



CREATION AND THE BEGINNING OF HUMAN HISTORY

#40 – Jacob’s Dream Genesis 28:10-22

PICTURES NEEDED

40-1 Jacob’s dream

REVIEW (Before Teaching Lesson)

- **Journal Review:** Ask students to share an important truth that they learned from their journal readings at home that week. Share some of your own insights.
- **Previous Lesson Review:**
Abraham’s son Isaac had two sons with his wife Rebekah. Who were Isaac’s sons? Isaac had twin sons, Jacob and Esau. Esau was the firstborn but Jacob was the one God chose even before he was born to be the son of the promise he made to Abraham.

What was the promise God made to Abraham? God promised to give Abraham descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore. He promised to make Abraham into a great nation and to bless all people on earth through him.

How did Jacob get the birthright of the firstborn? One day when Esau came in from the country he was very hungry and Jacob got him to sell his birthright for a bowl of stew.

What is the birthright of the firstborn? According the ancient law of primogeniture the firstborn son is the one who receives the birthright, which means he receives a double inheritance and is the one through whom the family line passes.

Why did God love Jacob and hate Esau? Jacob believed in and acknowledged God while Esau rejected God and went his own way.

- **The Big Question Review: Why did Esau give up his birthright?**

Let the students give their answers to the question.

- **Bible Verse Review: Hebrews 12:16**

Esau was godless and lived for the moment.

See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son.

LESSON CONTENT

Jacob dressed up like Esau and tricked his father into giving him Esau's blessing. After that he had to go away because Esau wanted to kill him. His parents, Isaac and Rebekah, sent him to Paddan Aram where Rebekah's family lived. Rebekah wanted Jacob to find a wife among the daughters of her brother Laban who was Jacob's uncle.

As he was traveling to his uncle's house, Jacob had a dream.

Genesis 28:10-15 (picture 40-1)

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. ¹³ There above it 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 offspring. 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."

What did the stairway represent in Jacob's dream? God was opening a way for Jacob to reach him. In building the Tower of Babel people were trying to make a stairway to reach God by their own efforts. In the dream God provided a stairway for Jacob to reach him. That should be a reminder that we can't get to God on our own efforts. We can only get to God because he makes a way for us through Jesus.

What were the angels doing? The angels were going back and forth between heaven and earth.

What are angels? Angels are heavenly beings, messengers God uses to speak to and watch over men. When an angel speaks to a person it is the same as God speaking.

What was God's promise to Jacob? God gave the same promise to Jacob that he gave to Abraham.

- 13 To give his descendants the land
- 14a His descendants would be too many to count
- 14b All people on earth would be blessed through his offspring.
- 15a God would be with him and watch over him no matter where he was
- 15b God would bring him back to the land

Why didn't Jacob deserve to be blessed by God in that way? Jacob was a sinner who did things wrong. He had tricked his brother into giving him his birthright and his father into blessing him instead of Esau.

How is Jacob like us all? Jacob is an example of how the fulfillment of God's promises doesn't rest on our merit (what we do good) but rather on God's faithfulness. None of us deserves the kindness God shows to us, but he extends it to us anyway.

How is God different from us in that way? We treat people the way we think they deserve to be treated or how we feel at any given moment. God treats us in accord with his holy character, so he always does what is right.

Genesis 28:16-22

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."

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, though the city used to be called Luz.

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 house, 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."

How did Jacob describe the place where he had the dream? The house of God, the gate of heaven. This would be the land where God would dwell with his chosen people, the descendants of Abraham.

What did Jacob set up there? He set up the stone that he had put under his head as a pillar and anointed it with oil. A pillar was to create a memorial to God and the oil poured on it set it apart as holy. It was to be a reminder of what God had told him in that place.

What did Jacob's vow for God to be his God require of God? It required God watching over him and taking care of him on his journey.

What was the problem with Jacob's vow? It was conditional. God had to do something for Jacob in order for Jacob to consider him his God.

What should our faith in God be based on? Our faith should be based on who God is, his nature and character, not on what he will do for us. We need to trust God in all circumstances; whether or not it seems to us that he is with us. God promises to be with us and we

can trust him to work things out for our good. If we don't have real faith we will doubt and may abandon God when we don't like the situation we are in, when things are difficult and it seems God isn't with us.

Proverbs 3:5-6 says, ⁵ *Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;* ⁶ *in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.*

What does the verse mean? God calls us to trust him because of who he is. He is smarter than we are. If we trust in him he will be with us and direct our lives.

LESSON WRAP-UP

- **Overview Questions:** Where was Jacob going? What happened in his dream? What was God's promise to Jacob? What did Jacob do in response? What was Jacob's vow to God?
- **Thought Questions:** What does it mean to follow God unconditionally? Why should we follow God that way? What does it say about us if we put conditions on following God?
- **Prayer:** Thank God that he is God and Lord and ruler over all things. Pray that you would fully give yourself to God and trust him completely. Thank him for leading and guiding you in his way.
- **The Big Question:** **What happens when we trust God completely?**
Let the students give their answers to the question. Share the memory verse. Ask how it answers the question.
- **Memory Verse: Proverbs 3:5-6**
God makes our paths straight.

⁵ *Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;*

⁶ *in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.*

ACTIVITIES (Completed after the lesson)

Any age appropriate activity can be included which fits into the class time. The activities with a star are included on the class notes.

- ★ **Lesson Notes:** Ask the students to summarize in one sentence what the lesson was about. Then have them give three main points covered in the lesson. An example is below.

Theme: On his way to Paddan Aram, Jacob stopped for the night and had a dream in which God revealed himself.

1. In the dream was a stairway to heaven that led to God. There were angels who were going back and forth between heaven and earth.
2. God spoke to Jacob and promised to give him the same things he had promised Abraham.
3. Jacob built a pillar to remember what had happened. He said God would be his God if he watched over and protected him.

★ **Memory Verse:** Read the memory verse on the cover of the class notes and then have the students fill in the blanks in the verse.

★ **Activity Page:** Crossword Puzzle

Instructions: Fill in the puzzle with the words of things that God has blessed us with.

Food God provides what we need to eat.

Wisdom God gives us insight to the way we should live.

Compassion God doesn't treat us the way we deserve.

Life God brought us into being.

Joy God fills us with delight when we seek him.

Salvation God sent his Son to die for our sin.

Contentment We can find satisfaction in God.

Forgiveness God doesn't punish us the way we deserve.

★ **Further Understanding:** Bible Study Skills

Instructions:

1. Read the whole passage below to the students as they read along in their Bibles or on the discussion notes.
2. Read the passage verse by verse and have the students explain each verse.
3. Have the students extract one important truth from the passage. This can be done as an entire class or you can break into pairs or small groups.
4. Have the students answer the additional two questions: How can you apply this truth in your life? What will be the result of applying that truth?

Proverbs 3:1-12 – Following God's way brings blessing.

¹ My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart, ² for they will prolong your life many years and bring you prosperity.

³ Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. ⁴ Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man.

⁵ Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;

⁶ in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.

⁷ Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil.

⁸ This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones.

⁹ Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops;

¹⁰ then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.

¹¹ My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline and do not resent his rebuke,

¹² because the LORD disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in.

JOURNAL

The journal is passed out at the end of class for the students to complete at home. It has six readings that answer a digging deeper question. It would be beneficial for the teacher to work through the journal readings also.

Digging Deeper: Journal Focus – Genesis, chapters 29-31

Reading 1: Genesis 29:1-30 Jacob arrives in Paddan Aram.

What did Jacob do when he saw Rachel? How did Laban trick Jacob? What does that show you about Laban? What should Jacob have learned from that?

Reading 2: Genesis 29:31-30:24 Jacob has wives and children.

Why was Leah able to have children and not Rachel? Why did Rachel give Bilhah to Jacob to be his wife? Why did Leah give Zilpah to Jacob to be his wife? What caused Rachel to finally have a son?

Reading 3: Genesis 30:25-43 Jacob's flocks increase.

What did Laban recognize about Jacob? What was the agreement Laban made with Jacob? What was the outcome of what Jacob did?

Reading 4: Genesis 31:1-21 Jacob flees Laban.

Why did Laban's attitude toward Jacob change? How did Jacob deceive Laban? What does that show about Jacob? What did Rachel do as they were leaving? What does that show about Rachel?

Reading 5: Genesis 31:22-55 Laban goes after Jacob.

What was the problem Laban had with Jacob? What was the agreement Jacob and Laban made with each other?

Reading 6: Proverbs 3:1-12 Following God's way brings blessing

What will bring true benefit to a person's life? Why?