



SMALL GROUP STUDY

The Beginning of the Hebrew Race

God is all about people. In this section of the Bible we find 4 great people. The patriarchs of the Hebrew Nation, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. Through their lives we see that God is always reaching out for people. We read of God's selection of a nation so He could bring His son, the Messiah into the world through that nation by whom the world can be saved.

Abraham - a Father of Many Nations, a Friend of God

Abraham is a very important character. God promises to make Abraham a father of many nations. Is this a joke? Abraham is old, and his wife Sari is barren. God called Abraham to leave all and go to a land that the Lord would give to Abraham and his descendants forever. But, the land was in the middle of a famine, so it took some faith to believe that this was truly a blessing. After Isaac, the son of promise was born, God called Abraham to sacrifice him. Though he did not fully understand, he believed the promises that God had given him. Faith needs testing. Only when it is tested in extreme circumstances do we truly know how strong our faith is.

Discussion Questions:

- a. How old was Abraham when his son Isaac was born?
- b. Do you know the magnitude of your faith? What testings have you had in your life that have given proof to your faith?

Isaac - the Son of God's Promise

Isaac is the promised son born to Sarah and Abraham in their old age. The word love is first mentioned in the Bible here in relation to Abraham's son Isaac, "the son whom he LOVED." When Isaac is 40 years old, he marries Rebekah. Rebekah is barren. So, Isaac cries out to God who hears Isaac's plea and Rebekah births two boys. It was a difficult pregnancy and when she inquires of the Lord, she is told that, "Two nations are in your womb." Genesis 25:23

Discussion Questions:

- a. What lie did Isaac tell to King Abimelech?
- b. How was Isaac deceived by his son Jacob?

Jacob - Heal Catcher

Jacob was the second son of Isaac who caught his twin brother's heel on the way out of the womb. Esau was the older brother by seconds. However, when the boys are older Esau trades his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of stew. Then Jacob tricks his father into officially giving him Esau's birthright. Jacob runs away because he is afraid of his brother. He marries Rachel and her older sister. Jacob wrestles with God and God renames him Israel.

Discussion Questions:

- a. What is the meaning of the name Israel.
- b. Examine your heart: Do you wrestle with God?



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Joseph -

Joseph is the next to youngest son of Israel; a favorite of his father and hated by his brothers. He has dreams which indicate that the family will bow down to him. When he reveals these dreams to his family they become upset and his brothers despise him for his favored place and his presumptions. His brothers sell him into slavery and tell Israel that he has been killed by wild beasts. He is carried off to Egypt. There he interprets dreams, and eventually is highly favored and is put in charge of all Pharaoh's goods. A famine hits the middle east and Israel sends Joseph's brothers to Egypt to buy food. They don't recognize Joseph. When Joseph reveals who he is, he tells them not to be afraid, that what they meant for evil God meant for good. Then Israel and 70 of his family move to Egypt and they become a great nation.

Discussion Questions:

- a. What was the dream that Joseph interpreted for Pharaoh?
- b. Why was Joseph imprisoned?
- c. What is the blessing that Jacob gives at the end of his life to his sons and in what way does it refer to the Messiah?