

In The Beginning: Session 20: Family Matters

בְּרֵאשִׁית

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No class next week

Patriarchs

A patriarch is a father-leader of a group of people, as opposed to a matriarch. In the Bible these are the “founding fathers” of the Israelite, or Jewish, people.

- Abraham
- Isaac
- Jacob, later known as Israel.
- Jacob had 12 sons.
- The son of Jacob that we focus on the most is Joseph.

Why does God choose a people?

- He was going to “reestablish diplomatic relations” with the human race!
- Choosing the Israelites was a matter of God’s choice and grace. It was not something that Abraham earned, or that any of his descendants earned.
- Is this an offensive concept?

“The LORD delighted only in your fathers, to love them; and He chose their descendants after them, you above all peoples, as it is this day.” (Deuteronomy 10:15)

6 “For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. 7 The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; 8 but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.” (Deut. 7:6-8)

What was the mission for which GOD chose Israel?

1. God called Israel to be a witness. God called the people of Israel to give the world the knowledge of the one true God. Whether through the Word, or whether it was by the preaching of the prophets and the testimony of the people, Israel was called to be a light and a testimony to the nations.

“You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews.” (John 4:22) We owe the Jewish people a debt that can never be repaid.

2. Israel was called to demonstrate the holiness of God to the world. Israel was called to be an example of the nature of godly living.

3. God chose Israel to be a vehicle to bring the Messiah into the world. God promised a seed which would crush the head of the serpent. The Christ or Messiah would be the redeemer of the whole human race, but He would first be sent to the people of Israel.

The Family Of Terah (Genesis 11:27-32)

27 This is the genealogy of Terah: Terah begot Abram, Nahor, and Haran. Haran begot Lot.

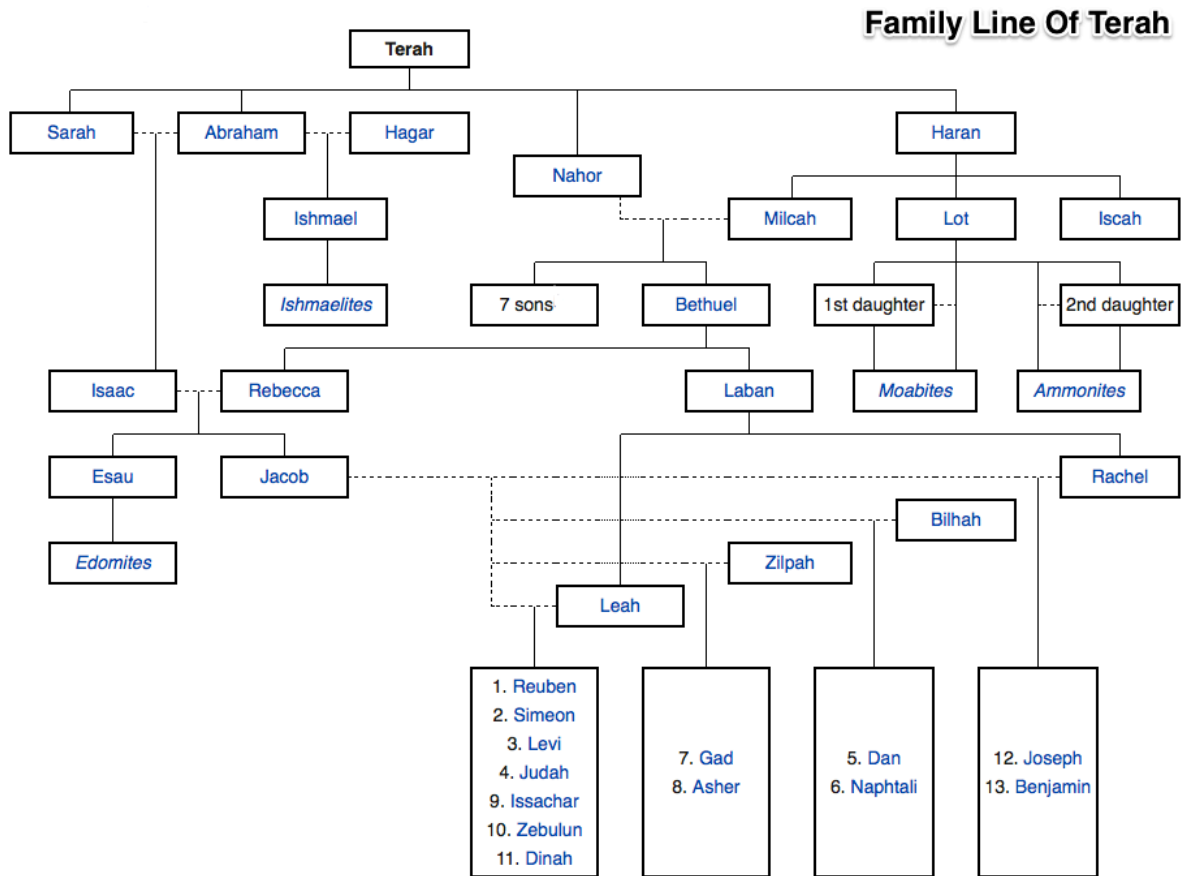
- *Abram: exalted father; Abraham: father of a multitude.* He was not the firstborn.

28 And Haran died before his father Terah in his native land, in Ur of the Chaldeans.

29 Then Abram and Nahor took wives: the name of Abram’s wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor’s wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran the father of Milcah and the father of Iscah. 30 But Sarai was barren; she had no child.

31 And Terah took his son Abram and his grandson Lot, the son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, his son Abram's wife, and they went out with them from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to the land of Canaan; and they came to Haran and dwelt there.
 32 So the days of Terah were two hundred and five years, and Terah died in Haran.

- What is the purpose of passages like this?



1. Dropping Lifespans. Lifespans continue to drop, as we have seen a few times already.

2. Inter-marriage between close relatives (endogamy). Not only was it common, it was apparently done to a degree of relationship which makes us uncomfortable. Why was there so much close marriage? People wanted to maintain their traditions and wealth.

3. Where are these people from? Ur Kasdim, south of Babylon, close to the Persian Gulf. A major center for worship of the moon god. A virtual certainty they were all idolaters.

And Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the Lord God of Israel: 'Your fathers, including Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, dwelt on the other side of the River [the Euphrates] in old times; and they served other gods.'" (Josh. 24:2)

4. What about their names?

- Terah = waiting
- Haran = this name appears twice
- Nahor = hard breathing, or snorting.
- Milcah = a queen.
- Sarai = *my princess*.

The Stage Is Set: Genesis 12:1-3

1 Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. 2 I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

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