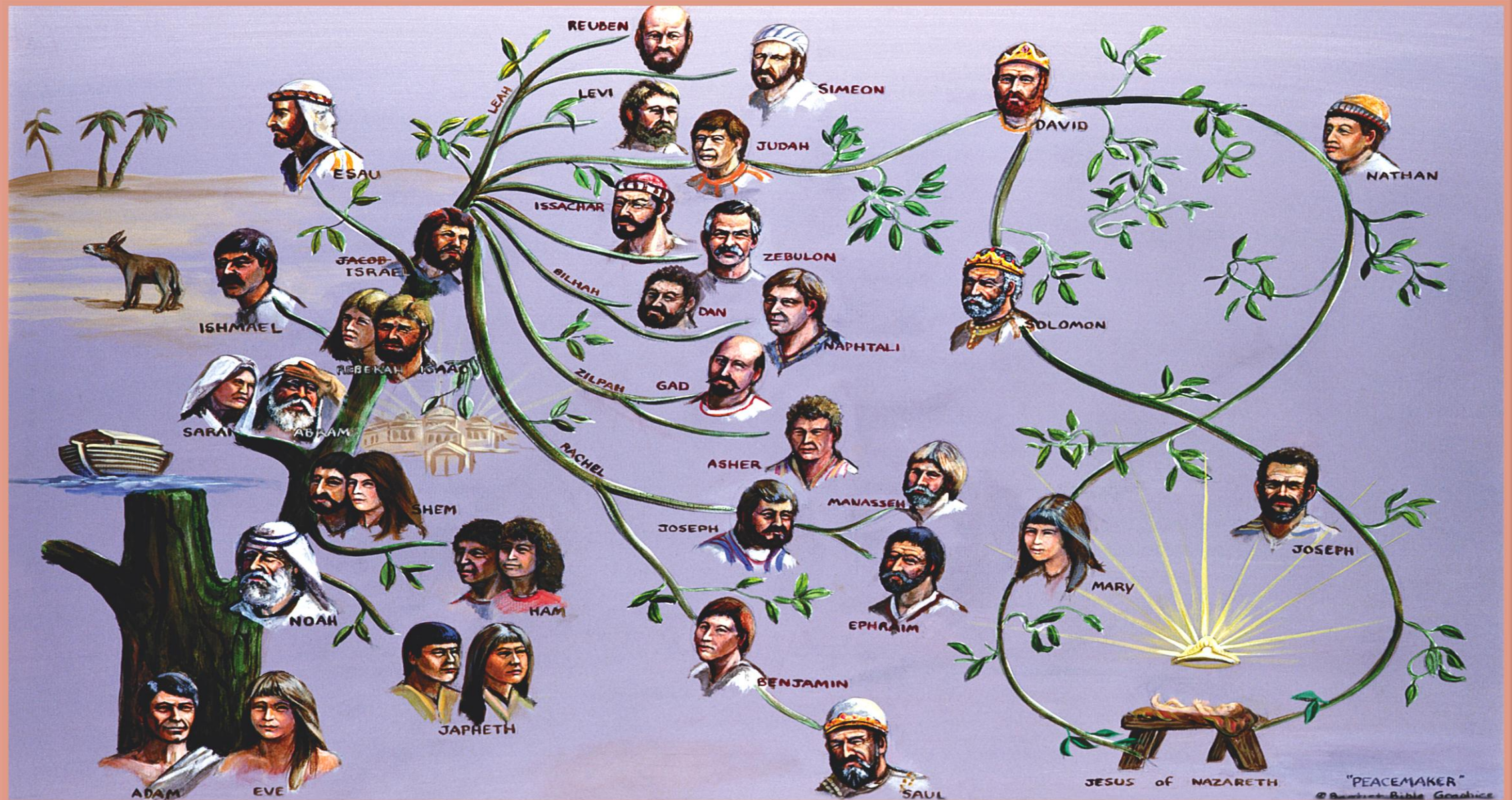


FAMILY HERITAGE



Did you know that your family heritage directly influences your attitude to some life circumstances? Transgenerational therapy studies how behavioral styles and physical and mental health problems are passed down in a family, from one generation to another. Ellen G. White notes: «There are many who have some defect of character received as a birthright, which they have not overcome, but have cherished as though it were fine gold, and brought with them into their religious experience.» (5T 418.1)



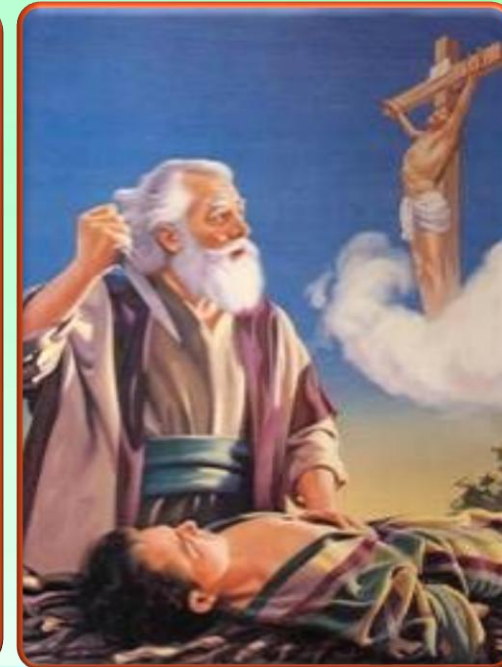
The Lord knew that our family heritage would bring us tendencies to evil, so in His Word He established the ways we can overcome these deficiencies and have happy homes. We will learn lessons from Jesus' ancestors and how what most influenced each one's life was the decision they made in their relationship with God. Welcome!



Abraham

One of God's instructions for families to live happily is to have true faith in God. While Abraham waited for the fulfillment of the promise, doubt took hold of him. As a consequence he took Hagar as his wife, introducing polygamy into his family. The son of this union, together with his mother, was the cause of great suffering in his family.

Later, Abraham overcame his weaknesses and demonstrated blind faith by offering his son Isaac. For this he was called the father of faith. We must keep our faith high, despite the trial.



Isaac



The second lesson can be observed in Isaac: our partner must share our same faith. It was easy to get wives among Canaanite women, but Abraham knew that God did not approve of the practice. Even in his day it was difficult to find a suitable partner, but Isaac left everything in God's hands and God rewarded him with a wife according to his ideal. The choice of a partner is vitally important to our relationship with God and our happiness.



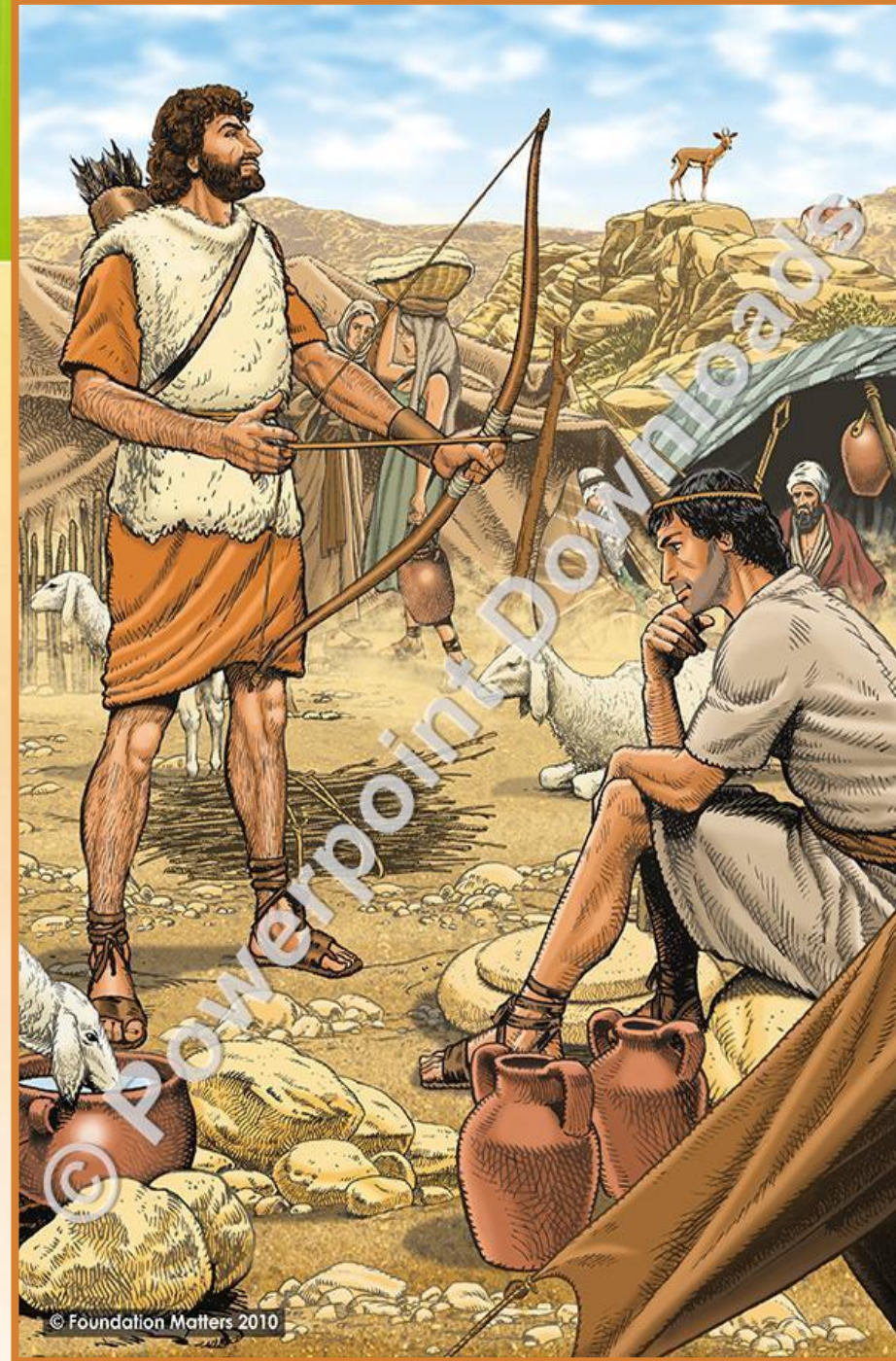
Jacob & Esau

Jacob and Esau were raised with the same religious principles as their parents, but both showed character problems. One was a liar and the other loved self-indulgence. However, Isaac applied the divine principle we find in Deuteronomy.

“And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.”
(Deuteronomy 6:6-9).

At the end of his life, Isaac was able to see his sons transformed and converted.

In Jacob the promise was fulfilled, and from him came the people of Israel. The lesson we learn is that although spiritual experience is not passed on genetically, spiritual inheritance can be transferred through teaching. Repeat spiritual teachings to your children in the different activities of daily life.



Judah

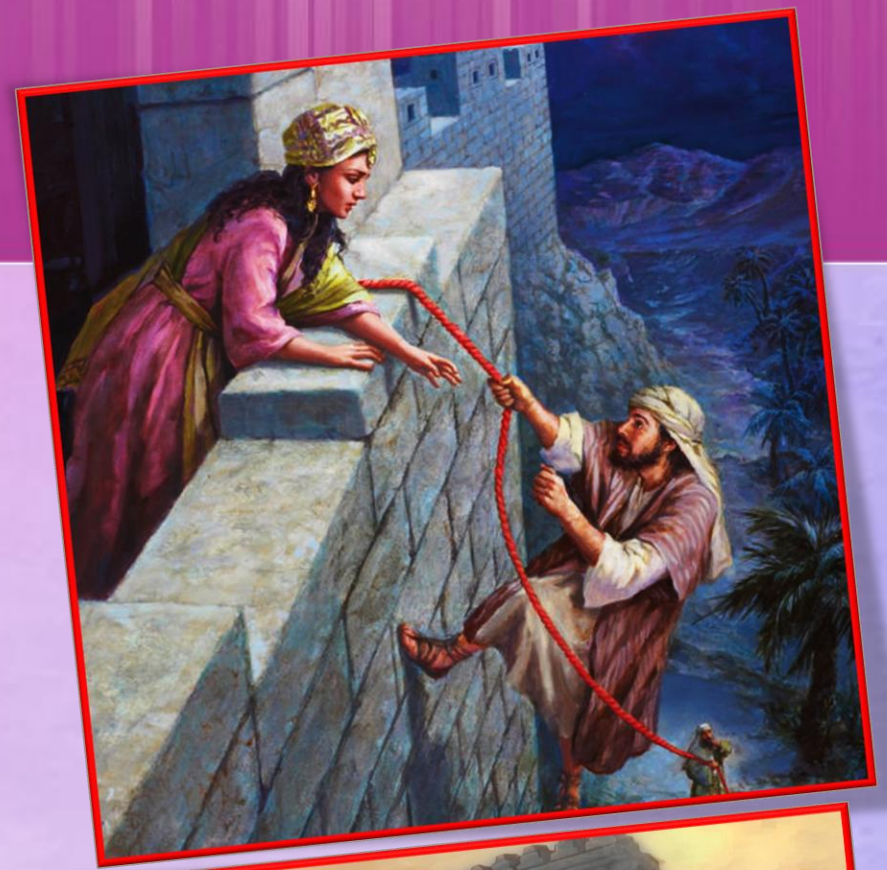
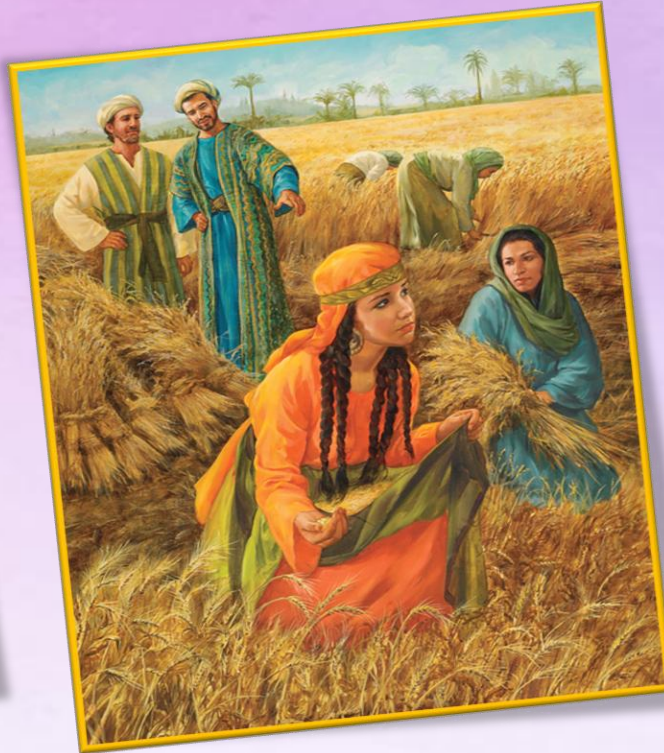
Judah showed nobility of character toward Benjamin by interceding for him before Joseph: "For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever. Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren. For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father." (Genesis 44:32-34.) But he had deficiencies in the discipline of his first two children. Both were evil in God's eyes. It was from his son Perez, whom he had in his old age, that Jesus descended.



Another lesson we must learn is that despite the sufferings of mistakes made in raising our children, we should turn to the Lord, ask for His direction, and try to do better, whether with those same children, with others we have, or with grandchildren.

Rahab a Ruth

It is striking to see in Jesus' family tree two women whose origins and lifestyles were contrary to those of God's people. Rahab had a profession totally opposed to God's laws, and on the other hand, Ruth had grown up worshipping false gods. However, the lesson these two women teach us is that it doesn't matter where the members of a family come from. If you give your life to the Lord, He accepts you and transforms you for His glory.



David



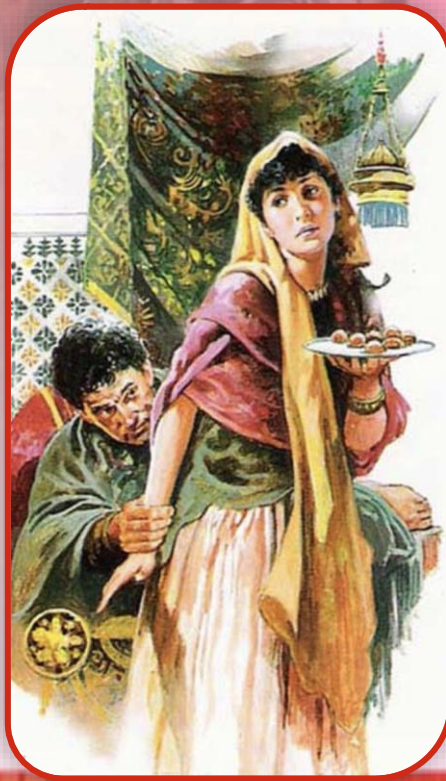
King David, like his ancestors, made the tremendous mistake of polygamy.

His children displayed character traits that were the cause of their suffering and displeasure to God. Murder, adultery, incest, and other negative behaviors were repeated in his offspring.

However, David remained faithful to the Lord despite the mistakes he made in his life and in the education of his children.

That's why God fulfilled His promise in Solomon.

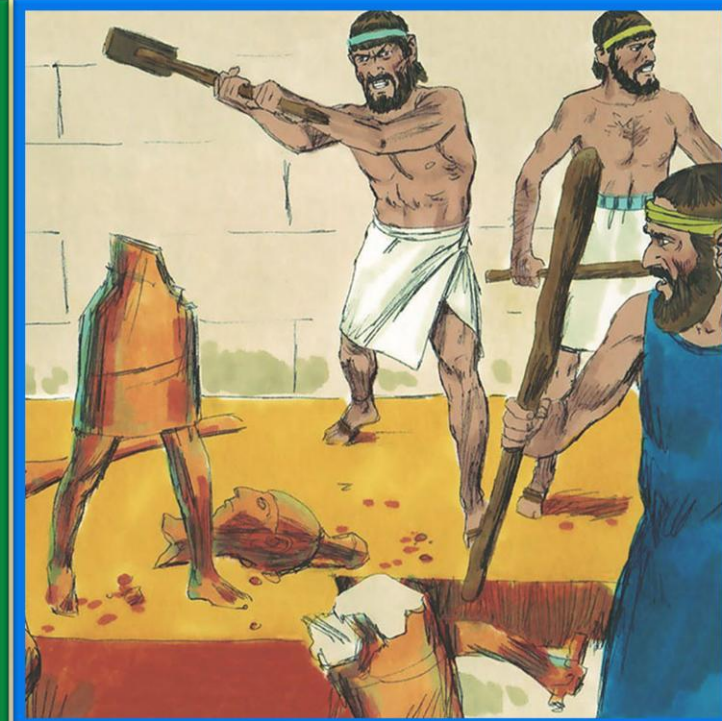
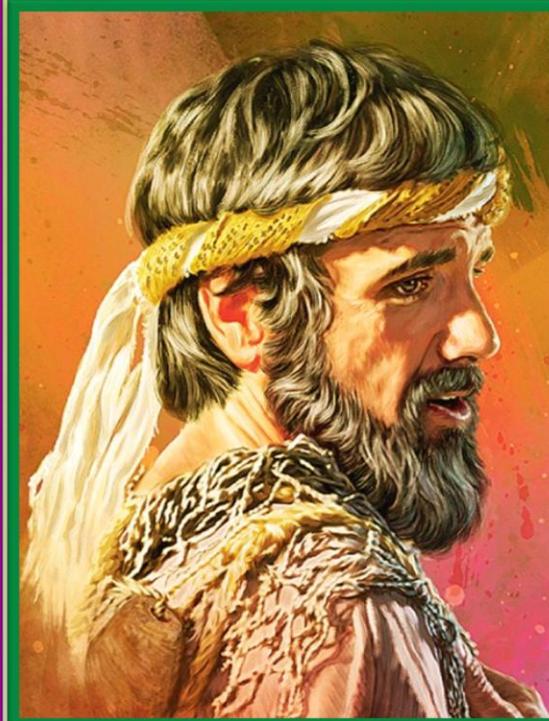
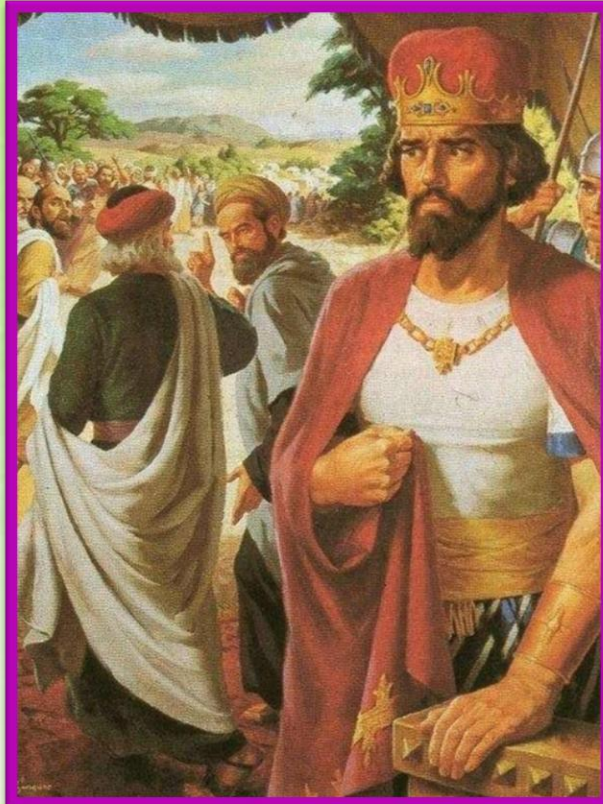
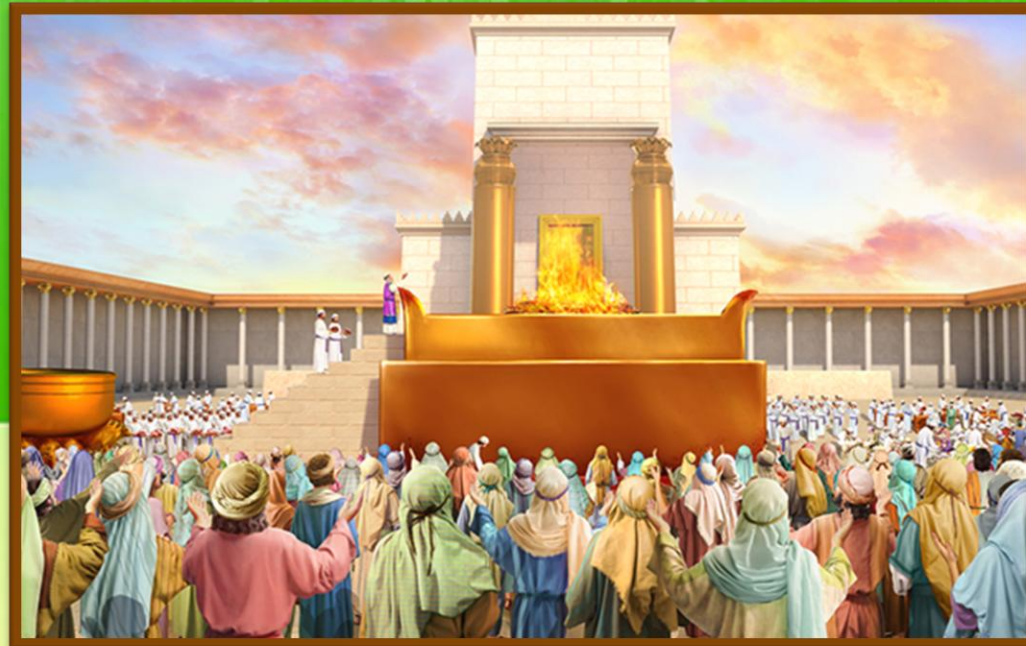
The lesson is that no matter the bad relationships and undisciplined dispositions in our family, God can fulfill His promise in us if we are faithful to Him.



Solomon, Rehoboam, Abijah and Asa

In the next sequence of Jesus' family tree is Solomon, then Rehoboam and his son, Abijah, then Asa.

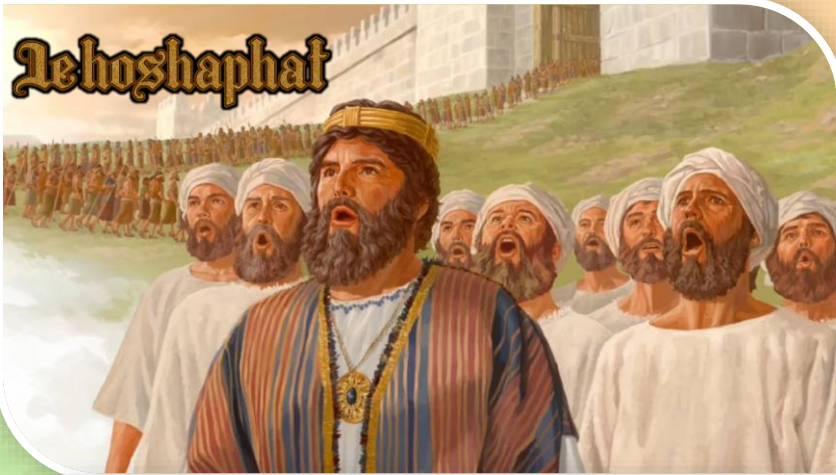
What can be observed is that in David's offspring weakness of character, lack of adherence to principles and cowardice prevail. This teaches us that even though parents enjoy fame and success, this does not guarantee that their children will enjoy the same, unless they develop a firm fidelity to God.



Other Kings

After the kings already mentioned we can notice a sequence of fidelity and infidelity from one generation to another. Despite his father's bad example, Jehoshaphat was faithful to the Lord. After him, Jehoram, Uzziah, and Jotham did what was right in God's eyes.

Jehoshaphat



Ahaz was rebellious. However, his son Hezekiah served God. But he begat the most criminal and wicked king of all time, Manasseh. However, although he repented, his son Amun rejected God. From Amun arises the most perfect and spiritual king: Josiah. It is true that we can lead our children in God's ways, but in the end they will decide whether to follow God or not.

As parents we must do our duty and wait confidently on God's promise (Isaiah 49:25).

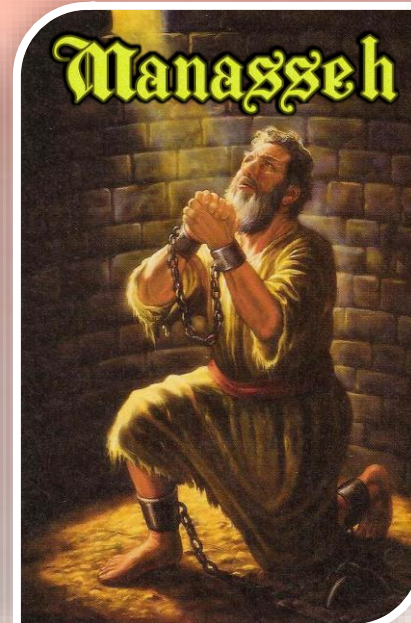
Uzziah



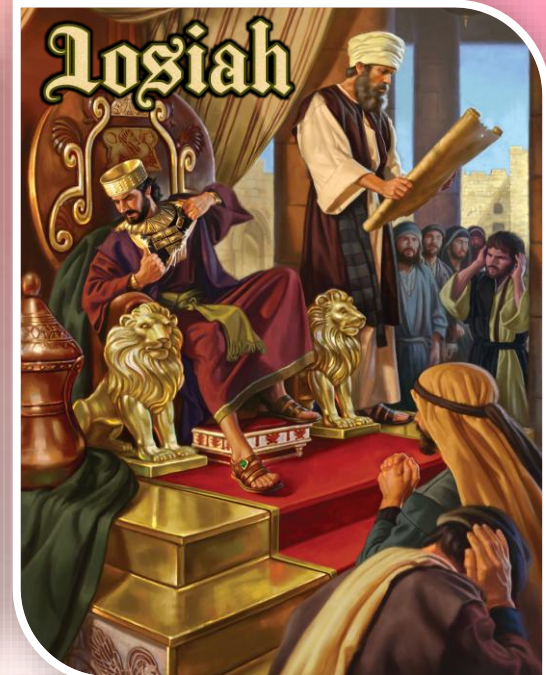
Hezekiah



Manasseh



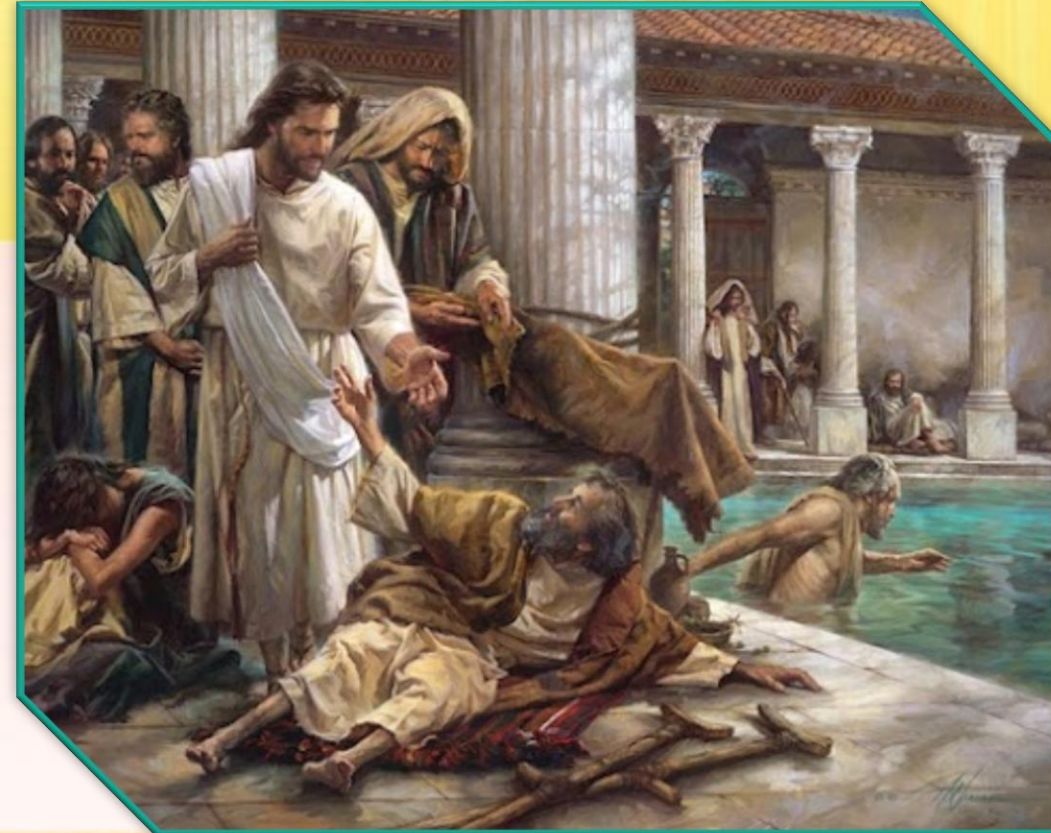
Josiah





Jesus

Jesus showed us the most valuable lesson we can learn: It doesn't matter if your family heritage gives you unpleasant or deficient character traits. No matter what circumstances you've grown up in, we don't have to repeat His story.





Let no one say, I cannot remedy my defects of character. If you come to this decision, you will certainly fail of obtaining everlasting life. The impossibility lies in your own will. If you will not, then you can not overcome. The real difficulty arises from the corruption of an unsanctified heart, and an unwillingness to submit to the control of God. (COL 331.2)

Let the law of kindness be upon your lips and the oil of grace in your heart. This will produce wonderful results. You will be tender, sympathetic, courteous. You need all these graces. The Holy Spirit must be received and brought into your character; then it will be as holy fire, giving forth incense which will rise up to God, not from lips that condemn, but as a healer of the souls of men. Your countenance will express the image of the divine.... OFC 249



By beholding the character of Christ you will become changed into His likeness. The grace of Christ alone can change your heart and then you will reflect the image of the Lord Jesus. God calls upon us to be like Him—pure, holy, and undefiled. We are to bear the divine image....

The Lord Jesus is our only helper. Through His grace we shall learn to cultivate love, to educate ourselves to speak kindly and tenderly. Through His grace our cold, harsh manners will be transformed. The law of kindness will be upon our lips, and those who are under the precious influences of the Holy Spirit, will not feel that it is an evidence of weakness to weep with those who weep, to rejoice with them that rejoice. We are to cultivate heavenly excellences of character. (OFC 249).

