

PRECEPT
UPON
PRECEPT

Genesis

KEEPING YOUR
FOCUS WHEN
YOUR DREAMS
ARE SHATTERED

A STUDY ON JOSEPH

GENESIS, PART 5

PRECEPT UPON PRECEPT

KEEPING YOUR FOCUS WHEN YOUR DREAMS ARE SHATTERED
A STUDY ON JOSEPH

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HELPFUL STUDY TOOLS

ARTHUR, KAY

How to Study Your Bible

Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 1994

The New Inductive Study Bible

Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 2000

Word Study Tools

Commentaries on Genesis

(See commentary list below.)

RECOMMENDED COMMENTARIES

BAXTER, J. SIDLOW

Explore the Book

Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1960.

KIDNER, DEREK F.

Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries: Genesis

Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1967.

RECOMMENDED SOFTWARE

Logos Bible Software

Powerful search engines and up to 4,000 electronic Bible study resources (commentaries, lexicons, Bible dictionaries etc.) make it fast and easy to do simple and complex searches of multiple sources, then pull materials together for orderly presentation—excellent for word and topical studies based on English or original Hebrew and Greek. Available at www.logos.com.

LESSON ONE—CHAPTERS 37–39

THIS LESSON INCORPORATES The following located in the Appendix:
Observation Worksheets of Genesis 37–39
“Genesis at a Glance” chart
“Journal on God”
Cross-references

JEALOUSY

...and so *Abraham* became the father of Isaac, and circumcised him on the eighth day; and Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob of the twelve patriarchs. The patriarchs became jealous of Joseph....¹

PASSION

...“Your daughter-in-law... has played the harlot, and... is also with child by harlotry.”...²

AND HEARTACHE

DAY ONE

There was a man named Joseph . . . a real man, a human being like us who lived nearly 4000 years ago and faced many of the same temptations, trials, and testings that you and I face. And because of this, there is much we can learn from his story that can help us in the twists and turns of our own lives.

Although Joseph is mentioned earlier in the book of Genesis, his story begins in chapter 37. In the Appendix of this book you will find Genesis 37–50 printed out as an Observation Worksheets.

1. Read Genesis 37:1-4.
 - a. Mark in a distinctive color every reference to *Joseph*, including any pronouns that refer to him.
 - b. Then look at each of the references you marked on Joseph and see if they answer the 5 Ws and an H: who, what, when, where, why and how.

¹Acts 7:8-9

²Genesis 38:24

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These are investigative questions that help you understand the essence of what is written.

See if the text tells you

who Joseph is,

to whom he belongs or associates with,

what he does,

what happens to him and **why**,

where he is,

when this is occurring,

why he is treated as he is,

how he responds, etc.

- c. List everything these first four verses tell you about Joseph.

2. Now if you have not done our other character studies on Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Esau from the book of Genesis, we want to take this opportunity to give you a better understanding of Joseph's background.

- a. As you observed in Genesis 37:1-3, Joseph's father is referred to by two names: Jacob and Israel. Jacob is the son of Isaac and the grandson of Abraham. God made covenant promises to Abraham and to Isaac and to their descendants.

In Genesis 28 He also gave the promises to Jacob. Read Genesis 28:13-15 and write down what you learn about God's promises to Jacob.

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- b. Genesis 32:22-30 tells us how Jacob obtained his second name, Israel. Write down what you learn regarding his name being changed, who changed his name, and why he was named this.
- c. Read Genesis 35:22b-29, and record
- 1) How many sons Jacob had
 - 2) Who Jacob's father was and how old he was when he died.
 - 3) The name of Jacob's brother.
 - 4) Listed below is the birth order of Jacob's (Israel's) sons along with their mothers' names. Find Joseph, underline his name and note his mother's name.

The Birth Order of Jacob's (Israel's) Sons

Mother	Son
Leah	Reuben (born 1921 B.C.) Simeon Levi Judah
Bilhah (Rachel's maid)	Dan Naphtali
Zilpah (Leah's maid)	Gad Asher
Leah	Issachar Zebulun
Rachel	Joseph (born 1914 B.C.) Benjamin

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- b. Do you see any key word or synonym that you marked previously in Genesis 37:5-11? If so, mark it in the same way. Hint: note how Joseph is referred to in verse 19.
 - c. What do Joseph's brothers want to do to him? Look for every reference to this and mark it in the same way. It is a key phrase.
 - d. Which of the brothers opposes this? Where is he in the birth order?
 - e. What does this brother suggest they do with Joseph? If you want to, you can mark *pit* since it is repeated numerous times.
 - f. Now summarize in a sentence or two what occurs in this paragraph.
4. Now, let's move on to Genesis 37:25-28. Read this paragraph and then complete the following:
- a. Who are the main characters in this paragraph? List them with a brief description of the role each plays.

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- b. Mark the key words you marked in the previous paragraph along with references to killing Joseph or shedding his blood. Also don't forget to mark geographical locations.
 - c. Once again in a sentence or two summarize what occurs in this paragraph.
5. Finally read Genesis 37:29–36.
- a. Did you notice how often Joseph's *tunic* is mentioned? In light of this repetition you may want to go back and mark it as a key word throughout the chapter. Then you can trace the saga of the varicolored tunic. Some believe that the Hebrew word indicates it was a full-length robe. As you look at the various references, you can get an idea of what this tunic meant to Jacob. List your observations below.
 - b. Mark key words; watch for geographical references. Note any expressions of emotion.
 - c. Observe what you learn about Reuben in this paragraph. How do Judah and Reuben distinguish themselves?

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d. Now summarize the content of this paragraph in one or two sentences.

e. Finally, at the beginning of your Observation Worksheet record where Joseph is as the chapter opens and then at the end of your worksheet record where Joseph is as the chapter closes. Also note Jacob's status in the beginning of the chapter and what it is when the chapter comes to a close.

6. Now stop and think about Genesis 37. Record the main theme of this chapter on the line for chapter 37 on the "**Genesis at a Glance**" chart in the Appendix.

If you will do this after you finish studying each chapter, from chapter 37 through chapter 50, then when you complete your study you will have a handy summary of this portion of the book of Genesis.

7. This record of Joseph not only gives us a historical account of the sons of Jacob, it also serves another purpose. Read Romans 15:4. Then think about how this chapter might instruct us as we find ourselves in similar situations, how it might cause us to persevere, to be encouraged, to be warned, or what hope might come from it—if any at this point. So often as we read of others in similar situations or circumstances and their relationship to God, be it negative or positive, it helps us evaluate where we are, or where we are headed.

For instance, has anything similar happened to you? Has there been a conflict in your family—a case of favoritism, partiality of a parent toward a child? Have you had to deal with a seething jealousy? Have any family members ever ganged up on you? Do you see yourself in any of these characters? Can you relate to Joseph? Or maybe Reuben or Judah? Or are you like Joseph's brothers, so eaten up with jealousy that you can hardly talk with them decently, kindly? Has your jealousy turned to hatred? Is there murder in your heart?

If you relate to any of these situations or know others who are in them, then you want to pay careful attention to what transpires in the chapters to come. Take a moment now to stop and pray about it. You might even want to write out a prayer to our Father and tell Him what you want to learn from all of this.

Record any practical insights you personally have gained in your observations of this chapter.

DAY
THREE

1. As chapter 37 opens, the author of Genesis lets us know what he is going to cover next in his Genesis account. Look at the phrase, “These are *the records of the generations of Jacob.*”


The phrase “These are the records of the generations” first occurs in Genesis 2:4 (while the text in the NASB reads “This is the account of the heavens and the earth,” the literal Hebrew reads, “These are the generations of the heavens and the earth.”) It is then repeated in Genesis 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10,27; 25:12; 25:19; 36:1,9; and 37:2.

In Genesis 37, God focuses first on Jacob’s son, Joseph. Then in Genesis 38, God moves our attention to another of Jacob’s sons.

Read Genesis 38 and note the main characters in this chapter. List them below in order of their importance.

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Lesson 1, Chapters 37–39

2. Now read Genesis 38 again and observe the chapter, the same way you did Genesis 37.
 - a. Watch for key repeated words and mark them.
 - b. Don't forget to double underline every geographical location.
 - c. Mark every reference to time because it helps you discover the "when" of something. You might want to mark it with a clock like this: 
 - d. Watch for references to the *Lord* in this chapter. What do you learn about God from these references? It is so helpful to keep a journal on God as you study the Word of God; it's a real faith builder. We have included a section at the end of this workbook for you to begin your journal. Every time you come across a new insight on God you should record the book, chapter, and verse and what you learn about Him from the text. The journal will then become a wonderful aid to worship, for to worship God is to look at His worth and give Him the reverence and praise worthy His name. This is how the Lord's Prayer begins.

In the Appendix we have included several pages you might want to use for your journal as you study Genesis 37–50. Then if you like the concept and find it useful, you can transfer your insights to a permanent journal later.

3. Although there is no record of the Law at this point in the history of Israel³, it is apparent from the text that what was written in the Law at a later time regarding the duty of the brother-in-law (Genesis 38:8) was part of the culture then.

Read the following Scriptures and next to them record what they say in respect to carrying on the bloodline of a family member. As you look at these two passages, you will see how long this custom of the law continued.

- a. Deuteronomy 25:5-10

³The Law wouldn't be given until 430 years after the Abrahamic Covenant, when the children of Israel came out of Egypt (Genesis 15:12-17; Galatians 3:16-17).

b. Matthew 22:23–33

4. Read Matthew 1:1–3 and note who is recorded in the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. Now, isn't it exciting to see the hand of God in this event in Judah's life?
5. Finally write out the theme of Genesis 38 and record it on the "Genesis at a Glance" chart.

O Beloved, life may be difficult with all of its unexpected, unwelcome twists and turns, and yet we never know what God is about! And although we may not know or understand all that is transpiring and what God's ultimate purpose is, our calling is simply to be faithful to our God and His precepts no matter the situation. The question then becomes, Am I?

DAY FOUR

1. Your assignment for today is a simple one. Following the pattern of what you did as you observed the other chapters this week, read Genesis 39 and mark the text.
 - a. Also mark the words *blessing (blessed)* and *sin*. Although *sin* is not repeated throughout the chapter, it is always good to mark the word when you come across it in your Bible. Therefore, you might want to devise a way to mark it throughout your Bible. This way it will always be easy to find and to discern what God says is sin and consequently avoid it. You would also want to mark synonyms such as *iniquity* and *transgression* in the same way.
 - b. Also mark *Hebrew*. This is the second event in which the word is used. The first occurrence of *Hebrew* in the Bible is in Genesis 14:13.

4) Hebrews 13:4

If you have the time, you may want to look up the following passages and note what they teach on the subject of sex outside marriage. If you are not familiar with these passages, may we suggest that you write them somewhere in your Bible for future reference so you can share with others what God says on the subject.

Deuteronomy 22:13-30

Job 31:1, 9-12

Proverbs 5:1-23; 7:1-27

Matthew 5:27-30

Ephesians 5:5-6

1 Thessalonians 4:3-8

Revelation 21:8

2. Many people reading Genesis 39 would question God. If Joseph honored God, why didn't God watch over him? Wouldn't God be obligated to do so? Why did something bad happen when someone was being good? Is that fair of God? How would you answer this? (If you know the remainder of Joseph's story, don't use it in your answer at this point.) Answer the question as if you were sitting in the prison with Joseph and he had just told you why he was there.

Aren't you touched by how relevant all this is to our day, to our lives! Press on. You are going to learn so much over the next three weeks that it will astound you and, I pray, make you hunger for more and more. . . as you hunger and thirst for righteousness.

Blessings

GENESIS 37
Observation Worksheet

Chapter Theme _____

- 1 Now Jacob lived in the land where his father had sojourned, in the land of Canaan.
- 2 These are *the records* of the generations of Jacob.
Joseph, when seventeen years of age, was pasturing the flock with his brothers while he was *still* a youth, along with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives. And Joseph brought back a bad report about them to their father.
- 3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his sons, because he was the son of his old age; and he made him a varicolored tunic.
- 4 His brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers; and so they hated him and could not speak to him on friendly terms.
- 5 Then Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more.
- 6 He said to them, "Please listen to this dream which I have had;
- 7 for behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and lo, my sheaf rose up and also stood erect; and behold, your sheaves gathered around and bowed down to my sheaf."
- 8 Then his brothers said to him, "Are you actually going to reign over us? Or are you really going to rule over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.
- 9 Now he had still another dream, and related it to his brothers, and said, "Lo, I have had still another dream; and behold, the sun and the moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me."

- 10 He related *it* to his father and to his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, “What is this dream that you have had? Shall I and your mother and your brothers actually come to bow ourselves down before you to the ground?”
- 11 His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying *in mind*.
- 12 Then his brothers went to pasture their father’s flock in Shechem.
- 13 Israel said to Joseph, “Are not your brothers pasturing *the flock* in Shechem? Come, and I will send you to them.” And he said to him, “I will go.”
- 14 Then he said to him, “Go now and see about the welfare of your brothers and the welfare of the flock, and bring word back to me.” So he sent him from the valley of Hebron, and he came to Shechem.
- 15 A man found him, and behold, he was wandering in the field; and the man asked him, “What are you looking for?”
- 16 He said, “I am looking for my brothers; please tell me where they are pasturing *the flock*.”
- 17 Then the man said, “They have moved from here; for I heard *them* say, ‘Let us go to Dothan.’ ” So Joseph went after his brothers and found them at Dothan.
- 18 Then they saw him from a distance and before he came close to them, they plotted against him to put him to death.
- 19 They said to one another, “Here comes this dreamer!
- 20 “Now then, come and let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits; and we will say, ‘A wild beast devoured him.’ Then let us see what will become of his dreams!”
- 21 But Reuben heard *this* and rescued him out of their hands and said, “Let us not take his life.”
- 22 Reuben further said to them, “Shed no blood. Throw him into this pit that is in the wilderness, but do not lay hands on him”—that he might rescue him out of their hands, to restore him to his father.

- 23 So it came about, when Joseph reached his brothers, that they stripped Joseph of his tunic, the varicolored tunic that was on him;
- 24 and they took him and threw him into the pit. Now the pit was empty, without any water in it.
- 25 Then they sat down to eat a meal. And as they raised their eyes and looked, behold, a caravan of Ishmaelites was coming from Gilead, with their camels bearing aromatic gum and balm and myrrh, on their way to bring *them* down to Egypt.
- 26 Judah said to his brothers, “What profit is it for us to kill our brother and cover up his blood?
- 27 “Come and 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 listened to *him*.
- 28 Then some Midianite traders passed by, so they pulled *him* up and lifted Joseph out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty *shekels* of silver. Thus they brought Joseph into Egypt.
- 29 Now Reuben returned to the pit, and behold, Joseph was not in the pit; so he tore his garments.
- 30 He returned to his brothers and said, “The boy is not *there*; as for me, where am I to go?”
- 31 So they took Joseph’s tunic, and slaughtered a male goat and dipped the tunic in the blood;
- 32 and they sent the varicolored tunic and brought it to their father and said, “We found this; please examine *it* to *see* whether it is your son’s tunic or not.”
- 33 Then he examined it and said, “It is my son’s tunic. A wild beast has devoured him; Joseph has surely been torn to pieces!”
- 34 So Jacob tore his clothes, and put sackcloth on his loins and mourned for his son many days.

- 35 Then all his sons and all his daughters arose to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. And he said, “Surely I will go down to Sheol in mourning for my son.” So his father wept for him.
- 36 Meanwhile, the Midianites sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, Pharaoh’s officer, the captain of the bodyguard.

GENESIS 38

Observation Worksheet

Chapter Theme _____

- 1 And it came about at that time, that Judah departed from his brothers and visited a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah.
- 2 Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was Shua; and he took her and went in to her.
- 3 So she conceived and bore a son and he named him Er.
- 4 Then she conceived again and bore a son and named him Onan.
- 5 She bore still another son and named him Shelah; and it was at Chezib that she bore him.
- 6 Now Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, and her name *was* Tamar.
- 7 But Er, Judah's firstborn, was evil in the sight of the LORD, so the LORD took his life.
- 8 Then Judah said to Onan, "Go in to your brother's wife, and perform your duty as a brother-in-law to her, and raise up offspring for your brother."
- 9 Onan knew that the offspring would not be his; so when he went in to his brother's wife, he wasted his seed on the ground in order not to give offspring to his brother.
- 10 But what he did was displeasing in the sight of the LORD; so He took his life also.
- 11 Then Judah said to his daughter-in-law Tamar, "Remain a widow in your father's house until my son Shelah grows up"; for he thought, "*I am afraid* that he too may die like his brothers." So Tamar went and lived in her father's house.
- 12 Now after a considerable time Shua's daughter, the wife of Judah, died; and when the time of mourning was ended, Judah went up to his sheepshearers at Timnah, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite.
- 13 It was told to Tamar, "Behold, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep."

- 14 So she removed her widow's garments and covered *herself* with a veil, and wrapped herself, and sat in the gateway of Enaim, which is on the road to Timnah; for she saw that Shelah had grown up, and she had not been given to him as a wife.
- 15 When Judah saw her, he thought she *was* a harlot, for she had covered her face.
- 16 So he turned aside to her by the road, and said, "Here now, let me come in to you"; for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law. And she said, "What will you give me, that you may come in to me?"
- 17 He said, therefore, "I will send you a young goat from the flock." She said, moreover, "Will you give a pledge until you send *it*?"
- 18 He said, "What pledge shall I give you?" And she said, "Your seal and your cord, and your staff that is in your hand." So he gave *them* to her and went in to her, and she conceived by him.
- 19 Then she arose and departed, and removed her veil and put on her widow's garments.
- 20 When Judah sent the young goat by his friend the Adullamite, to receive the pledge from the woman's hand, he did not find her.
- 21 He asked the men of her place, saying, "Where is the temple prostitute who was by the road at Enaim?" But they said, "There has been no temple prostitute here."
- 22 So he returned to Judah, and said, "I did not find her; and furthermore, the men of the place said, 'There has been no temple prostitute here.' "
- 23 Then Judah said, "Let her keep them, otherwise we will become a laughingstock. After all, I sent this young goat, but you did not find her."
- 24 Now it was about three months later that Judah was informed, "Your daughter-in-law Tamar has played the harlot, and behold, she is also with child by harlotry." Then Judah said, "Bring her out and let her be burned!"

- 25 It was while she was being brought out that she sent to her father-in-law, saying, “I am with child by the man to whom these things belong.” And she said, “Please examine and see, whose signet ring and cords and staff are these?”
- 26 Judah recognized *them*, and said, “She is more righteous than I, inasmuch as I did not give her to my son Shelah.” And he did not have relations with her again.
- 27 It came about at the time she was giving birth, that behold, there were twins in her womb.
- 28 Moreover, it took place while she was giving birth, one put out a hand, and the midwife took and tied a scarlet *thread* on his hand, saying, “This one came out first.”
- 29 But it came about as he drew back his hand, that behold, his brother came out. Then she said, “What a breach you have made for yourself!” So he was named Perez.
- 30 Afterward his brother came out who had the scarlet *thread* on his hand; and he was named Zerah.

GENESIS 39
Observation Worksheet

Chapter Theme _____

- 1 Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an Egyptian officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the bodyguard, bought him from the Ishmaelites, who had taken him down there.
- 2 The LORD was with Joseph, so he became a successful man. And he was in the house of his master, the Egyptian.
- 3 Now his master saw that the LORD was with him and *how* the LORD caused all that he did to prosper in his hand.
- 4 So Joseph found favor in his sight and became his personal servant; and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he owned he put in his charge.
- 5 It came about that from the time he made him overseer in his house and over all that he owned, the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house on account of Joseph; thus the LORD's blessing was upon all that he owned, in the house and in the field.
- 6 So he left everything he owned in Joseph's charge; and with him *there* he did not concern himself with anything except the food which he ate. **N**ow Joseph was handsome in form and appearance.
- 7 It came about after these events that his master's wife looked with desire at Joseph, and she said, "Lie with me."
- 8 But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Behold, with me *here*, my master does not concern himself with anything in the house, and he has put all that he owns in my charge.
- 9 "There is no one greater in this house than I, and he has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do this great evil and sin against God?"

- 10 As she spoke to Joseph day after day, he did not listen to her to lie beside her *or* be with her.
- 11 Now it happened one day that he went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the household was there inside.
- 12 She caught him by his garment, saying, “Lie with me!” And he left his garment in her hand and fled, and went outside.
- 13 When she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and had fled outside,
- 14 she called to the men of her household and said to them, “See, he has brought in a Hebrew to us to make sport of us; he came in to me to lie with me, and I screamed.
- 15 “When he heard that I raised my voice and screamed, he left his garment beside me and fled and went outside.”
- 16 So she left his garment beside her until his master came home.
- 17 Then she spoke to him with these words, “The Hebrew slave, whom you brought to us, came in to me to make sport of me;
- 18 and as I raised my voice and screamed, he left his garment beside me and fled outside.”
- 19** Now when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spoke to him, saying, “This is what your slave did to me,” his anger burned.
- 20 So Joseph’s master took him and put him into the jail, the place where the king’s prisoners were confined; and he was there in the jail.
- 21 But the LORD was with Joseph and extended kindness to him, and gave him favor in the sight of the chief jailer.
- 22 The chief jailer committed to Joseph’s charge all the prisoners who were in the jail; so that whatever was done there, he was responsible *for it*.
- 23 The chief jailer did not supervise anything under Joseph’s charge because the LORD was with him; and whatever he did, the LORD made to prosper.

GENESIS AT A GLANCE

Theme of Genesis:

Chapter Themes

1	Creation in Six Days
2	Creation of Mankind
3	The Fall
4	Cain & Abel
5	Life under the Curse
6	Setting for the Flood Judgment
7	The Flood
8	The End of the Flood
9	God's Covenant with Noah
10	Nations Separated after the Flood
11	Babel
12	God Calls Abram/Abram & Pharaoh
13	Abram and Lot Separate
14	Abram Rescues Lot/Melchizedek
15	God's Covenant with Abram
16	Hagar Bears Ishmael
17	Circumcision—Sign of the Covenant
18	Promise of Isaac/Abraham Intercedes for Sodom
19	Destruction of Sodom & Gomorrah
20	Abraham & Abimelech
21	Sarah Bears Isaac
22	Abraham Offers Isaac
23	Sarah Buried at Hebron
24	Rebekah Becomes Isaac's Wife
Chapter Themes	

PRECEPT UPON PRECEPT

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Genesis at a Glance

25	Abraham Marries Keturah/Dies/Jacob & Esau
26	God's Covenant with Isaac/Isaac & Abimelech
27	Isaac Blesses Jacob
28	God's Promise to Jacob/Jacob's Vow to God
29	Jacob Serves for Leah & Rachel
30	Jacob's Children/Prosper
31	Jacob's Covenant with Laban
32	Gifts for Esau/Jacob Wrestles
33	Jacob Meets Esau/Settles in Shechem
34	Dinah & Shechem
35	Jacob to Bethel/Benjamin Born/Rachel Dies
36	Generations of Esau
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JOURNAL ON GOD