

Study 8: Jacob, Part 2 Genesis 30-35

Overview of chapters:

- Gen 30: Vs. 14-16 **Mandrakes** – purported to cause fertility. Jacob is “hired” by Leah for some of the mandrakes. 17 God listened to Leah, and she became pregnant and bore Jacob a fifth son. 18 Then Leah said, “God has rewarded me for giving my servant to my husband.” So she named him Issachar [sounds like the Hebrew word for *reward*].
- 19 Leah conceived again and bore Jacob a sixth son. 20 Then Leah said, “God has presented me with a precious gift. This time my husband will treat me with honor, because I have borne him six sons.” So she named him Zebulun [probably means *honor*]. 21 Some time later she gave birth to a daughter and named her Dinah [*judgment; who judges*].
- 22 Then God remembered Rachel; he listened to her and enabled her to conceive. 23 She became pregnant and gave birth to a son and said, “God has taken away my disgrace.” 24 She named him Joseph [*may he add*], and said, “May the Lord add to me another son.” [Jacob then asks Laban to release him from his service so he can go back to his father’s home, but Laban knows he’s been blessed because of Jacob, so he wants to keep him around, so he bargains with Jacob: “What do you want?”].
- 31 “Don’t give me anything,” Jacob replied. “But if you will do this one thing for me, I will go on tending your flocks and watching over them: 32 “Let me go through all your flocks today and remove from them every speckled or spotted sheep, every dark-colored lamb and every spotted or speckled goat. They will be my wages.”
- 34 “Agreed,” said Laban. “Let it be as you have said.” 35 That same day he removed all the male goats that were streaked or spotted, and all the speckled or spotted female goats (all that had white on them) and all the dark-colored lambs, and he placed them in the care of his sons. 36 Then he put a three-day journey between himself and Jacob, while Jacob continued to tend the rest of Laban’s flocks.
- Vs. 35-42 Striped sticks in water. Genetic manipulation? Adaptation to fit the environment? Magic?
- 43 In this way the man grew exceedingly prosperous and came to own large flocks, and female and male servants, and camels and donkeys.
- Gen 31: Laban’s sons complain that Jacob is taking all their family’s wealth (their inheritance).
- Verse 3 Then the Lord said to Jacob, “Go back to the land of your fathers and to your relatives, and I will be with you.”
- Jacob tells his wives about a dream he had: Verse 10 “In breeding season I once had a dream in which I looked up and saw that the male goats mating with the flock were streaked, speckled or spotted. 11 The angel of God said to me in the dream, ‘Jacob.’ I answered, ‘Here I am.’ 12 And he said, ‘Look up and see that all the male goats mating with the flock are streaked, speckled or spotted, for I have seen all that Laban has been doing to you. 13 I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and where you made a vow to me. Now leave this land at once and go back to your native land.’”
- 14 Then Rachel and Leah replied, “Do we still have any share in the inheritance of our father’s estate? 15 Does he not regard us as foreigners? Not only has he sold us, but he has used up what was paid for us. 16 Surely all the wealth that God took away from our father belongs to us and our children. So do whatever God has told you.”
- 17 Then Jacob put his children and his wives on camels, 18 and he drove all his livestock ahead of him, along with all the goods he had accumulated in Paddan Aram, to go to his **father** Isaac in the land of Canaan.
- 19 When Laban had gone to shear his sheep, Rachel stole her father’s household gods [the possession of which may have indicated the right to inherit an estate. This act would more firmly tie Jacob to Laban’s family, from which he was now trying to break free]. 20 Moreover, Jacob **deceived** Laban the Aramean by not telling him he was running away. 21 So he fled with all he had, crossed the Euphrates River, and headed for the hill country of Gilead.

Three days later, Laban gives chase. When he catches up to Jacob, he says: Verse 26 “What have you done? You’ve **deceived** me, and you’ve carried off my daughters like captives in war. 27 Why did you run off secretly and deceive me? Why didn’t you tell me, so I could send you away with joy and singing to the music of timbrels and harps? 28 You didn’t even let me kiss my grandchildren and my daughters goodbye. You have done a foolish thing. 29 I have the power to harm you; but last night the God of your father said to me, ‘Be careful not to say anything to Jacob, either good or bad.’ 30 Now you have gone off because you longed to return to your father’s household. But why did you steal my gods?”

31 Jacob answered Laban, “I was afraid, because I thought you would take your daughters away from me by force. 32 But if you find anyone who has your gods, that person shall not live. Now Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen the gods. [She does die later in childbirth].

Jacob and Laban make a covenant. Verse 49 It was also called Mizpah [*watchtower*], because he said, “May the Lord keep watch between you and me when we are away from each other. 50 If you mistreat my daughters or if you take any wives besides my daughters, even though no one is with us, remember that God is a witness between you and me.”

51 Laban also said to Jacob, “Here is this heap, and here is this pillar I have set up between you and me. 52 This heap is a witness, and this pillar is a witness, that I will not go past this heap to your side to harm you and that you will not go past this heap and pillar to my side to harm me. 53 May the God of Abraham and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge between us.” [Laban heads home].

Gen 32: Verse 1 Jacob also went on his way, and the angels of God met him. 2 When Jacob saw them, he said, “This is the camp of God!” So he named that place Mahanaim [*two camps*].

3 Jacob sent messengers ahead of him to his brother Esau in the land of Seir, the country of Edom.

6 When the messengers returned to Jacob, they said, “We went to your brother Esau, and now he is coming to meet you, and four hundred men are with him.”

7 In great fear and distress Jacob divided the people who were with him into two groups [or *camps*], and the flocks and herds and camels as well. 8 He thought, “If Esau comes and attacks one group, the group that is left may escape.”

9 Then Jacob prayed, “O God of my father Abraham, God of my father Isaac, Lord, you who said to me, ‘Go back to your country and your relatives, and I will make you prosper,’ 10 I am unworthy of all the kindness and faithfulness you have shown your servant. I had only my staff when I crossed this Jordan, but now I have become two camps. 11 Save me, I pray, from the hand of my brother Esau, for I am afraid he will come and attack me, and also the mothers with their children. 12 But you have said, ‘I will surely make you prosper and will make your descendants like the sand of the sea, which cannot be counted.’”

Jacob prepares a gift for Esau of a large number of animals to go ahead of him. Verse 22 That night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two female servants and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of the Jabbok [*evacuation; dissipation; wrestling*]. 23 After he had sent them across the stream, he sent over all his possessions. 24 So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak [Rom 3:11 “There is none who seeks after God”; Rom 5:8 “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us”]. 25 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 [Luke 20:17-18 speaks of the “stone that the builders rejected” (Christ), and He says of Himself “Whoever falls on that stone will be broken”]. 26 Then the man said, “Let me go, for it is daybreak.” But Jacob replied, “I will not let you go unless you bless me.”

27 The man asked him, “What is your name?” He said, “Jacob.”

28 Then the man said, “Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel [probably means *he struggles with God*], because you have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome.”

29 Jacob said, “Please tell me your name.”

But he replied, “Why do you ask my name?” Then he blessed him there.

30 So Jacob called the place Peniel [*face of God*] saying, “It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared.”

31 The sun rose above him as he passed Peniel and he was limping because of his hip. 32 Therefore to this day the Israelites do not eat the tendon attached to the socket of the hip, because the socket of Jacob’s hip was touched near the tendon. [Question: Who eats tendons, anyway? Yuk!]

Gen 33: Jacob looked up and there was Esau, coming with his four hundred men; so he divided the children among Leah, Rachel and the two female servants. 2 He put the female servants and their children in front, Leah and her children next, and Rachel and Joseph in the rear. 3 He himself went on ahead and bowed down to the ground seven times as he approached his brother. 4 But Esau ran to meet Jacob and embraced him; he threw his arms around his neck and kissed him.

Jacob tells Esau that the animals he sent ahead are a gift for Esau, but Esau says he’s got plenty, but takes it when Jacob insists. Esau wants to accompany Jacob, or at least leave some of his men with him, but Jacob (probably fearing some sort of intrigue) refuses to allow him, using the “tenderness” of the flocks and children as an excuse. So, Esau travels on to Seir, while Jacob, et al, went to Sukkoth [*booths*, as in the *Feast of Booths*] where he builds shelters for himself and his flocks.

18 After Jacob came from Paddan Aram, he arrived safely at the city of Shechem [*part; portion; back early in the morning*] in Canaan and camped within sight of the city. 19 For a hundred pieces of silver, he bought from the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem, the plot of ground where he pitched his tent. 20 There he set up an altar and called it El Elohe Israel [can mean *El is the God of Israel* or *mighty is the God of Israel*]

Gen 34: Dinah, daughter of Jacob by Leah, gets raped by Shechem son of Hamor the Hivite, ruler of the area [Gen 36:1 one of Esau’s wives was “Aholibamah the daughter of Anah, the daughter of Zibeon the Hivite”]. He then wants to marry her. Verse 13 Because their sister Dinah had been defiled, Jacob’s sons replied deceitfully as they spoke to Shechem and his father Hamor.

Jacob’s sons insist that all the men of the city be circumcised, otherwise, (verse 17) “...we’ll take our sister and go.” Shechem was practicing a form of deceit himself: He tells the men of his city, (verse 23), “Won’t their livestock, their property and all their other animals become ours? So let us agree to their terms, and they will settle among us.”

25 Three days later, while all of them were still in pain, two of Jacob’s sons, Simeon and Levi, Dinah’s brothers, took their swords and attacked the unsuspecting city, killing every male. 26 They put Hamor and his son Shechem to the sword and took Dinah from Shechem’s house and left. 27 The sons of Jacob came upon the dead bodies and looted the city where [or *because*] their sister had been defiled. 28 They seized their flocks and herds and donkeys and everything else of theirs in the city and out in the fields. 29 They carried off all their wealth and all their women and children, taking as plunder everything in the houses.

30 Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, “You have brought trouble on me by making me obnoxious to the Canaanites and Perizzites, the people living in this land. We are few in number, and if they join forces against me and attack me, I and my household will be destroyed.”

31 But they replied, “Should he have treated our sister like a prostitute?”

Gen 35: 1 Then God said to Jacob, “Go up to Bethel and settle there, and build an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you were fleeing from your brother Esau.”

2 So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, “Get rid of the foreign gods you have with you, and purify yourselves and change your clothes. 3 Then come, let us go up to Bethel, where I will build an altar to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and who has been with me wherever I have gone.” 4 So they gave Jacob all the foreign gods they had and the rings in their ears, and Jacob buried them under the oak at Shechem. 5 Then they set out, and the terror of God fell on the towns all around them so that no one pursued them.