

jenaministries – Part 4 Bible Characters

5. The Life of Jacob

Jacob, Isaac's son, Abraham's grandson, had a very interesting life. Isaac was 40 years old when he married Rebekah. And Rebekah appeared to be barren. After 20 years of prayer for this problem, Rebekah got pregnant with twins. Isaac was 60 years old when the twins were born. **(Scriptures 1. Jacob's Birth)**. The two babies jostled with each other within her womb. The Lord explained to Rebekah that the two babies in her will be two nations and will be separated; one will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger. Rebekah kept this in her heart. The first born was named Esau, and he had hair all over his body. After this, his brother came out, with his hand grasping Esau's heel; so he was named Jacob.

In these biblical times, the ritual of the father giving the first born son his blessing was very important. That child got everything. When Isaac was very old and blind, he knew it was time to give Esau his blessing **(Scriptures 2. Jacob Stole Father's Blessing)**. But Rebekah remember what God told her that the first born will serve the younger brother, so she told Jacob to pretend to be Esau so Jacob could get the blessing instead. She put Jacob in Esau's clothes so he would smell like Esau. She also put goatskin on his arm so Isaac could feel the hair of Esau. The plan worked. Though Isaac said his voice sounded like Jacob, he smelled him and felt the hair on his arm and believed he was Esau and gave his blessing to the wrong child. So Jacob got his father's blessing using trickery and deceit.

Jacob left the family and Esau stayed with his parents. Jacob met a lovely relative named Rachel. She was beautiful and had lovely big eyes and Jacob fell in love with her. He asked her father for her hand in marriage. Rachel's father said he would have to work for him for seven years before he could marry his daughter and Jacob agreed. After the seven years, Jacob went to his bed. It was dark and he couldn't see. Rachel's father sent Rachels older sister to go lay with Jacob and they consummated their relationship. When morning came, Jacob realized it was Leah the older sister, not Rachel **(Scriptures 3. Jacob Tricked to Marry Leah not Rachel)**, and that Rachel's father used trickery and deceit to marry the oldest daughter (what comes around goes around). He approached Rachel's father about that trickery and Rachel's father said it is tradition to marry the first born daughter first. But he would allow him to marry Rachel if he worked seven more years, which he did. So after working 14 years, he finally was allowed to marry the one he truly loved, Rachel.

God changed Jacob's name to Israel because he had struggled with God and with humans and have overcome. After Jacob returned from Paddan Aram, God appeared to him again and blessed him. God said to him, "Your name is Jacob, but you will no longer be called Jacob; your name will be Israel." So he named him Israel. **(Scriptures 4. Name Changed to Israel)**.

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Jacob had two wives and two concubines. The first wife (Leah) and his two concubines gave him many strong sons. But Rachel (the wife he truly loved) had a harder time with that. Rachel finally had two boys Joseph and Benjamin. **(Scriptures 5. Twelve Sons of Israel – Twelve Tribes)**. So Jacob had twelve sons that would later become the twelve tribes of Israel.

Now Jacob started doing something wrong and it had bad consequences. He favored Rachel's sons over all his other sons, especially Joseph. He bought Joseph gifts like a lovely coat, but not to the other sons **(Scriptures 6. Jacob Favored Joseph)**. His other sons got very jealous and angry. This favoritism caused an uproar in the family. Then Joseph made the mistake of telling his brothers and father about a dream the Lord gave him about all of them bowing down to him and worshiping him. That was the last straw for the older brothers..

The older brothers wanted Joseph gone and they sold him to caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead to be a slave in Egypt **(Scriptures 7. Brothers Sold Joseph to Slavery in Egypt)**. They took Joseph's coat and tore it and put sheep blood on it, and told their father Jacob that Joseph was attacked by a wild animal and was killed. Of course, Jacob's heart was broken.

Some years after that, there became a famine in the land. Jacob's family was running out of food **(Scriptures 8. Famine)**. They heard that there was grain stored up in Egypt and people were going there to purchase or trade for the grain. So Jacob sent his older sons to Egypt and left the youngest (Rachel's other son Benjamin) home. Jacob eventually found out that the person in charge of selling the grain in Egypt was his son Joseph who he thought was dead. Ends up Joseph had won the Pharaoh's respect when God gave Joseph the interpretation of a dream and cautioned the Pharaoh of the famine coming. Egypt was able to prepare for the famine because of Joseph's interpretation, so the Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of the grain sales.

The Pharaoh invited all of Joseph's family (including their livestock and animals) to come live in the finest parts of Egypt. So, Jacob and all his family went to live there **(Scriptures 9. Jacob Brings Family to Egypt)**. God spoke to Jacob in a dream and told him not to be afraid to go to Egypt and that the Lord would someday bring his people back to their own land.

Jacob lived the rest of his days there in Egypt. At his death, the Egyptians mourned with Joseph's family and buried Jacob how and where he requested **(Scriptures 10. Jacob's Death)**. Jacob never lived to see his family be turned into slavery by the new Pharaoh. Jacob's family (even though harshly enslaved) grew to be over a million people of 12 tribes. The 12 tribes were the 12 sons of Jacob.

Jesus eventually came from the tribe of Judah. **(Scriptures 11. Jesus Belonged to the Tribe of Judah)**.

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Scriptures 1. Jacob's Birth:

Genesis 25:19-26 This is the account of the family line of Abraham's son Isaac. Abraham became the father of Isaac, and Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah daughter of Bethuel the Aramean from Paddan Aram and sister of Laban the Aramean. 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. The babies jostled each other within her, and she said, "Why is this happening to me?" So she went to inquire of the LORD. **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."** When the time came for her to give birth, there were twin boys in her womb. The first to come out was red, and his whole body was like a hairy garment; so they named him Esau. 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.

Scriptures 2. Jacob Stole Father's Blessing:

Genesis 27:1-35 When Isaac was old and his eyes were so weak that he could no longer see, he called for Esau his older son and said to him, "My son." "Here I am," he answered. Isaac said, "I am now an old man and don't know the day of my death. Now then, get your equipment—your quiver and bow—and go out to the open country to hunt some wild game for me. Prepare me the kind of tasty food I like and bring it to me to eat, so that I may give you my blessing before I die." Now Rebekah was listening as Isaac spoke to his son Esau. When Esau left for the open country to hunt game and bring it back, Rebekah said to her son Jacob, "Look, I overheard your father say to your brother Esau, 'Bring me some game and prepare me some tasty food to eat, so that I may give you my blessing in the presence of the LORD before I die.' Now, my son, listen carefully and do what I tell you: Go out to the flock and bring me two choice young goats, so I can prepare some tasty food for your father, just the way he likes it. Then take it to your father to eat, so that he may give you his blessing before he dies." Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, "But my brother Esau is a hairy man while I have smooth skin. What if my father touches me? I would appear to be tricking him and would bring down a curse on myself rather than a blessing." His mother said to him, "My son, let the curse fall on me. Just do what I say; go and get them for me." So he went and got them and brought them to his mother, and she prepared some tasty food, just the way his father liked it. Then Rebekah took the best clothes of Esau her older son, which she had in the house, and put them on her younger son Jacob. She also covered his hands and the smooth part of his neck with the goatskins. Then she handed to her son Jacob the tasty food and the bread she had made. He went to his father and said, "My father." "Yes, my son," he answered. "Who is it?" Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau your firstborn. I have done as you told me. Please sit up and eat some of my game, so that you may give me your blessing." Isaac asked his son, "How did you find it so quickly, my son?"

Scriptures 2. Jacob Stole Father's Blessing: continued

“The LORD your God gave me success,” he replied. Then Isaac said to Jacob, “Come near so I can touch you, my son, to know whether you really are my son Esau or not.” Jacob went close to his father Isaac, who touched him and said, “The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau.” He did not recognize him, for his hands were hairy like those of his brother Esau; so he proceeded to bless him. “Are you really my son Esau?” he asked. “I am,” he replied. Then he said, “My son, bring me some of your game to eat, so that I may give you my blessing.” Jacob brought it to him and he ate; and he brought some wine and he drank. Then his father Isaac said to him, “Come here, my son, and kiss me.” So he went to him and kissed him. When Isaac caught the smell of his clothes, he blessed him and said, “Ah, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field that the LORD has blessed. May God give you heaven’s dew and earth’s richness— an abundance of grain and new wine. May nations serve you and peoples bow down to you. Be lord over your brothers, and may the sons of your mother bow down to you. May those who curse you be cursed and those who bless you be blessed.” After Isaac finished blessing him, and Jacob had scarcely left his father’s presence, his brother Esau came in from hunting. He too prepared some tasty food and brought it to his father. Then he said to him, “My father, please sit up and eat some of my game, so that you may give me your blessing.” His father Isaac asked him, “Who are you?” “I am your son,” he answered, “your firstborn, Esau.” Isaac trembled violently and said, “Who was it, then, that hunted game and brought it to me? I ate it just before you came and I blessed him—and indeed he will be blessed!” When Esau heard his father’s words, he burst out with a loud and bitter cry and said to his father, “Bless me—me too, my father!” But he said, “Your brother came deceitfully and took your blessing.”

Scriptures 3. Jacob Tricked to Marry Leah not Rachel:

Genesis 29:14-28 After Jacob had stayed with him for a whole month, Laban said to him, “Just because you are a relative of mine, should you work for me for nothing? Tell me what your wages should be.” Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. Leah had weak eyes, but Rachel had a lovely figure and was beautiful. Jacob was in love with Rachel and said, “I’ll work for you seven years in return for your younger daughter Rachel.” Laban said, “It’s better that I give her to you than to some other man. Stay here with me.” So Jacob served seven years to get Rachel, but they seemed like only a few days to him because of his love for her. Then Jacob said to Laban, “Give me my wife. My time is completed, and I want to make love to her.” So Laban brought together all the people of the place and gave a feast. But when evening came, he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob, and Jacob made love to her. And Laban gave his servant Zilpah to his daughter as her attendant. When morning came,

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Scriptures 3. Jacob Tricked to Marry Leah not Rachel: continued

there was Leah! So Jacob said to Laban, “What is this you have done to me? I served you for Rachel, didn’t I? Why have you deceived me?” Laban replied, “It is not our custom here to give the younger daughter in marriage before the older one. Finish this daughter’s bridal week; then we will give you the younger one also, in return for another seven years of work.” And Jacob did so. He finished the week with Leah, and then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to be his wife.

Scriptures 4. Name Changed to Israel:

Genesis 32:24-28 So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob’s hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. Then the man said, “Let me go, for it is daybreak.” But Jacob replied, “I will not let you go unless you bless me.” The man asked him, “What is your name?” “Jacob,” he answered. Then the man said, “Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome.”

Genesis 35:9-10 After Jacob returned from Paddan Aram, God appeared to him again and blessed him. God said to him, “Your name is Jacob, but you will no longer be called Jacob; your name will be Israel. ” So he named him Israel.

Scriptures 5. Twelve Sons of Israel – Twelve Tribes:

Genesis 46:8-27 These are the names of the sons of Israel (Jacob and his descendants) who went to Egypt: **Reuben** the firstborn of Jacob. The sons of Reuben: Hanok, Pallu, Hezron and Karmi. The sons of **Simeon**: Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jakin, Zohar and Shaul the son of a Canaanite woman. The sons of **Levi**: Gershon, Kohath and Merari. The sons of **Judah**: Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez and Zerah (but Er and Onan had died in the land of Canaan). The sons of Perez: Hezron and Hamul. The sons of **Issachar**: Tola, Puah, Jashub and Shimron. The sons of **Zebulun**: Sered, Elon and Jahleel. These were the sons Leah bore to Jacob in Paddan Aram, besides his daughter Dinah. These sons and daughters of his were thirty-three in all. The sons of **Gad**: Zephon, Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Arodi and Areli. The sons of **Asher**: Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi and Beriah. Their sister was Serah. The sons of Beriah: Heber and Malkiel. These were the children born to Jacob by Zilpah, whom Laban had given to his daughter Leah—sixteen in all. **The sons of Jacob’s wife Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin.** In Egypt, Manasseh and Ephraim were born to Joseph by Asenath daughter of Potiphera, priest of On. The sons of Benjamin: Bela, Beker, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman, Ehi, Rosh, Muppim, Huppim and Ard. These were the sons of Rachel who were born to Jacob—fourteen in all. The son of **Dan**: Hushim. The sons of **Naphtali**: Jahziel, Guni, Jezer and Shillem. These were the sons born to Jacob by Bilhah, whom Laban had given to his daughter Rachel—seven in

Scriptures 5. Twelve Sons of Israel – Twelve Tribes: continued

all. All those who went to Egypt with Jacob—those who were his direct descendants, not counting his sons' wives—numbered sixty-six persons. With the two sons who had been born to Joseph in Egypt, the members of Jacob's family, which went to Egypt, were seventy in all.

Genesis 49:1-28 Then Jacob called for his sons and said: "Gather around so I can tell you what will happen to you in days to come. "Assemble and listen, sons of Jacob; listen to your father Israel. "**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. "**Simeon** and **Levi** are brothers—their swords are weapons of violence. Let me not enter their council, let me not join their assembly, for they have killed men in their anger and hamstringed oxen as they pleased. Cursed be their anger, so fierce, and their fury, so cruel! I will scatter them in Jacob and disperse them in Israel. "**Judah**, your brothers will praise you; your hand will be on the neck of your enemies; your father's sons will bow down to you. You are a lion's cub, Judah; you return from the prey, my son. Like a lion he crouches and lies down, like a lioness—who dares to rouse him? The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he to whom it belongs shall come and the obedience of the nations shall be his. He will tether his donkey to a vine, his colt to the choicest branch; he will wash his garments in wine, his robes in the blood of grapes. His eyes will be darker than wine, his teeth whiter than milk. "**Zebulun** will live by the seashore and become a haven for ships; his border will extend toward Sidon. "**Issachar** is a rawboned donkey lying down among the sheep pens. When he sees how good is his resting place and how pleasant is his land, he will bend his shoulder to the burden and submit to forced labor. "**Dan** will provide justice for his people as one of the tribes of Israel. Dan will be a snake by the roadside, a viper along the path, that bites the horse's heels so that its rider tumbles backward. "I look for your deliverance, LORD. "**Gad** will be attacked by a band of raiders, but he will attack them at their heels. "**Asher**'s food will be rich; he will provide delicacies fit for a king. "**Naphtali** is a doe set free that bears beautiful fawns. "**Joseph** is a fruitful vine, a fruitful vine near a spring, whose branches climb over a wall. With bitterness archers attacked him; they shot at him with hostility. But his bow remained steady, his strong arms stayed limber, because of the hand of the Mighty One of Jacob, because of the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel, because of your father's God, who helps you, because of the Almighty, who blesses you with blessings of the skies above, blessings of the deep springs below, blessings of the breast and womb. Your father's blessings are greater than the blessings of the ancient mountains, than the bounty of the age-old hills. Let all these rest on the head of Joseph, on the brow of the prince among his brothers. "**Benjamin** is a ravenous wolf; in the morning he devours the prey, in the evening he divides the plunder." All these are the twelve tribes of Israel, and this is what their father said to them when he blessed them, giving each the blessing appropriate to him.

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Scriptures 6. Jacob Favored Joseph

Genesis 37:1-11 Jacob lived in the land where his father had stayed, the land of Canaan. This is the account of Jacob's family line. Joseph, a young man of seventeen, was tending the flocks with his brothers, the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives, and he brought their father a bad report about them. Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made an ornate robe for him. When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him. Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more. He said to them, "Listen to this dream I had: We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it." His brothers said to him, "Do you intend to reign over us? Will you actually rule us?" And they hated him all the more because of his dream and what he had said. Then he had another dream, and he told it to his brothers. "Listen," he said, "I had another dream, and this time the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me." When he told his father as well as his brothers, his father rebuked him and said, "What is this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?" His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind.

Scriptures 7. Brothers Sold Joseph to Slavery in Egypt:

Genesis 37:12:34 Now his brothers had gone to graze their father's flocks near Shechem, and Israel said to Joseph, "As you know, your brothers are grazing the flocks near Shechem. Come, I am going to send you to them." "Very well," he replied. So he said to him, "Go and see if all is well with your brothers and with the flocks, and bring word back to me." Then he sent him off from the Valley of Hebron. When Joseph arrived at Shechem, a man found him wandering around in the fields and asked him, "What are you looking for?" He replied, "I'm looking for my brothers. Can you tell me where they are grazing their flocks?" "They have moved on from here," the man answered. "I heard them say, 'Let's go to Dothan.'" So Joseph went after his brothers and found them near Dothan. But they saw him in the distance, and before he reached them, they plotted to kill him. "Here comes that dreamer!" they said to each other. "Come now, let's kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns and say that a ferocious animal devoured him. Then we'll see what comes of his dreams." When Reuben heard this, he tried to rescue him from their hands. "Let's not take his life," he said. "Don't shed any blood. Throw him into this cistern here in the wilderness, but don't lay a hand on him." Reuben said this to rescue him from them and take him back to his father. So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe—the ornate robe he was wearing—and they took him and threw him into the cistern. The cistern was empty; there was no water in it. As they sat down to eat their meal, they looked up and saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead. Their camels were loaded with spices, balm

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Scriptures 7. Brothers Sold Joseph to Slavery in Egypt: continued
and myrrh, and they were on their way to take them down to Egypt. Judah said to his brothers, “What will we gain if we kill our brother and cover up his blood? Come, let’s sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him; after all, he is our brother, our own flesh and blood.” His brothers agreed. So when the Midianite merchants came by, his brothers pulled Joseph up out of the cistern and sold him for twenty shekels of silver to the Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt. When Reuben returned to the cistern and saw that Joseph was not there, he tore his clothes. He went back to his brothers and said, “The boy isn’t there! Where can I turn now?” Then they got Joseph’s robe, slaughtered a goat and dipped the robe in the blood. They took the ornate robe back to their father and said, “We found this. Examine it to see whether it is your son’s robe.” He recognized it and said, “It is my son’s robe! Some ferocious animal has devoured him. Joseph has surely been torn to pieces.” Then Jacob tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and mourned for his son many days.

Scriptures 8. Famine:

Genesis 41:55-57 When all Egypt began to feel the famine, the people cried to Pharaoh for food. Then Pharaoh told all the Egyptians, “Go to Joseph and do what he tells you.” When the famine had spread over the whole country, Joseph opened all the storehouses and sold grain to the Egyptians, for the famine was severe throughout Egypt. And all the world came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph, because the famine was severe everywhere.

Scriptures 9. Jacob Brings Family to Egypt:

Genesis 45:16-28 When the news reached Pharaoh’s palace that Joseph’s brothers had come, Pharaoh and all his officials were pleased. Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Tell your brothers, ‘Do this: Load your animals and return to the land of Canaan, and bring your father and your families back to me. I will give you the best of the land of Egypt and you can enjoy the fat of the land.’ “You are also directed to tell them, ‘Do this: Take some carts from Egypt for your children and your wives, and get your father and come. Never mind about your belongings, because the best of all Egypt will be yours.’ ” So the sons of Israel did this. Joseph gave them carts, as Pharaoh had commanded, and he also gave them provisions for their journey. To each of them he gave new clothing, but to Benjamin he gave three hundred shekels of silver and five sets of clothes. And this is what he sent to his father: ten donkeys loaded with the best things of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain and bread and other provisions for his journey. Then he sent his brothers away, and as they were leaving he said to them, “Don’t quarrel on the way!” So they went up out of Egypt and came to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan. They told him, “Joseph is still alive! In fact, he is ruler of all Egypt.” Jacob was stunned; he did not believe them. But when they told him everything Joseph had said to them, and when he saw the carts Joseph had sent to carry him back, the spirit of their father Jacob revived. And Israel said, “I’m

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Scriptures 9. Jacob Brings Family to Egypt: continued

convinced! My son Joseph is still alive. I will go and see him before I die.”

Genesis 46:1-7 So Israel set out with all that was his, and when he reached Beersheba, he offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. And God spoke to Israel in a vision at night and said, “Jacob! Jacob!” “Here I am,” he replied. “I am God, the God of your father,” he said. “Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you into a great nation there. I will go down to Egypt with you, and I will surely bring you back again. And Joseph’s own hand will close your eyes.” Then Jacob left Beersheba, and Israel’s sons took their father Jacob and their children and their wives in the carts that Pharaoh had sent to transport him. So Jacob and all his offspring went to Egypt, taking with them their livestock and the possessions they had acquired in Canaan. Jacob brought with him to Egypt his sons and grandsons and his daughters and granddaughters—all his offspring.

Scriptures 10. Jacob’s Death:

Genesis 50:3-14 taking a full forty days, for that was the time required for embalming. And the Egyptians mourned for him seventy days. When the days of mourning had passed, Joseph said to Pharaoh’s court, “If I have found favor in your eyes, speak to Pharaoh for me. Tell him, ‘My father made me swear an oath and said, “I am about to die; bury me in the tomb I dug for myself in the land of Canaan.” Now let me go up and bury my father; then I will return.’ ” Pharaoh said, “Go up and bury your father, as he made you swear to do.” So Joseph went up to bury his father. All Pharaoh’s officials accompanied him—the dignitaries of his court and all the dignitaries of Egypt— besides all the members of Joseph’s household and his brothers and those belonging to his father’s household. Only their children and their flocks and herds were left in Goshen. Chariots and horsemen also went up with him. It was a very large company. When they reached the threshing floor of Atad, near the Jordan, they lamented loudly and bitterly; and there Joseph observed a seven-day period of mourning for his father. When the Canaanites who lived there saw the mourning at the threshing floor of Atad, they said, “The Egyptians are holding a solemn ceremony of mourning.” That is why that place near the Jordan is called Abel Mizraim. So Jacob’s sons did as he had commanded them: They carried him to the land of Canaan and buried him in the cave in the field of Machpelah, near Mamre, which Abraham had bought along with the field as a burial place from Ephron the Hittite. After burying his father, Joseph returned to Egypt, together with his brothers and all the others who had gone with him to bury his father.

Scriptures 11. Jesus From Tribe of Judah:

Matthew 1:1-2 This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham: Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers,