fulfilled (Gen. 22:18)
Jacob (Israel)	Genesis 29:16-30:24; 31:1-32:29; 35:1-35; 42:1-47:34; 48:1-49:33	Isaac's younger son, whose name was later changed to Israel (Gen. 32:28)
Joseph*	Genesis 37:1-50:26; 46:1-48:22; 50:1-26	Saved the nation in Egypt and refused to take vengeance on his brothers (Gen. 50:15-21)

Example from *Explore the Bible Leader Pack*

Pack Item 4

Poster: Principles of Prayer
Session 2

Locate an article that identifies several of the key elements of prayer. Use this article to create a poster that lists and explains the elements of effective communication with God.



Example from *Explore the Bible Leader Pack*

Examples from *Explore the Bible Leader Pack*.
The Pack is available for purchase at [goExploreTheBible.com](https://www.explorethebible.com).

Pack Item 5

Poster: Key Moments in Jacob’s Life
Sessions 3-4, 6-8, 12-13

Create a poster listing the highlights of Jacob’s life and where they are located in the book of Genesis. Consider including the following:

- Jacob was born (Gen. 25:24-26).
- Jacob gained the birthright (Gen. 25:29-34) and blessing (Gen. 27:1-40).
- God affirmed His covenant with Jacob at Bethel (Gen. 28:10-22).
- Jacob moved to Haran (Gen. 29:13–31:21).
- Laban confronted Jacob (Gen. 31:22-55).
- Jacob wrestled with God and was renamed Israel (Gen. 32:22-32).
- Jacob and Esau reunited (Gen. 33:1-20).
- God renewed His covenant with Jacob (Gen. 35:1-15).
- Rachel died in childbirth (Gen. 35:16-20).
- Jacob moved to Egypt (Gen. 46:1-7).
- Jacob died in Egypt and was buried in Canaan (Gen. 49:29–50:14).

Pack Item 6

Poster: Key Verse: John 20:8
Session 5

Create a poster of John 20:8.

“The other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, then also went in, saw, and believed.”

Pack Item 7

Handout: Genesis Time Line
Sessions 1-13

Locate a study Bible with a time line of the major people and events related to the book of Genesis.

Pack Item 8

Handout: Background of Genesis
Sessions 1-13

Use a study Bible or Bible commentary to gather background information on the book of Genesis, especially chapters 20–50. Highlight the following information:

- Purpose
- Writer and Date
- Organization
- Themes in Genesis

Pack Item 9

Handout: Background of the Patriarchs
Sessions 1-13

Use a commentary, Bible handbook, or other source to create a handout that describes the background of each patriarch: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph and his brothers. Include the meaning of their names, their key accomplishments, their relationship with God, and their relationship to the covenant.

BACKGROUND OF THE PATRIARCHS	
Readers' central concern from a church school setting: "What of the role of God in the Old Testament, the term generally refers to Abraham and his immediate descendants who shared in God's covenant, Isaac and Jacob, and all Joseph and his brothers."	
Date and Chronology	Approximately 2200-1800 BC. While some have dated the biblical patriarchs more recently, no evidence of any such period exists.
Names	Abraham (Hebrew: Avram) means "Father of many nations" (Hebrew: Avram). Isaac (Hebrew: Itzhak) means "laughter" (Hebrew: Itzhak). Jacob (Hebrew: Yaakov) means "heel" (Hebrew: Yaakov).
History	The patriarchal narratives appear in Genesis 12-50. God called Abraham out of Mesopotamia into Canaan, Isaac received the birthright and blessing from Jacob, and Jacob returned to Canaan. Jacob's son received his brother and shared his birthright and the blessing. Later, Joseph, son of Jacob, was sold into Egyptian slavery—yet even then God used to preserve the family during a famine.
Religion	Abraham likely worshipped false gods (including the sun, moon, and stars), which is why Genesis 12:1-13:18 tells of his journey to Canaan. However, he became a worshiper of the one true God. Later patriarchs also followed God as he revealed himself to them and affirmed the covenant with them.
Covenant	God's covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was an everlasting, a promise of land, and Isaac's blessing (including the Patriarchs). The birth of Isaac affirmed God's faithfulness to Abraham, while the trial of circumcised infants affirmed God's faithfulness to God. And from a birthright and blessing, the patriarchal narrative moved into a covenant. They accepted God's promise of land by faith, Isaac is the ultimate fulfillment of God's covenant to bless the world through Abraham's family.

Example from *Explore the Bible Leader Pack*

Pack Item 10

Handout: What the Bible Says About Isaac
Sessions 1–2

Use a commentary, Bible handbook, or other source to create a handout that explains the significance of Isaac and his role in the book of Genesis.



Example from *Explore the Bible Leader Pack*

Pack Item 11

Handout: Jesus's Post-Resurrection Appearances
Session 5

Create a handout highlighting all of Jesus's post-resurrection appearances recorded in the Gospels, Acts, and 1 Corinthians 15.

Pack Item 12

Handout: At Peniel
Session 7

Use a Bible commentary, Bible handbook, or other source to research and create a handout explaining the significance of Peniel, especially in the life of Jacob.

Pack Item 13

Handout: Potiphar: All We Know
Session 10

Use a Bible commentary, Bible handbook, or other source to research and create a handout outlining who Potiphar was and how he related with Joseph in the book of Genesis.

Pack Item 14

Handout: Joseph as a Ruler in Egypt
Sessions 11-13

Use a Bible commentary, Bible handbook, or other source to research and create a handout providing details about how Joseph rose from the ranks of slave and prisoner to become second in command over the nation of Egypt.

Examples from *Explore the Bible Leader Pack*.
The Pack is available for purchase at [goExploreTheBible.com](https://www.explorethebible.com).

COMING **NEXT QUARTER**

ACTS 1-12

Session 1: **Commissioned** (Acts 1:4-11,23-26)

Session 2: **Empowered** (Acts 2:5-16,36-38)

Session 3: **United** (Acts 2:41-47)

Session 4: **Placed** (Acts 3:12-26)

Session 5: **Emboldened** (Acts 4:8-21)

Session 6: **Accountable** (Acts 4:36-5:11)

Session 7: **Worthy** (Acts 5:29-42)

Session 8: **Serving** (Acts 6:1-15)

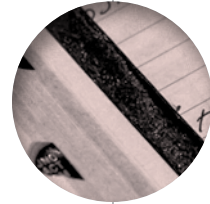
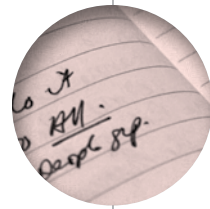
Session 9: **Baptizing** (Acts 8:26-39)

Session 10: **Calling** (Acts 9:3-16)

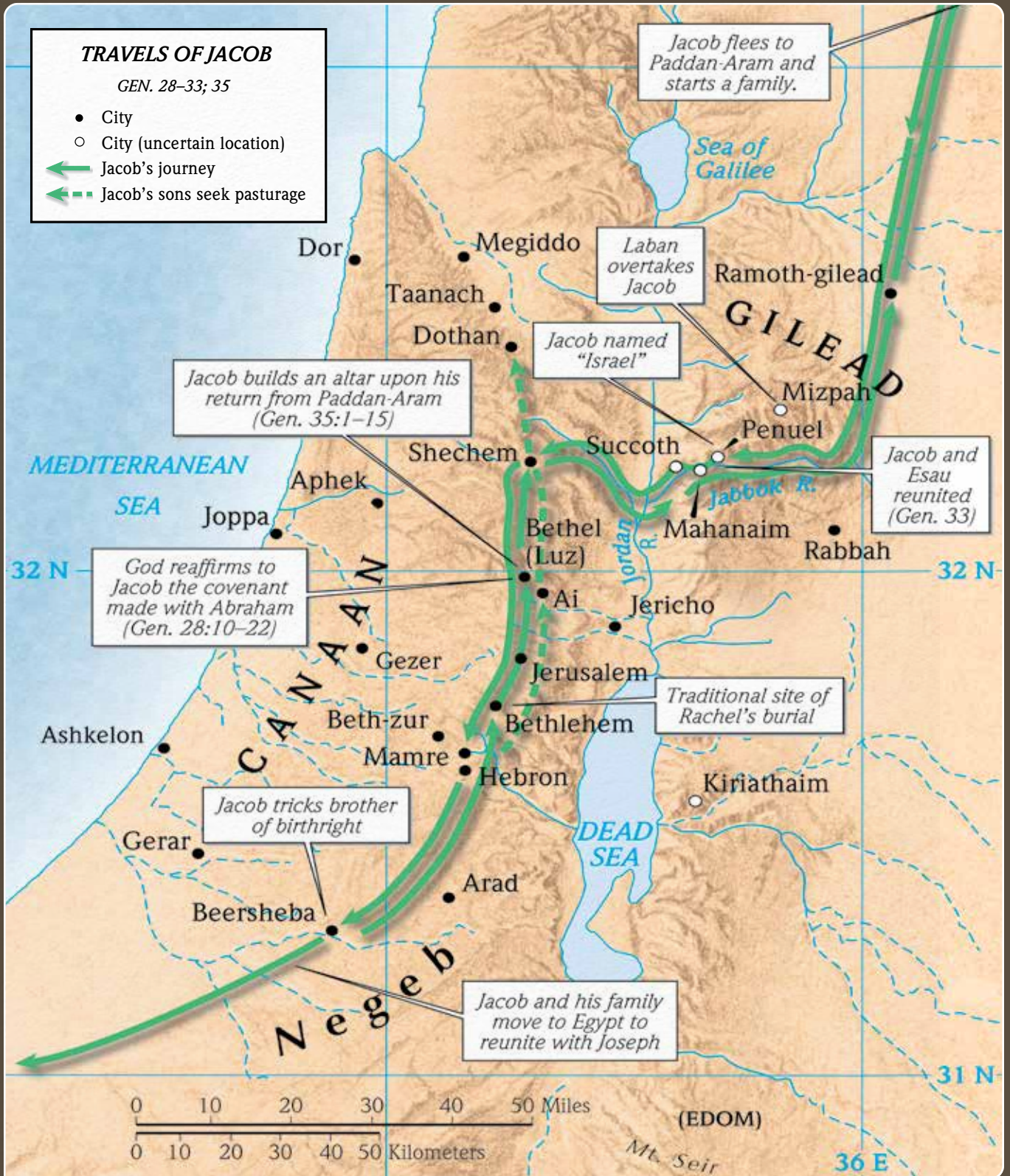
Session 11: **Healing** (Acts 9:32-43)

Session 12: **Including** (Acts 10:34-48)

Session 13: **Praying** (Acts 12:6-18)



The Travels of Jacob



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For many, family makes all the difference. Our families shape us and test us. In big and small ways, we are who we are because of them. In Genesis 20–50, readers get a deep dive into one particular family: the descendants of Abraham. Through these patriarchs, God built the nation of Israel and established a line to the Savior. What's more, their examples of faith continue to resonate with Christ followers today. And these studies bring their stories to life.

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