

# GENESIS

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Lesson 44 w/Answers

A Scorecard: The Chronology of Genesis 25-50

Welcome to the second half of our study of the book of Genesis. The next twenty-five chapters will primarily focus on the life of Jacob, his son Joseph, and the events that will lead up to the Israelites—Abraham’s descendants—living in Egypt. The last chapter of Genesis ends with the death of Joseph at one hundred and ten years of age and Joseph’s instruction to the Israelites.

Transitioning to the book of Exodus, Exodus 1:1-14 provides further details regarding the Israelites and their early days in Egypt at the beginning of their enslavement.

The portion of Genesis that we are going to begin studying in this lesson covers the remaining twenty-five chapters at a high level, beginning with Jacob and Esau and then focusing on key events that culminate with the arrival of Jacob in Egypt. There, one of his sons, Joseph, has become the second most powerful person in all of Egypt. Joseph has been given oversight responsibility to accumulate and store produce during seven years of plenty, and then to ration out these food stores as Egypt subsequently deals with seven years of severe famine.

Before we delve into the back half of Genesis, it is helpful to look at the chronology of the people and key events covered in these last twenty-five chapters. This will provide us a good understanding of the events from the birth of Isaac until Jacob arrives in Egypt and the eventual death of Joseph.

It is my experience that following this chronology will provide us a deeper understanding of these scriptures, and the Lord will show us things that perhaps we have not noticed before.

## The Birth of Jacob and Esau — The Birthright

The scripture passage in Genesis 25:19-34 tells us about the birth of the twins, Jacob and Esau, and the struggle that began between the two of them before they were born. This struggle will continue throughout their lives.

<sup>19</sup> *This is the account of the family line of Abraham’s son Isaac. Abraham became the father of Isaac, <sup>20</sup> and Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah daughter of Bethuel the Aramean from Paddan Aram and sister of Laban the Aramean.*

<sup>21</sup> *Isaac prayed to the Lord on behalf of his wife, because she was childless. The Lord answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant. <sup>22</sup> The babies jostled each other within her, and she said, "Why is this happening to me?" So she went to inquire of the Lord.*

<sup>23</sup> *The Lord said to her, "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger."*

<sup>24</sup> *When the time came for her to give birth, there were twin boys in her womb. <sup>25</sup> The first to come out was red, and his whole body was like a hairy garment; so they named him Esau. <sup>26</sup> After this, his brother came out, with his hand grasping Esau’s heel; so he was named Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when Rebekah gave birth to them.*

<sup>27</sup> *The boys grew up, and Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the open country, while Jacob was content to stay at home among the tents. <sup>28</sup> Isaac, who had a taste for wild game, loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob.*

<sup>29</sup> *Once when Jacob was cooking some stew, Esau came in from the open country, famished. <sup>30</sup> He said to Jacob, "Quick, let me have some of that red stew! I’m famished!" (That is why he was also called Edom.)*

<sup>31</sup> *Jacob replied, "First sell me your birthright."*

<sup>32</sup> *"Look, I am about to die," Esau said. "What good is the birthright to me?"*

<sup>33</sup> *But Jacob said, "Swear to me first." So he swore an oath to him, selling his birthright to Jacob.*

*34 Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and some lentil stew. He ate and drank, and then got up and left. So Esau despised his birthright.*

Genesis 25:19-34 [NIV]

For many of us who regularly study the Bible, this narrative is very familiar. We will examine it closer in the next lesson, but for now I want us to focus on the chronology that flows through the last twenty-five chapters of Genesis. Doing this will enable us to obtain a deeper understanding of this familiar passage.

I personally believe that many people who study this passage and the subsequent one in Genesis 27 believe that the twins, Jacob and Esau, are in their teens or early twenties when their father Isaac is deceived into giving Jacob the blessing that was due to Esau, the older of the two. But a closer look at Genesis 26:34-35 reveals that prior to the deception of Isaac, Esau was already forty years old.

*34 When Esau was forty years old, he married Judith daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and also Basemath daughter of Elon the Hittite. 35 They were a source of grief to Isaac and Rebekah.*

Genesis 26:34-35 [NIV]

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***Are we able to determine the ages of all protagonists as we determine the answers to the following related questions?***

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1. How old was Isaac when the twins, Jacob and Esau, were born? See Genesis 25:26.
  - a. ANSWER: He was sixty years old.
2. How old were the twins, Jacob and Esau, when Jacob deceived Isaac into giving him Esau's blessing?
  - a. ANSWER: We have to calculate this based on scripture, as the age itself is not given in the text. We will explore this calculation shortly, but the derived answer is that the twins were seventy-one years old when Jacob deceived his father Isaac and fled to Haran, to Laban's family to find a wife. (Genesis 28:1-5)
3. How old was Isaac when he died? See Genesis 35:28.
  - a. ANSWER: Isaac was one hundred and eighty years old when died, which means if he was sixty when the twins were born, and the twins were seventy-one when he was ill, he would have been one hundred and thirty-one at the time of the deception. He lived another forty-nine years after that until his death at one hundred-eighty.
4. How old was Jacob when Joseph was born? (Again, we will need to calculate this.)
  - a. ANSWER: Jacob was ninety-one years old when Joseph was born. We arrive at this conclusion based on the fact that Joseph was thirty-nine years old when Jacob came to meet the Pharaoh, and he told the Pharaoh that he was one hundred and thirty years old at that time. (130 - 39 = 91 yrs. old)
5. How old was Joseph when he had his two dreams and was sold into slavery by his brothers? See Genesis 37:10.
  - a. ANSWER: Joseph was seventeen years old, and his father Jacob would have been one hundred and eight years old.
6. How old was Joseph when he interpreted the dreams of the cupbearer and the baker? See Genesis Chapter 40 and Genesis 41:1.
  - a. ANSWER: Joseph was twenty-eight years old, eleven years after being sold into slavery.
7. How old was Joseph when he interpreted the Pharaoh's dream and came to power? See Genesis 41:46.
  - a. ANSWER: Joseph was thirty years old, and he had been a slave in Egypt for thirteen years.
8. How old was Joseph when his brothers came to Egypt, bringing Jacob with them to meet the Pharaoh? See Genesis 41:46-53, 45:6-11.
  - a. ANSWER: Joseph was thirty-nine years old when he has his brothers bring Jacob, his father, to Egypt. Once there, Jacob has an audience with the Pharaoh. At that time, it had been twenty-two years since he thought his son Joseph had been killed by a wild animal (when Joseph was about seventeen). Scripture tells us that seven years of plenty began when Joseph began serving the Pharaoh and that two years of famine had then taken place when Joseph's brothers brought Jacob to meet the Pharaoh.

9. How old was Jacob when he came to Egypt? See Genesis 47:1-10.

- a. ANSWER: Jacob was one hundred and thirty years old when he met the Pharaoh, some fifty-three years removed from Isaac's blessing to Jacob when Jacob deceived him into thinking he was Esau, the older twin.

10. How old was Jacob when he died? See Genesis 47:28.

- a. ANSWER: Jacob was one hundred-forty-seven years old when he died. This indicates that Jacob lived in Egypt for seventeen years. Given that Joseph was thirty-nine when Jacob and his brothers came to live in Egypt, this also tells us that Joseph was fifty-nine when his father Jacob died.

11. How old was Joseph when he died? See Genesis 50:22,26.

- a. ANSWER: Joseph was one hundred and ten years old when he died. This means that he lived in Egypt for ninety-three years.

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I realize that there is a lot of chronology to take in for such a short lesson, but it provides us insight into the people and timing of the events in the second half of Genesis. This information is important to our understanding of these scriptures.

I hope that you will keep this information handy as we move forward and see how God worked in the lives of Jacob and Joseph, as God began the process of bringing His chosen people to Egypt.

In Christ,

Wes