

Examples in Scripture of Surrogate Solutions:

Jacob and Esau: Jacob is another deceiver. The blessing was never promised to him, so he becomes the Bible's first con artist and scams his family out of his brother's rightful inheritance. He spends years running from his family, and when he can't take it anymore he tries to buy off his brother with an elaborate bribe. But it's when God meets Jacob in the wilderness – literally wrestling him to the ground – that he learns to finally be honest with who he is. Ironically it was only when he walked away with a limp that he could finally stand on his own two feet (Genesis 32).

Joseph: In Genesis 37 we meet this kid named Joseph – this kid whose dreams tell him he's the one his brothers are going to bow down to. His Dad's favoritism is revealed in a new designer coat that he wears around while bragging about his future – talk about a superiority complex. His trust in God's promise actually became a source of pride and arrogance. What we find in his journey over the next several chapters, is that God often can use people in a very wrong place at just the right time – *His* time.

Moses: In Exodus 2 we find Moses so enraged over the Egyptian slavery that he kills a guy, and ends up living as a fugitive. Moses' concern for his people was perfectly right, the problem was that he was trying to do it through vigilante justice rather than waiting on God's provision. So he ended up going from Rambo to outlaw to reluctant activist pleading Israel's case before Pharaoh, but through God's grace and empowerment Moses was the one who led the nation to freedom.

Saul: In 1 Samuel 13, Saul is waiting to go into battle, but has to wait for Samuel to arrive to make the sacrifice. But the clock was ticking, and the ragtag band of soldiers that made up Israel's army was already starting to go AWOL. So Samuel decides to perform the sacrifices himself. But his problems only get worse – in 1 Samuel 15 we see Saul defy the Lord's command by keeping all the best animals as a sacrifice – though he only admits this when Samuel starts asking questions about all the bleating of sheep. Saul had been head and shoulders above the competition when it had been time to select a king – now he was getting rejected.

Peter: Peter never wanted Jesus to die (Mk 8:33). He was the one who suggested that, at the transfiguration, they build tabernacles for everyone to remain in (Mk 9:5). When Jesus was arrested, he was the one with the sword to whack off one of the guards' ears (Mk 14:47; cf. Jn 18:26). The problem was that during the actual trial of Jesus, Peter famously denied that he ever knew him. Peter was all about Jesus so long as it was easy – but as soon as it meant he might have to bleed a little he got scared. Like Abram and Hagar, he sought comfort and the promise on his own terms.

**Excerpt from research brief compiled for Tim Hawks by the Docent Group.*