

# Dr. Elaine Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 8, Joseph and Israel to Egypt Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

## 1. Abstract of Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 8, Joseph and Israel to Egypt, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Phillips' lecture focuses on the Old Testament, specifically Genesis, covering the stories from Jacob to Joseph. The lecture prepares students for an upcoming exam by reviewing key figures like Isaac, Jacob (renamed Israel), and Joseph, noting the importance of geographical context and maps. **Phillips highlights the tension and conflict in Jacob's life** while also emphasizing God's intervention and the overarching theme of God's sovereignty as exemplified in Joseph's narrative. **She underscores the significance of understanding God's control over circumstances**, forgiveness, and the role of dreams and prophecies. The lecture also draws connections between the Old and New Testaments, particularly referencing Jacob's ladder and Jesus' ministry.

**2. 24 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 8 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → OT Introduction → OT Lit).**



**Phillips\_OTLit\_Sessi  
on08.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document: Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 8, Joseph and Israel to Egypt

Okay, here's a briefing document summarizing the main themes and important ideas from the provided excerpts of Dr. Elaine Phillips' Old Testament Literature Lecture 8, focusing on the transition from Jacob to Joseph.

#### **Briefing Document: Elaine Phillips' Old Testament Literature Lecture 8: Jacob to Joseph**

**Overview:** This lecture aims to cover a significant amount of material, including the figures of Isaac, Jacob (renamed Israel), and an introduction to the Joseph narrative. The emphasis is on understanding the key elements of the stories, the theological implications, and their connections to the broader biblical narrative.

#### **I. Exam Information & Initial Review:**

- **Exam Scope:** The exam covers all material through the end of Genesis.
- **Maps:** There will be no visual maps on the exam, but students need to know the content of the Ancient Near East and Israel maps covered in the historical geography lecture.
- **Review of Isaac:** Isaac is presented as a "hinge" figure connecting Abraham (father of the covenant people) to Jacob (who becomes Israel, the father of the 12 tribes). The Akedah (binding of Isaac) is discussed, with potential parallels to Jesus. Important geographical locations include the Negev, Hebron, Shechem, and Dothan.

#### **II. Isaac as the "Hinge":**

- **Key Role:** Isaac serves as a crucial link between Abraham and Jacob. He's not as prominent as either, but essential to the continuity of the covenant.
- **Marriage to Rebekah:** The lengthy account of Isaac's marriage to Rebekah emphasizes God's design in the selection of his wife. The detail of Rebekah watering the camels highlights her energy and adventurous spirit. The text states, "Isaac brings her into the tent of his mother, Sarah. He married her. She became his wife, and he loved her" (5).
- **Renewal of the Promise:** God renews the covenant promise to Isaac, ensuring its continuation.

#### **III. Jacob (Israel): A Story of Tension, Conflict, and God's Intervention**

- **Jacob's Character:** Jacob's story is marked by tension, conflict, and pain. Despite receiving blessings, he faces numerous difficulties. God intervenes repeatedly in his life.
- **Birth and Prophecy:** Rebekah's barrenness highlights God's intervention in establishing the chosen line. The struggle between Jacob and Esau begins even in the womb. The name "Jacob" (Yaakov) means "to grasp" or "deceit." The Lord tells Rebekah, "Two nations are in your womb. Two peoples from within you will be separated. One will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger" (7).
- **Theological Significance:** The prophecy about the older serving the younger is key to understanding God's election, as Paul argues in Romans 9. God's choice precedes any human action.
- **Isaac's Disregard for the Prophecy:** Phillips suggests that Isaac, aware of God's declaration to Rebekah, intentionally tries to give the blessing to Esau, countering God's intent.
- **The Birthright:** Esau's selling of his birthright is seen as a sign of his lack of seriousness and fear of the Lord. The birthright includes a double inheritance (financial leadership), religious significance, and family leadership responsibilities.
- **Deception for the Blessing:** Rebecca orchestrates the deception to ensure Jacob receives the blessing, knowing that he is destined to have it. This leads to Jacob fleeing and fracturing the family. Phillips poses the question: "Is it the right thing? I don't dare make a pronouncement on that (11)."
- **Jacob's Dream at Bethel:** Jacob dreams of a stairway (or ladder) connecting heaven and earth, with angels ascending and descending. God reiterates the covenant promise. Jacob makes a conditional promise to God.
- **Connection to John 1:** Jesus alludes to Jacob's dream in John 1:51, stating that the angels will ascend and descend on the Son of Man, who is the new access point between heaven and earth.
- **Jacob's Family:** Jacob fathers 12 sons (the tribes of Israel) through Leah, Rachel, and their handmaids. The actions of Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah are highlighted, impacting their tribes' destinies.
- **Conflict with Laban:** Jacob encounters his match in deceit with Laban.

#### IV. Jacob Wrestles with God and is Renamed Israel:

- **The Wrestling Match:** Jacob wrestles with a "man" (identified as the angel of the Lord in Hosea 12) and prevails, refusing to let go until he is blessed.
- **Name Change:** Jacob's name is changed to Israel, signifying that he has "struggled with God and with men, and you've overcome" (18). The place is named Peniel because Jacob says, "I have seen God face-to-face, and yet my life was spared" (18).
- **Theological Implications:** The wrestling match symbolizes the Jewish tradition of questioning and wrestling with God. It also foreshadows God's willingness to limit himself, even to the point of death (referencing the Incarnation).
- **Unsavory Activities:** Reuben sleeps with his father's concubine, and Simeon and Levi take revenge on the city of Shechem.
- **Genealogy in Genesis 36:** Phillips notes the importance of the genealogy, pointing out that Esau (Edom) settles in the hill country of Seir, and mentions the names Eliphaz (important for Job) and Amalek (the father of the Amalekites).

## V. Introduction to Joseph: God's Sovereignty and Forgiveness

- **Sovereignty Defined:** "God's exercising complete control over all circumstances as he directs them according to his goodwill and pleasure" (19). This is a crucial theme in the Joseph narrative.
- **Joseph's Understanding:** Joseph understands that God used his brothers' evil intentions for good. "You intended to harm me," Joseph says. "God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives" (20).
- **Forgiveness:** The Joseph story highlights the importance of forgiveness in rooting out bitterness. Understanding God's sovereignty can aid in the process of forgiveness.
- **Historical Context:** The lecture notes an increase in Asiatics entering Egypt during this time period, making Joseph's arrival less isolated.
- **Geographical Connections:** Dothan's location along the international trade routes facilitates Joseph's sale to the spice traders en route to Egypt.

## VI. Literary Issues and Themes:

- **Parallels to Esther:** The Joseph narrative shares similarities with the Book of Esther.

- **Clothing as Symbolism:** The "long robe" given to Joseph symbolizes his firstborn status and favors from his father. The word used for it is only used once elsewhere, to refer to one of David's daughters.
- **Dreams:** Dreams play a significant role in the Joseph narrative, with two dreams in several instances, symbolizing two witnesses.
- **Preparation, Prisoner, Ruler** Joseph goes from being given rights, to being a slave, then a prisoner and finally a ruler.

**Key Takeaways:**

- Isaac acts as a hinge.
- Jacob's narrative is full of tension and deceit but also highlights God's continued presence.
- God used Jacob's blessing for His glory.
- God's sovereignty and the need for forgiveness is emphasized through the story of Joseph.

This document provides a structured overview of Dr. Phillips' lecture, highlighting key themes, quotes, and connections within the Old Testament and to the New Testament.

## 4. Study Guide: Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 8, Joseph and Israel to Egypt

### Genesis: Jacob and Joseph - A Study Guide

#### Quiz

Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. What does the name "Yaakov" (Jacob) mean, and how does this meaning relate to his character and actions?
2. Describe the significance of Isaac as a "hinge" between Abraham and Jacob. What does he represent in the overarching narrative?
3. Explain the importance of the birthright in the context of Jacob and Esau. What did Esau stand to lose by giving it up?
4. What was the prophetic statement made to Rebekah regarding her twin sons, and why is it significant?
5. Briefly describe the encounter Jacob has at Bethel (the "stairway to heaven" dream). What is the significance of this dream?
6. How does Jacob's interaction with Laban demonstrate a continuation of the theme of deception in his life?
7. What is the significance of Jacob wrestling with God (or the angel of the Lord), and what new name is he given?
8. Define "sovereignty" in the context of the Joseph narrative. How does this concept help to explain the events in Joseph's life?
9. What geographical factors played a role in Joseph being sold into slavery in Egypt?
10. Describe Joseph's interpretation of his circumstances at the end of Genesis, particularly regarding his brothers' betrayal.

#### Quiz Answer Key

1. The name "Yaakov" means to grasp, grab, or hold onto, and it also implies deceit. This meaning connects to his actions throughout his life, as he grasps for power and blessing, often through deceptive means. His very name foreshadows his character.

2. Isaac acts as a hinge connecting Abraham, the father of the covenant, with Jacob, who becomes Israel, the father of the twelve tribes. He represents the continuation of the covenant promise through a somewhat passive figure, linking the promise to the next generation.
3. The birthright entitled Esau to a double portion of the inheritance, leadership over the extended family (bet av), and religious significance as the head of the family. By despising it, he was rejecting not just financial benefits but also his place in the family lineage and its covenantal implications.
4. Rebekah was told that the older son (Esau) would serve the younger son (Jacob). This was significant because it established that God's choice was not based on birth order or merit but on his sovereign will, as Paul argues in Romans 9.
5. In his dream at Bethel, Jacob sees a stairway (or ladder) reaching to heaven with angels ascending and descending. God reiterates the covenant promise to Jacob, promising him the land and numerous descendants, solidifying God's commitment to continue the covenant.
6. Jacob's interaction with Laban highlights a pattern of deception as Laban changes Jacob's wages multiple times and tries to cheat him out of his livestock. This situation creates a dynamic where Jacob must also use trickery to survive, perpetuating the theme of deceit within the family.
7. Jacob wrestling with God (or the angel of the Lord) signifies his struggle with his own identity and God's will. He is given the new name Israel, meaning "he who struggles with God," marking a turning point in his life where he acknowledges God's power and his dependence on Him.
8. "Sovereignty" in the Joseph narrative refers to God's complete control over all circumstances, directing them according to his goodwill and pleasure. This concept explains how God uses Joseph's suffering and betrayal to ultimately save his family and fulfill his divine purposes, as Joseph himself acknowledges.
9. Geographical factors, such as the location of Dothan near the International Coastal Highway and the trunk route connecting the Transjordanian Highway, played a role in Joseph's fate. Dothan's location allowed him to be intercepted by a caravan of traders on their way to Egypt, leading to his enslavement.
10. At the end of Genesis, Joseph interprets his circumstances as being part of God's plan to save many lives during the famine. He reassures his brothers that even

though they intended to harm him, God intended it for good, demonstrating his faith in God's sovereignty and his willingness to forgive.

## Essay Questions

1. Explore the theme of deception in the lives of Jacob and Laban. How does deception impact their relationship and their families? What are the consequences of their actions, and what does this suggest about the nature of deceit in the context of Genesis?
2. Discuss the significance of the birthright and the blessing in the story of Jacob and Esau. Why are these two elements so important, and how do they shape the destinies of the two brothers and their descendants?
3. Analyze the concept of sovereignty in the Joseph narrative. How does the author of Genesis portray God's control over events, and what does this suggest about the relationship between divine will and human action?
4. Compare and contrast the characters of Jacob and Joseph. What similarities and differences do they share, and how do their respective journeys contribute to the overall themes of Genesis?
5. Examine the role of women, specifically Rebekah and Rachel, in the Jacob narrative. How do their actions influence the events of the story, and what do their experiences reveal about the status and agency of women in ancient Israelite society?



## Glossary of Key Terms

- **Adumbration:** A foreshadowing or prefiguration; a faint sketch or outline of something to come.
- **Bet Av:** A Hebrew term referring to an extended family unit or household, often including servants and other dependents.
- **Birthright:** The special rights and privileges belonging to the firstborn son, typically including a double portion of the inheritance, leadership responsibilities, and religious significance.
- **Blessing:** A pronouncement of favor and prosperity, often with prophetic implications, bestowing benefits and a sense of divine approval.
- **Covenant:** A formal agreement or treaty between two parties, often involving promises, obligations, and signs to signify the relationship.
- **Divination:** The practice of seeking knowledge of the future or the unknown through supernatural means, such as omens or oracles.
- **Etiology:** An account of the origin or cause of something, often used to explain the naming or significance of a place, person, or custom.
- **Sovereignty:** God's complete and ultimate authority and control over all things, directing events according to his will and purpose.
- **Teraphim:** Household idols or images, possibly used for divination or as symbols of family heritage and inheritance rights.
- **Yaakov:** The Hebrew name for Jacob, meaning "to grasp, grab, or hold onto," often associated with deception.

## **5. FAQs on Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 8, Joseph and Israel to Egypt, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)**

### **Old Testament Literature: Jacob to Joseph FAQ**

#### **1. What topics from the Ancient Near East should I know for the exam?**

You should be familiar with the geography of the ancient Near East, including Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Anatolia. Additionally, you should know the geography of the land of Israel and the areas where the patriarchs operated. Focus on the material covered in the historical geography lecture, and review the three maps posted on Blackboard in PDF format under course materials. These maps cover the ancient Near East and the land of Israel.

#### **2. Who was Isaac and why is he important?**

Isaac is a crucial "hinge" figure in the Old Testament narrative. He connects Abraham, the father of the covenant people, to Jacob, who is later renamed Israel and becomes the father of the twelve tribes. Key events in Isaac's life include being willingly offered as a sacrifice by Abraham (a parallel to Jesus), marrying Rebekah through God's design, and renewing the covenant promise that God made to Abraham.

#### **3. What is the significance of the oath Abraham's servant takes regarding Isaac's marriage?**

The act of placing the hand under the thigh when taking an oath is a euphemism referring to the genitals, symbolizing the source of life and progeny. It highlights the importance of the promise of descendants and the continuation of the chosen line through Isaac's marriage. This oath emphasizes that the marriage is crucial for fulfilling God's promise of seed and a future lineage.

#### **4. What are the key characteristics of Jacob's story?**

Jacob's story is filled with tension, conflict, and pain, even though he receives blessings. He is known for lying and deceit throughout his life. The narrative intertwines his struggles with God's interventions and confrontations. He deceives his father Isaac with the help of his mother Rebekah in order to steal the birthright of his older brother Esau.

**5. What is the significance of God telling Rebekah "the older will serve the younger" regarding Esau and Jacob?**

This statement is significant for two main reasons. First, it establishes God's election before the twins were born, ensuring that no one can boast of choosing God based on their deeds. The Apostle Paul refers to this in Romans 9. Second, it is important to remember that this prophecy occurs because it is in direct opposition to Isaac's intention to give the blessing to Esau, showing that the will of God always prevails.

**6. How are the birthright and the blessing different in the Jacob and Esau narrative?**

The birthright and the blessing are two separate things. The birthright involves a double inheritance (receiving two-thirds of the father's estate), leadership responsibilities over an extended family (bet av), and certain religious significance. Esau despises his birthright. The blessing, however, is a prophetic pronouncement conferring favor and future prosperity, which Isaac attempts to give to Esau, despite knowing God's intent for Jacob to receive it.

**7. What is the importance of Jacob's dream at Bethel (Genesis 28)?**

In the dream, Jacob sees a stairway connecting heaven and earth with angels ascending and descending, symbolizing God's protection and the connection between heaven and earth. God reiterates the covenant promise to Jacob, promising land and numerous descendants. This dream is later referenced in John 1:51, where Jesus claims to be the means of access between heaven and earth, fulfilling the imagery of Jacob's ladder.

**8. What role does God's sovereignty play in the story of Joseph?**

God's sovereignty, defined as His complete control over all circumstances, directing them according to His goodwill and pleasure, is a major theme in the Joseph narrative. Despite the betrayal by his brothers and the hardships he faces, Joseph recognizes that God used these events for good, ultimately saving lives during the famine. Joseph tells his brothers in Genesis 45:5 and 50:20 that what they meant for evil, God intended for good.