

Jacob – Lessons in God's Sovereignty

Text: Genesis 25:21 - 50:13; but read Hebrews 11:21 By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and, he worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff.

Biographical introduction:

1. Genesis 25:24-26 - Jacob received his name at birth when he was born second, clutching the heel of his elder brother Esau. Jacob means "he clutches" or "the supplanter".

Picture of Esau selling his birthright to Jacob



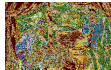
2. Genesis 25:27-34 - The eldest son normally received authority over the family upon his father's death. He would become the priest and also received a double portion as his birthright. But Esau despised his birthright and sold Jacob his birthright for a meal.

Picture of Nuzi tablets



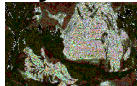
3. This custom of selling the birthright is confirmed extra-biblically on the Nuzi tablets which were found south-east of Nineveh.

Picture of Isaac deceiving Jacob



4. Genesis 27:35ff – Though Jacob was deceitful in acquiring his father's blessing we see that that blessing was irrevocable nevertheless.
5. Romans 9:10-13 - Thus Jacob became the inheritor of Canaan.
6. Genesis 36 – As a side note, Jacob's brother Esau received Edom. According to Daniel 11, when the Antichrist, in his war against the African and North European armies will enter Israel, Edom is one of only three countries (the other two being Moab and Ammon) that will elude his grasp.

Picture of Jacob dreaming of the heavenly ladder



7. Genesis 12:8 - After the blessing Jacob fled to Bethel where his grandfather Abraham had built an altar. Here he received the vision of Jacob's ladder.

Picture of Jacob and Rachel at the well



8. Genesis 24:11 - Continuing to the north east he traveled to Haran where he met Rachel at the well. This was apparently the same well where Abraham's servant Eleazer had found Rebekah.
9. Genesis 29:16-30 - Jacob served Laban 20 years, seven for Leah, seven for Rachel and six for flocks.

10. Genesis 31:1-21 - While there he was blessed with eleven sons and a daughter. He became very prosperous and left Haran while his father-in-law Laban was out shearing.
11. Genesis 31:22-55 - Laban angrily pursued Jacob to Gilead. But upon being warned by God to not interfere with his son-in-law, Laban had a pact was drawn up between them.
12. Genesis 32:1ff. - Traveling to Mahanaim, Jacob sent out scouts to discover his long estranged brother Esau's attitude.

Picture of Jacob wrestling the Theophany



13. Genesis 32:24-30, cf. Genesis 28:20-21 - Hosea 12:4 Just as he was about to ford the river Jabbok, he wrestled with a "man", who turned out to be no less than the Son of God Himself, receiving a permanent hip injury. His name was changed here from Jacob to Israel, and this is probably the place of Jacob's conversion. Israel means "Strives with God", "Influences God" or "Prince of God".
14. Genesis 33:19 – But instead of proceeding to Bethel, Jacob now purchased land at Shechem. According to Genesis 12:6; 35:4; Judges 9:6, 37 Shechem was famous for its oaks. Unfortunately those oaks were commonly associated with divination or sorcery.
15. Genesis 34 – Because the morals of the locals were so low, Jacob's daughter Dinah ended up being raped. As a result of Jacob's passive aggressive reaction, his sons reacted by deceiving and slaughtering the entire village of men that went along with the rape.
16. Genesis 35:28-29 - After Isaac's death he settled finally settled in Hebron.
17. Genesis 49 - Jacob the patriarch gave one of the three great prophecies in Genesis - the prophecy of the twelve tribes prior to his death at the age of 130.
18. Genesis 50:13 - He was buried at Machpelah near Hebron.

Life lessons from Jacob:

1. Israel's identity has always been uniquely linked to Jacob.
 - a. Israel is called the house of Jacob (Isaiah 8:17; Micah 2:7).
 - b. Israel is called the sons of Jacob (1 Kings 18:31; Malachi 3:6).
 - c. Israel is called the seed of Jacob (Isaiah 45:19; Jeremiah 33:26).
 - d. Israel is called the community of Jacob (Deuteronomy 33:4).
 - e. Israel is called Jacob (Hosea 10:11).
2. As Jacob is considered the child of favor (Malachi 1:2; Romans 9:10-13)
 - a. so all adopted Israelites are considered the chosen people. (Romans 2:28-29; Philippians 3:3 cp Ephesians 2:11-19)
3. As Jacob is linked with Abraham and Isaac (2 Kings 13:23; Mark 12:26-27)
 - a. so we too may claim Abraham as our spiritual ancestor (Romans 4:11)
4. As Jacob is described as the heir of the divine promise (Hebrews 11:9)
 - a. so we now are co-heirs with Christ (Romans 8:17)
5. As Jacob blessed others, (Hebrews 11:20-21)
 - a. so we should bless others (James 5:16; 3 John 2)
6. Preferential treatment in a family causes jealousy (1 Samuel 1:5-6).
 - a. We should not allow preferential treatment to characterize us (James 2:9)
7. As Jacob went from Bethel, "the house of God", to Haran, "a dried up place"

- a. so we too must be careful that we do not, through disobedience lose contact with the life-giving Spirit within us. (Ephesians 4:30)
- 8. As Jacob spent a night at Bethel and twenty years at Haran
 - a. so we must be aware that our sin can have lasting effects (Isaiah 59:1)
- 9. As Jacob only entered fully into God's plan after a long and arduous struggle
 - a. so we must be prepared to make every effort in order to fully submit our lives to God's will. (Philippians 3:12-15; Hebrews 12:14)
- 10. As the "supplanter" Jacob became the "prince" Israel
 - a. so we who were once rejected outcasts has become royalty (1 Peter 2:5) and allowed direct access to the throne (Hebrews 4:14-16)

Lessons in God's sovereignty:

1. God in His foreknowledge loves the believer even prior to his birth (Romans 9:10-13).
2. Those whom He foreknew, He predestined to salvation (Romans 8:29-30)
3. Yet He does not coerce the free will of the believer (Romans 1:18-20; 1 John 3:4).
4. If we decide to submit our wills to His, we become new creatures in Christ (John 1:12-14; 2 Corinthians 5:17).
5. As God had a plan for Jacob's life, to form a major role in His nation Israel in like manner, God has plans for us (Ephesians 2:8-10)
6. If we humbly submit to His will, God can convert our weakness of character and stubbornness to His glory (2 Corinthians 12:7-11).
7. The plan of God is always superior to the plan of man (Job 42:2-6).