

# The God Who Delivers

**Where does the family line go from Abraham?** Abraham has two sons: Ishmael with Sarah's slave girl Hagar (because Abraham just couldn't wait and trust God with this) and Isaac with his wife Sarah (Sarai)

**Why was Ishmael not the heir of Abraham?** Even though Ishmael was the first born by date, it was through Hagar and not his wife. By laws of that time, the rightful heir to a family legacy had to be the first son **not born out of adultery**.

**Was slavery the same in Abraham's time as it was later in history?** Slavery was more of servanthood. It was actually an honor in many situations to work for a good family. They were fed, housed, and their families were taken care of. They were often even considered respected members of the household.

**Was Ishmael hated by God because of this adulterous situation?** Absolutely not, but God knew in his omniscience that from Ishmael would come enemies of his people and he even tells Hagar this when she was pregnant (Genesis 16:11-12).

**Imagine this, you are not able to have kids so your spouse has a child with a worker at your home.**

**Can anyone see how this could bring many problems to a family?** It did bring turmoil. Sarah told Abraham to sleep with Hagar and she would raise a family through the son Hagar bore. Hagar started despising Sarah when she became pregnant. Sarah mistreats Hagar and Hagar flees. God hears Hagar's cries and brings her back.

**The problems are still not over though. Let's read Genesis 21:9-10.** After Sarah has Isaac (as God promised), Hagar begins "mocking" Isaac and Sarah orders Abraham to get rid of them because she saw Ishmael as a threat to Isaac. Ishmael and Hagar leave and Ishmael finds a wife in Egypt and is the father of the Ishmaelites. Abraham is distressed from all this.

**Who's fault was this whole mess?** Both Abraham and Sarah's failure in faith leads them to try and provide by human means what the Lord is accused of withholding. **Are there times when you don't get immediate answers so you make your own decisions? How are we still feeling the effects of Abraham's disobedience and distrust in God to this day?** Genesis 25:19

**Why would God allow all this to happen? If Ishmael was never born, Islam may not have existed?** We come back to the concept of free will. Without free will, true love cannot exist. If God forced our hand in every situation with free choices between following him and not following him, that would bring no glory to God. God finds joy in his creations choosing to turn to him, not in having a bunch of programmed robots.

**How about Isaac. How does he follow in his father's footsteps?** Isaac, Abraham's son, is a wimp and prostitutes his wife out and lies just like Abraham does.

**Abraham is old and sends his son Isaac to find a wife. He finds Rebekah, marries her, and she becomes pregnant. She notices something odd going on inside her.... Read Genesis 25:21-23.** Jacob and Esau are "jostling" within the womb, two nations in the womb as God foresaw. **And then Rebekah has her twins, Esau and Jacob....** Genesis 25:24-26. Esau was technically the first-born, but God knew what Jacob was going to do and predicts "the older will serve the younger."

**What was Jacob like?** A deceiver and trickster, he steals Esau's birthright and also steals Esau's blessing from his father before his father died. **Genesis 25:27-34** (birthright stolen).

When Isaac was old and could not see anymore, he asked his oldest son Esau to bring him some game for a nice meal before he died and he would then give him his blessing. Jacob was Rebekah's favorite, so she tells Jacob what is happening after overhearing this conversation between Isaac and Esau, comes up with a master plan. **READ (Genesis 27:14-17)**. Ultimately, Jacob stole Esau's blessing by deceit and Esau vowed to kill him for it. Rebekah sends Jacob off to keep Esau from killing him.

Jacob gets a taste of his own medicine. Jacob goes to Paddan Aram and finds the wife he wants. He finds Rachel, works for her father for 7 years to earn the right to take her as a wife, and when the big night came, Rachel's sister sneaks in and sleeps with Jacob unknowingly. Jacob has to work another seven years to lawfully get Rachel. He ends up with both wives and it's a big mess from there.

**Things get out of hand.** Leah can conceive and Rachel can't. Jacob has kids with Leah. Rachel gives her servant to Jacob to have kids because she is jealous of Leah. Leah then can't conceive anymore after 3 kids and gives her servant to Jacob to have more kids to one-up Rachel. Finally, Rachel can conceive and she has her first own son, Joseph. When it's all said and done, there are 11 sons born.

**There are some other happenings after this you can read about in Genesis.** Fastforwarding.... Rachel ends up dying during childbirth when the 12<sup>th</sup> son is born, Benjamin. and here we have the 12 tribes of Israel. Jacob's father, Isaac, also dies.

## JOSEPH

**Who did Jacob love more than anyone else out of all his sons?** Joseph, is youngest son, since he bore him in his old age. **Naturally, how did his brothers feel about this?** Resentment and hatred. Joseph also told them about two dreams he had that foreshadowed the older brothers "serving" the younger one (Joseph).

**How did the brothers "rid" themselves of Joseph, or so they thought?** Joseph is sent to check on his brothers out in the field. His brothers saw him coming and started plotting to kill him. Reuben, one of the brothers, saves Joseph's life by convincing them to just sell him to some merchants. The brothers dipped Joseph's robe in goat blood and told their father some ferocious animal devoured him.

**Where did Joseph end up?** They sold Joseph to some Ishmaelite merchants who in turn took him to Egypt and sold him to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officials.

**How did Joseph miraculously make his way from being a slave to being head commander over Egypt? Let's step through the whole thing.**

1. God showered favor upon Joseph, thus the Potiphar was blessed as well. Potiphar saw this and Joseph found favor in his eyes. He put him in charge of everything in his household.
2. The Potiphar's wife took a liking to Joseph, tried to entice him, and Joseph ran out, leaving his cloak behind. The wife shows his cloak to the Potiphar, lies and says that Joseph threw himself on her and she screamed and ran. Potiphar throws Joseph in prison.
3. God shows favor with Joseph again and he gains favor with the prison ward. Joseph is put in charge of the prison ward.

4. Meanwhile, The Cupbearer and the Baker angered the Pharaoh and was put in the same prison ward as Joseph. They have dreams that Joseph interprets for them with God's help. The dreams revealed the Cupbearer would be restored and the Baker will be killed. It happens just as Joseph said.
5. The Pharaoh begins having dreams and Joseph successfully interprets those dreams. The Pharaoh knows that Joseph holds favor with God. Joseph therefore finds favor with the Pharaoh and is put in charge of all of Egypt.

**Joseph reunites with his brothers:**

1. One of Pharaoh's dreams showed that 7 years of abundance was coming that would be followed by 7 years of famine. Joseph being in charge of Egypt planned appropriately and the nation stored up excess in preparation for the famine. The world came to Egypt to get food.
2. Jacob hears of this and sends his sons to get food from Egypt during the famine. Joseph recognizes his brothers but they don't recognize him. He orders them to bring him their youngest brother to test if they are spies (which he knows they are not). The brothers felt they were being punished for what they did.
3. They return with the youngest brother that was alive. Joseph has dinner with them then sends them back with food and their silver, but purposely sneaks his cup into the youngest brother's sack (to make it look like he stole it). Joseph's men "catches" the younger brother and takes him as a slave.
4. The brothers return and plead with Joseph. Joseph finally makes himself known, forgives his brothers, and Jacob and the entire family go to live in Egypt through Joseph's prosperity.
5. Many years passed. Many generations of the 12 tribes of Egypt were born and died. A new king came into power that showed no favoritism to Joseph and his people and became fearful of the number of Israelites there were between the 12 tribes. He decided they had to be dealt with properly.