

Genesis 37

Jacob was 97 years old when God changed his name to Israel (Gen 32:28). The prior chapters were all about a guy who took questionable risks to get what he wanted, and he paid the price dearly. It is about a man in transition. He is seen as every Christian man at some point in his development (the good, the bad and the ugly). We all have a regrettable past that gives way to our future. Many of us can never escape the notion that we are *the captain of our own ship*. Depending on God usually does not become the option unless we are somehow incapacitated. Now Jacob turns a corner, and he starts over in the land of Canaan. Going forward is less about the *wheeler-dealer*, and more about a man learning to walk with God through life.

Read Genesis 37:1-8: Jacob is back in his homeland. It says that his dad (Isaac) had a transient lifestyle in Canaan. He was a traveler on the move like his father Abraham. In fact, Abraham is defined as a sojourner.

TIME PERIOD	LOCATION	KEY EVENTS
Birth	Gerar (near Beersheba)	Born to Abraham and Sarah.
Childhood	Beersheba	Raised in Beersheba.
Marriage	Haran	Went to find a wife (Rebekah) at Abraham's request.
Early Adulthood	Canaan (near Hebron)	Moved to Canaan after marriage; lived a nomadic life.
Famine	Gerar	Lived in Gerar during a famine (Genesis 26).
Later Years	Beersheba	Returned to Beersheba, where he became prosperous.

The underlying message is that God's plan for our life confirms that we are ultimately from another place. Life is full of seasons and changing environments. We act differently in different settings.

¹¹ Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, (1 Peter 2)

"These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth." (Hebrews 11:13)

The word used here is written *generations* or *history*, is the Hebrew word *Toldah*; which a section of history that encompasses a series of generations and residents over eras of time. We think of occupying land or space. The Bible tells us that we are also occupying sections of time and these are recorded in different scrolls as biblical sections of history.

[birth](#) (1x).

[Outline of Biblical Usage \[?\]](#)

- [I.](#) descendants, results, proceedings, generations, genealogies
 - [1.](#) account of men and their descendants
 - [A.](#) genealogical list of one's descendants
 - [B.](#) one's contemporaries
 - [C.](#) course of history (of creation etc)
 - [2.](#) begetting or account of heaven (metaph)

[Strong's Definitions \[?\]](#)

[\(Strong's Definitions Legend\)](#)

תּוֹלֶדֶת *tôlēdâh*, to-led-aw'; or תְּלִקְהָ tôlēdâh; from H3205; (plural only) descent, i.e. family; (figuratively) history:—birth, generations.

[Brown-Driver-Briggs Lexicon \[?\]](#)

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STRONGS H8435:

[Abbreviations](#)

תּוֹלֶדֶת [39] **noun feminine plural** **generations**, especially in genealogies = account of a man and his descendants; — construct **תּוֹלֶדֶת** Genesis 2:4; Ruth 4:18; **תּוֹלֶדֶת** Genesis 5:1 + 6 times; **תּוֹלֶדֶת** Genesis 36:1 + 2 times; **תּוֹלֶדֶת** Genesis 25:12; suffix **תּוֹלֶדֶתְ** 1 Chronicles 26:31; **תּוֹלֶדֶתְ** Exodus 28:10 + 16 times; **תּוֹלֶדֶתְ** Exodus 6:16, 19; —
a. *account of men and their descendants* Genesis 5:1; Genesis 6:9; Genesis 10:1;

There are a number of very specific places in the Bible where the word toldah is used. It is associated with all of the writings that follow. It may be the case that Genesis was handed down

to Moses as a pile of sequential scrolls. Obviously, only Adam saw the beginning. Obviously only Noah and his family could have recorded the details around the flood, etc... This section probably was recorded by Jacob, since his parents were almost dead.

In the Book of Genesis, the concept of new scrolls or generations is primarily found in the phrase "these are the generations of..." This introduces various sections of genealogies and family histories. Here are key verses that indicate the generations throughout Genesis:

1. **Genesis 2:4** - "These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created."
2. **Genesis 5:1** - "This is the book of the generations of Adam."
3. **Genesis 6:9** - "These are the generations of Noah."
4. **Genesis 10:1** - "Now these are the generations of the sons of Noah."
5. **Genesis 11:10** - "These are the generations of Shem."
6. **Genesis 11:27** - "Now these are the generations of Terah."
7. **Genesis 25:12** - "These are the generations of Ishmael."
8. **Genesis 25:19** - "These are the generations of Isaac."
9. **Genesis 36:1** - "Now these are the generations of Esau."

Each of these verses serves to introduce a new section that often includes genealogies, highlighting the continuation of family lines and the unfolding of God's covenantal promises.

Has God changed over time? God does not change. He is omnipresent. He has and still is in all times and he is outside of time as well. We cannot understand that.

Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. ² Before the mountains were brought forth, Or ever You had formed the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God. (Psalm 90:1-2)

If we want to escape our brief existence, we need to enter an eternal era in Jesus. He does not say he will be the future. He is the future. He walks the prophets through the future as present.

¹³ I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last." (Revelation 22:13)

Time travel accompanies some prophecy. Some prophetic dreams from God reveal the future. Joseph was a strong symbol of the coming Christ. Many of his life experiences mirror Jesus. He was *the favored son*, who was *betrayed by his own people*...but he still *saved the world*. Joseph is like Daniel and John the Apostle. They had some significant dreams and visions of future events. God was stepping out of eternity into the present to once again change the trajectory of men.

There is a biblical interpretation concept that is called *dispensationalism*. It suggests that God acts in a certain way to each group of people living in an era of time. We know that God never changes; but he was visible to Adam and Eve. He considers all nationalities the same, but he did

manifest himself to Moses and the Hebrew prophets to the whole world. There are different world circumstances that man has brought upon himself. The whole universe is affected when man sins.

Man changed the world through sin many times; and God jumped in and did what was necessary to save mankind. Each time, things changed. Here are some examples:

Key Dispensations	Commonly recognized dispensations include:
	1. Innocence (Adam and Eve)
	2. Conscience (Post-Fall humanity)
	3. Human Government (After the Flood)
	4. Promise (Abraham)
	5. Law (Mosaic Law)
	6. Grace (Church Age)
	7. Kingdom (Future Millennial reign of Christ)
Israel and the Church	Strong emphasis on the distinction between Israel and the Church, asserting that God's promises to Israel remain unfulfilled.
Eschatology	Often associated with pre-millennialism, believing in a future, literal 1,000-year reign of Christ on Earth.
Rapture	The belief that Christians will be 'raptured' (taken up) before a time of tribulation.
Biblical Basis	Advocates cite passages like Revelation 20 and certain Old Testament prophecies to support their views.

Key Characteristics

Biblical Interpretation

- **Literal Interpretation:** Dispensationalists often adopt a literal approach to scripture, especially prophetic texts, which leads to future events being seen as concrete and specific.

This section is the generation of Jacob, but his son Joseph is a central figure. It begins by telling us that there were factions within the family, according to the multiple women who produced children for Jacob. Joseph was feeding the sheep with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah. These women were not Jacob's wives. They were maids of his wives acting as competing surrogates. The sons of these two women were Dan, Naphtali, Gad and Asher. He told his dad, Jacob that they were not doing a good job.

Jacob's preference for Joseph was obvious. He was Jacobs eyes and ears for brothers who were up to mischief. In fact, his brothers became envious and infuriated with Joseph. Joseph started

having dreams of future greatness. These dreams reflected poorly upon his brothers. Their envy turned into pure hatred.

Read Genesis 37:9-36 Now that Jacob has made peace with God, his sons must work out their faith and do the same. Some of them have a long way to go. God uses extreme life circumstances to call out our true character and shape our lives.

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³ for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure. (Philippians 2:12)

Joseph was not in control over the events in his life. He probably did not know how to tell his dad that he had a dream that he would be over his parents and brothers. This is not only for his personal benefit. Joseph was being groomed by circumstances and exposures to save the entire Hebrew population.

Jacob sent Joseph to Shechem to see how the brothers were doing taking care of dad's flock. He walked 30 miles from Hebron to Shechem, looking for the camp. He found nothing there. He found someone who overheard them say they were going to Dothan, which is 13 miles away. Dothan was near the trade route, and possibly intentionally harder for Joseph to find. Being willing to kill their brother was on another level. Their fixation on his dreams and his favorite-son coat of many colors was clearly on their mind.

Ruben wanted to save his brother; but he was intimidated by the group. He acted as though putting him in a pit would end him; so that he could sneak back and save him. Ruben came back to get Joseph out of the pit and send him home without knowing his brothers sold him to Ishmaelites traveling to Egypt. Ruben was the oldest son, so he probably had the best work ethic. He probably did the biggest share of the work. The prophecy on Ruben was that he was unstable. Theoretically, Ruben should have been the boss who inherited the biggest part of the estate. Ruben had some instabilities and vices that caught up to him.

"Reuben, you are my firstborn, my might, the first sign of my strength, excelling in honor, excelling in power. Turbulent as the waters, you will no longer excel, for you went up onto your father's bed, onto my couch and defiled it." (Genesis 49: 3-4)

Simeon, Levi and Judah were the next oldest sons, who were probably the most influential perpetuating the lie to Jacob about wild animals killing Joseph.

It is interesting that the details include Jacob's sons and daughters comforting him in the loss of his son Joseph. Dinah is the only recorded daughter, because of the rape in Shechem. This is new insight. He had more daughters.