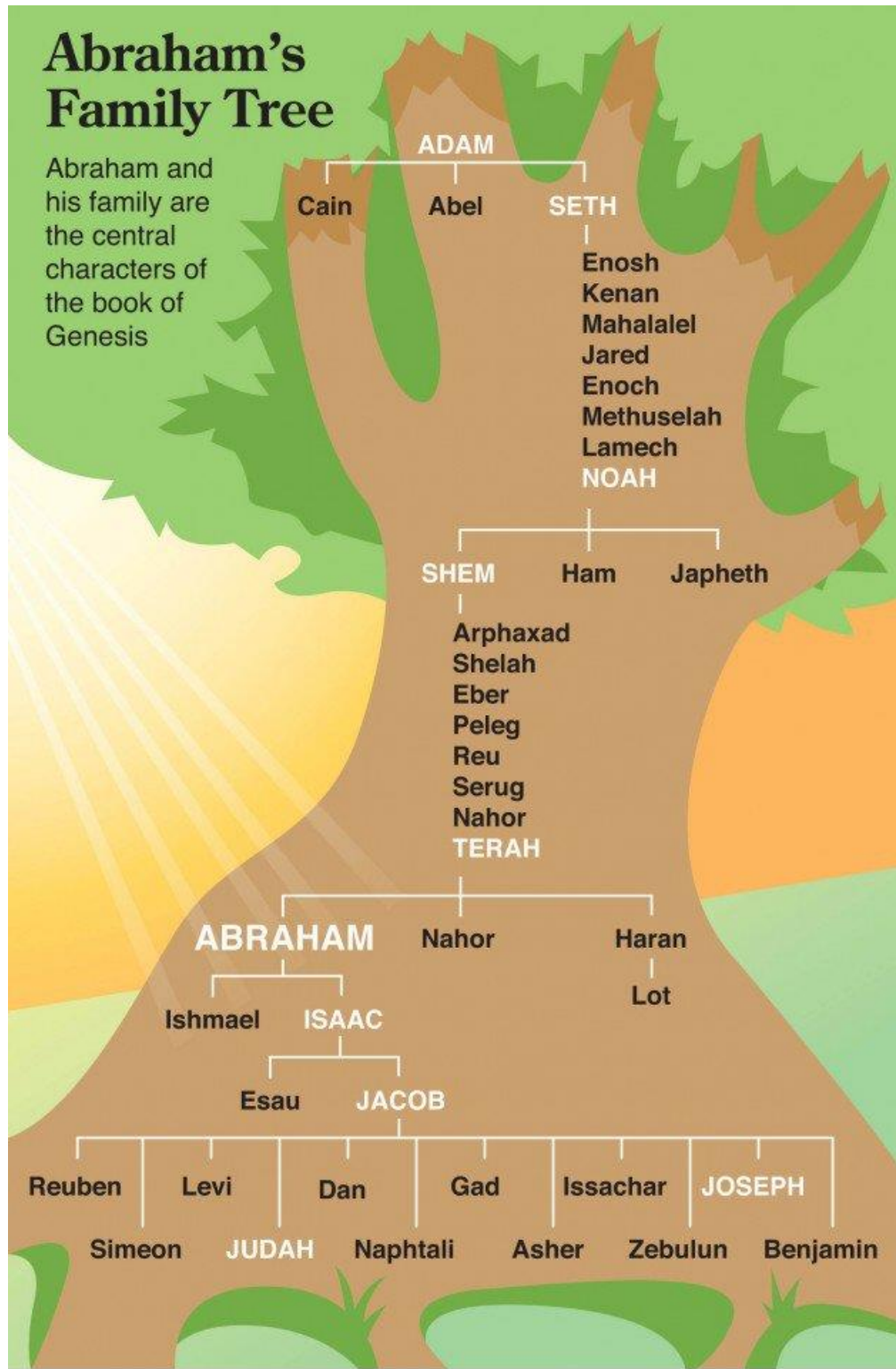


Abraham's Family Tree

Abraham and his family are the central characters of the book of Genesis



GROUP LEADER'S NOTES – STUDY 1

QUESTION 1

- It might be helpful to have a very simple family tree showing the place that Joseph has in the unfolding account of God's covenant: from the call of Abraham to be a special nation; through Isaac, Jacob and the twelve tribes of Israel that the brothers represent.
- Although Jesus will come through the line of Judah; Joseph is nevertheless important in terms of keeping that line on track.
- We see this clearly in Stephen's speech in **Acts 7:8-15**. Here the events that lead to the people of Israel going into Egypt are a foundational part of the bigger picture of deliverance pointing forward to Jesus' work on the cross.

(do ask if you want Family Tree graphic emailed)

QUESTION 2

- We are given a glimpse of what the brothers are like in **Genesis 35:2, 22; 38:2**. They are clearly behaving more like the Canaanites than they are the people of God.
- Is Joseph any different?
- From the unfolding story we see that Joseph was a man of faith.
- Later Pharaoh will make a dramatic statement to his servants in **Gen 41:38** "Can we find a man like this, in whom is the Spirit of God?"
- This suggests therefore, that here in this passage Joseph's actions are out of concern for his family; rather than him being a tell-tale.
- Joseph is perhaps naïve. He is only a teenager. Perhaps he should have just quietly shared his dreams with his father.
- He lacks wisdom and maturity maybe. But remember that he is only 17!

QUESTION 3

- a) Part of the hatred the brothers have for Joseph has to be Jacob's fault.
- b) Back in chapter 29 he had married Rachel and Leah. He had never hidden the fact that he loved Rachel more (Gen 29:30).
- c) Only two of the twelve sons were with Rachel. Joseph was her first born. She died giving birth to Benjamin.
- d) Jacob clearly showed favouritism towards Joseph. This is seen in the robe he gave him; a clear symbol of that special love. This doesn't make family relationships any easier.
- e) You might think that Jacob would have learnt from his own experience. The fact that he was his own mother's favourite led to problems and him having to leave the family home and run for his life.
- f) The growing jealousy among the brothers may have been fuelled by the fact that Jacob has chosen Joseph as his heir. That is because Reuben has forfeited that privilege through his sin in 35:22 (see **1 Chronicles 5:1-2**).

QUESTION 4

- a) The sentence "*These are the generations of Jacob*" in verse 2 links this period of history to God's wider plan of salvation through the line of Abraham. Jacob is part of the story.
- b) We see this clearly in the genealogies in Matthew 1 and Luke 3.
- c) We also see God at work in the dreams that Joseph has.
- d) In those days God often used dreams to reveal his truth. Again; Jacob would know that from his own personal experience (see **Genesis 28:10-17**).
- e) This may explain why, at the end of verse 11, we see that he keeps what Joseph has said in mind. He begins to reflect on how all this might fit into God's programme; even though at first he rebukes his son.

QUESTION 5

- a) God has already set Joseph apart to carry out His purposes and is communicating His word through the dreams.
- b) God will protect His people and then eventually deliver them out of slavery in Egypt.
- c) However, they have got to get to Egypt first. Here we see events beginning to slot into place that will lead to this happening.
- d) The fact that the dreams come in a pair emphasises the certainty of what is going to happen. That is exactly what Joseph will explain to Pharaoh after his two dreams in **Genesis 41:32**.
- e) It will only be later that the brothers realise that they have heard the Word of God from their brother.

QUESTION 6

- a) God can use imperfect people. Indeed, we are all fallen and therefore flawed.
- b) He works despite of us, in order to fulfil His purposes.
- c) He will fulfil His plans in His way and in His timing: (see **Genesis 15:13-14**).
- d) It won't always be the way we would do it. But it is the right way.