

Study 7: Jacob, Part 1 - Genesis 25-30

Overview of chapters:

Gen 25: Birth of Esau and Jacob. Isaac is 60 years old when the children are born. Verse 34 So Esau despised his birthright. [Esau “sold his birthright for a mess of pottage” – exact phrase is not found in the Bible, but was first used in the English summary of a sermon around 1452].

Gen 26: Esau turns 40 and marries two Canaanite women, causing grief for his parents, Isaac and Rebekah.

Gen 27: Isaac wants to bless Esau. Rebekah overhears and convinces Jacob to masquerade as Esau in order to get the blessing for himself. Isaac blesses Jacob thinking he is Esau. Esau is furious when he finds out.
35 But [Isaac] said [to Esau], “Your brother came deceitfully and took your blessing.”

36 Esau said, “Isn’t he rightly named Jacob [*deceiver*]? This is the second time he has taken advantage of me: He took my birthright, and now he’s taken my blessing!” Then he asked, “Haven’t you reserved any blessing for me?”

37 Isaac answered Esau, “I have made him lord over you and have made all his relatives his servants, and I have sustained him with grain and new wine. So what can I possibly do for you, my son?”

38 Esau said to his father, “Do you have only one blessing, my father? Bless me too, my father!” Then Esau wept aloud. [See: **Hebrews 12:14-17** below]

39 His father Isaac answered him, “Your dwelling will be away from the earth’s richness, away from the dew of heaven above. 40 You will live by the sword and you will serve your brother. But when you grow restless, you will throw his yoke from off your neck.”

41 Esau held a grudge against Jacob because of the blessing his father had given him. He said to himself, “The days of mourning for my father are near; then I will kill my brother Jacob.”

42 When Rebekah was told what her older son Esau had said, she sent for her younger son Jacob and said to him, “Your brother Esau is planning to avenge himself by killing you. 43 Now then, my son, do what I say: Flee at once to my brother Laban in Harran. 44 Stay with him for a while until your brother’s fury subsides. 45 When your brother is no longer angry with you and forgets what you did to him, I’ll send word for you to come back from there. Why should I lose both of you in one day?”

46 Then Rebekah said to Isaac, “I’m disgusted with living because of these Hittite women. If Jacob takes a wife from among the women of this land, from Hittite women like these, my life will not be worth living.”

Gen 28: Isaac blesses Jacob and sends him to find Laban in Paddan Aram [East to Haran in Northwest Mesopotamia]. Verse 2: ...to the house of your mother’s father Bethuel. Take a wife for yourself there, from among the daughters of Laban, your mother’s brother. 3 May God Almighty [*El-Shaddai*] bless you and make you fruitful and increase your numbers until you become a community of peoples. 4 May he give you and your seed the blessing given to Abraham, so that you may take possession of the land where you now reside as a foreigner, the land God gave to Abraham.” 5 Then Isaac sent Jacob on his way....

Verse 10 Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Haran. 11 When he reached a certain place, he stopped for the night because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones there, he put it under his head and lay down to sleep. 12 He had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it [cp. John 1:51]. 13 There beside him stood the Lord, and he said: “I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. 14 Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your seed [Or: *will use your name and the name of your seed in blessings* (see 48:20)]. 15 I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.”

16 When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, “Surely the Lord is in this place, and I was not aware of it.” 17 He was afraid and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven.”

17 And he was afraid and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!”

18 Early the next morning Jacob took the stone he had placed under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on top of it. 19 He called that place Bethel [*house of God*], though the city used to be called Luz [*separation; departure; an almond*].

20 Then Jacob made a vow, saying, “If God will be with me and will watch over me on this journey I am taking and will give me food to eat and clothes to wear 21 so that I return safely to my father’s household, then the Lord will be my God 22 and this stone that I have set up as a pillar will be God’s house, and of all that you give me I will give you a tenth.”

Gen 29: Jacob meets Rachel at a well where she comes to water her father’s sheep. Jacob stays with Laban for a month before his uncle finally asks Jacob what he wants as wages for all the work he’s doing around the place. Jacob agrees work for 7 years if he can marry his cousin, Rachel. Laban had two daughters: Leah (the eldest, who is said to have “weak [or *delicate*] eyes” – too small for her face? cross-eyed? Just plug ugly?), and Rachel (the youngest, who “had a lovely figure and was beautiful”). Jacob is so in love with Rachel that the 7 years pass like a few days. When the time came for him to marry her, Laban pulled the old switcheroo and substituted Leah for Rachel. Verse 25 When morning came, 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?”

26 Laban replied, “It is not our custom here to give the younger daughter in marriage before the older one. 27 Finish this daughter’s bridal week; then we will give you the younger one also, in return for another seven years of work.”

28 And Jacob did so. He finished the week with Leah, and then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to be his wife. 29 Laban gave his servant Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as her attendant. 30 Jacob made love to Rachel also, and his love for Rachel was greater than his love for Leah. And he worked for Laban another seven years.

You’ve heard the saying, “What goes around, comes around”? The deceiver had been deceived.

31 When the Lord saw that Leah was not loved, he enabled her to conceive, but Rachel remained childless.

32 Leah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Reuben [*behold, a son*, but sounds like the Hebrew for *he has seen my misery*], for she said, “It is because the Lord has seen my misery. Surely my husband will love me now.”

33 She conceived again, and when she gave birth to a son she said, “Because the Lord heard that I am not loved, he gave me this one too.” So she named him Simeon [*probably means one who hears*].

34 Again she conceived, and when she gave birth to a son she said, “Now at last my husband will become attached to me, because I have borne him three sons.” So he was named Levi [*sounds like the Hebrew word for attached*].

35 She conceived again, and when she gave birth to a son she said, “This time I will praise the Lord.” So she named him Judah [*sounds like the Hebrew word for praise*]. Then she stopped having children.

Gen 30: When Rachel saw that she was not bearing Jacob any children, she became jealous of her sister. So she said to Jacob, “Give me children, or I’ll die!” 2 Jacob became angry with her and said, “Am I in the place of God, who has kept you from having children?”

3 Then she said, “Here is Bilhah, my servant. Sleep with her so that she can bear children for me and I too can build a family through her.”

4 So she gave him her servant Bilhah as a wife. Jacob slept with her, 5 and she became pregnant and bore him a son. 6 Then Rachel said, “God has vindicated me; he has listened to my plea and given me a son.” Because of this she named him Dan [*he has vindicated, or God is my judge*].

7 Rachel’s servant Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob a second son. 8 Then Rachel said, “I have had a great struggle with my sister, and I have won.” So she named him Naphtali [*my struggle*].

9 When Leah saw that she had stopped having children, she took her servant Zilpah and gave her to Jacob as a wife. 10 Leah's servant Zilpah bore Jacob a son. 11 Then Leah said, "What good fortune!" [or: *A troop is coming!*] So she named him Gad [can mean *good fortune* or *a troop*].

12 Leah's servant Zilpah bore Jacob a second son. 13 Then Leah said, "How happy I am! The women will call me happy." So she named him Asher [*happy*].

References:

John 1:51 And He said to [Nathanael], "Most assuredly, I say to you, you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."