

# GENESIS

## PART 3

*God of Jacob*

## PART 3 - GOD OF JACOB

Week 19: BLESSING - Gen 27

Week 20: COVENANT - Gen 28-29

Week 21: MESSY - Gen 30

Week 22: RETURN - Gen 31-32:21

Week 23: WRESTLE - Gen 32:22-33

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*I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go*

## INTRODUCTION TO JACOB'S STORY

There is a significance to the fact that God associates Himself with Jacob. He is the God who brings about his covenant promise of the Messiah through Abraham's descendants, namely the nation of Israel. But also, let us not lose sight of the grace and reality that God accomplishes this salvation plan through unhealthy, dishonest, ordinary people. Jacob is a man we can relate to as he deals with a human condition that we all struggle with – that of longing for love, acceptance and approval. He shows us the ridiculous and harmful ways we go about filling this longing apart from God. He shows us how an encounter with God *begins* a lifetime *process* of transformation, rather than instant transformation.

Can you relate? We want there to be some reason for God to choose Jacob just like we want there to be a reason for God to pick us as His children. But don't you see? God's love for us is purer than that! If we miss this, we miss so much. To truly grasp that God loves us, that He moves towards us, that He works thru us for His kingdom—based solely on His pure, unmerited, completely Grace fueled love—means that we can be secure in it. It means that we can't lose it! But if God's favor and love is dependent on some right choices we make or because of some gift, intellect, skill or maturity we have, then we stand on shaky ground.

Let your study of Jacob's life transform your understanding of Grace and encourage your heart with God's movements that are specific, personal, and steadfast towards Jacob. May God become bigger and Jacob become smaller, echoing John the Baptist; “[Jesus] must increase, but I must decrease.” (see John 3:26-36)

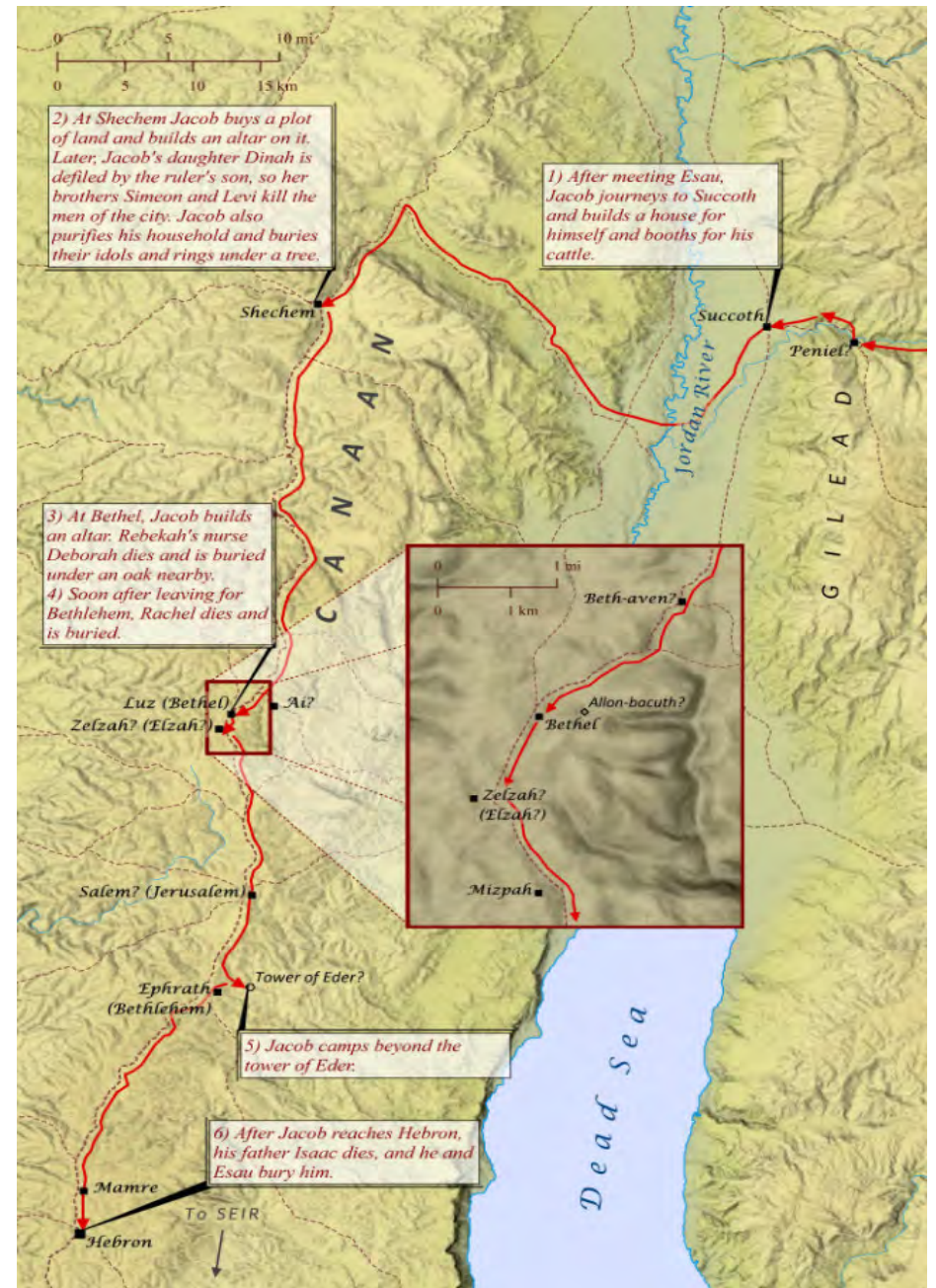
## NARRATIVE IN SCRIPTURE

These chapters recounting the life of Jacob are classified as narrative. A narrative tells us about a character and their story. At times the narrator will insert various scenes or use specific words to paint a picture for us. Narration is not meant to give life steps to emulate, nor does it imply approval of the events, practices, or beliefs of the people. It simply tells us what happened. Through narrative we learn about the characteristics of each individual as we observe their behavior in given situations. From this we can glean principles about human nature and about the character of God within the story arc, setting, and plot points contained therein. Narrative in scripture shows us God who doesn't change and how He interacts with our foolishness!

While we will be tackling Jacob's biography one moment and chapter at a time, there is value to reading through the whole thing in one sitting. This will help you grasp the full narrative and pick up themes woven throughout the course of his life.

*“Jacob is an amazingly contemporary figure. The things that he deals with in life are the very same things we all deal with. He's the least hero-like character that I can imagine. And yet when you think about how God reveals Himself to people in the Old Testament, He uses as His moniker the name of Jacob; 'I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.' What Grace, what overwhelming Grace!” - Gary Glover*





# BLESSING

Gen 27

## PREPARE

When we want something really badly it can be a struggle to release our desire in trust to God. It is not uncommon to resort to manipulation, deceit, striving, and grasping at what we can to control outcomes and to accomplish our will. Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Esau all have their own desires for who gets the blessing and their own plans for bringing it about. Not only does this family demonstrate an absence of trust among each other, they are not trusting God and things get pretty ugly. While we might think our own attempts at controlling outcomes are 'not so bad' it is wise for us to acknowledge our root issue is the same. When we sew patterns of striving in our lives we really do bring harm to our relationships. As you read pay attention to what each family member loses as a result of everyone's behavior and how the Lord's will prevails in the midst of it all.

Pray

asking the Holy Spirit to help you understand God's word.

Read Genesis 27  
and answer the following questions.

Review Genesis 25:21-26. What did God promise Rebekah about her boys?

Summarize Isaac and Rebekah's actions

Based on the lengths Isaac and Rebekah go to regarding who gets the blessing, what does this tell you about its significance?

Read Hebrews 11:20. At what point do you think Isaac surrendered in faith?

From vs 28-29,37 summarize Isaac's blessing to Jacob.

How does Jacob's character match the meaning of his name? (vs. 35-36)

**Read through Genesis 27 again.**

What impact does the family's dysfunction have on Jacob and Esau's relationship?

Think about times in your life when you've attempted to manipulate or force a situation. What aspects of God's character do you find most comforting or helpful for moving forward in trust?

*I blessed him—and indeed he will be blessed*



## ATTEND

## REFLECT

What is your main takeaway from this passage?

What challenged you or encouraged you?

What did you learn about the character of God?

How did this week's study affect your perspective on God, yourself, and/or your life?

## ACT

Note **one specific thing** you can do this week to put into practice what you learned from this passage?

Note **one specific person** you can share something you learned.

Name **one specific change** you will make in how you relate more deeply to God who **Prevails**. *(He proves superior in strength, power, and influence)*

Who will you tell so they can support you as you act on God's word?



# COVENANT

Gen 28-29

## PREPARE

After a disastrous outcome of his deceit, Jacob runs away from home. Will the promised blessing be lost? Jacob has no family or land—he has nothing! All throughout Genesis we have seen many examples of God coming down to those who are not seeking Him, calling out to Him, or reaching up to Him and this plot point of Jacob's life is no different. God comes to Jacob in a dream showing access to His presence opened and His work throughout the earth taking place. It is true that Jacob's story did not have to go the way it is going. The choices he and his family made could have been different and created a different family dynamic. And also it is true that God is bigger and able to overcome it all. As you read, pay special attention to the promise God makes to Jacob, God's care of Leah and who begins to show signs of trust in God as the source of their satisfaction.

Pray  
asking the Holy Spirit to help you understand God's word.

Read Genesis 28-29  
and answer the following questions.

Where is Jacob? What is he running from? Why a rock for a pillow?

What does this setting reveal as to how things are going for Jacob?

What do angels ascending and descending signify?

Compare and contrast Genesis 12:1-3, Genesis 26:2-5 with Genesis 28:13-15

Contrast God's promises to Jacob with Jacob's requirements of God.

Read Genesis 29:26 - What reason did Laban give for his deceit?

How do you think Laban's words landed for Jacob given his past?

How is the family pattern of favoritism and competition between siblings present in Laban's family? How are Jacob and Leah similar?

## Read through Genesis 28-29 again

What comfort do you take from God's illustration given in Jacob's dream?

Read John 1:51 – how is Jesus like the steps Jacob sees?

How does God provide and care for Leah? What do we know about Judah that she wouldn't have known at the time?

*the angels of God were ascending and descending*

## ATTEND

## REFLECT

What is your main takeaway from this passage?

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How did this week's study affect your perspective on God, yourself, and/or your life?

## ACT

Note **one specific thing** you can do this week to put into practice what you learned from this passage?

Note **one specific person** you can share something you learned with.

Name **one specific change** you will make in how you relate more deeply to God who **is Accessible**. *(Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. Hebrews 4:16)*

Who will you tell so they can support you as you act on God's word?





# MESSY

## PREPARE

Gen 30

Just because things go our way or we give God credit and praise, does not mean that we are interpreting things correctly. God's design for marriage is one man and one woman. God's design for his people is honesty, integrity, and seeking Him above all else. Jacob grew up in a competitive and divided family and creates for himself a competitive and divided family. And yet – God is at work within the mess they create and their choices do not negate God's grace! What a comfort that is! It is good and wise to break unhealthy patterns in our own families for the benefit of our lives and future generations. *And* we can take comfort in God's continued pursuit of each of our hearts in the midst of the messes we create. As you read, watch for the ways idolatry, superstition, and faith are mixed up and how this mixture contributes to the unhealthy ways Jacob's family functions and relates to God.

### Pray

asking the Holy Spirit to help you understand God's word.

Read Genesis 30  
and answer the following questions.

What are Rachel and Leah competing for? Why?

What methods do Rachel and Leah use to accomplish their goals?

How is their understanding of God's character and ways incomplete and immature?

What arrangement do Jacob and Laban make regarding Jacob's wages?

Based on past behavior, should Laban and Jacob trust each other? Why or why not?

How does Laban attempt to cheat Jacob?

How does Jacob attempt to cheat Laban?

According to Genesis 31:10-13 was it Jacob's clever stick method that caused him to be successful and prosperous? Explain.

### Read through Genesis 30 again

Where have you misunderstood God's character and favor based on things turning out the way you did *or did not* want?

It can be difficult to recognize areas where we have mixed up idolatry, superstition, and faith. How have you experienced help addressing these things through God's word, prayer, and fellowship with believers?

*send me on my way so I can go back home*

## ATTEND

## REFLECT

What is your main takeaway from this passage?

What challenged you or encouraged you?

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How did this week's study affect your perspective on God, yourself, and/or your life?

## ACT

Note **one specific thing** you can do this week to put into practice what you learned from this passage?

Note **one specific person** you can share something you learned with.

Name **one specific change** you will make in how you relate more deeply to God who **Overcomes**. *(The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. John 1:5, )*

Who will you tell so they can support you as you act on God's word?



# RETURN

## PREPARE

Gen 31-32:21

When Jacob left home, he fled from Esau to Laban afraid, alone, and owning nothing. Now he flees from Laban to Esau, still afraid but no longer alone and with great wealth. During his time with Laban, he has been cheated, deceived, and taken advantage of. Jacob has also continued using his learned pattern of deception to get what he wants. But God has kept His promise to be with Jacob, to give him children, to bring him back to the land, and to continue working out His plan of salvation for the world through Jacob's family. Jacob is still learning who God is and how to trust Him over and above his own intellect and schemes. He lives with an inner restlessness and seeks to fill the void of his heart with things other than God. In the midst of all of this, God calls Jacob back and Jacob answers that call and heads home. He leans on his own understanding in the practical aspects of his return, but he returns nonetheless. After Jacob deals with Laban he turns his focus ahead to the problem of Esau. Does Esau still want to kill him or could his anger have cooled over the years? As you read, pay attention to the ways Jacob is growing along with the ways God meets him in his fear.

### Pray

asking the Holy Spirit to help you understand God's word.

Read Genesis 31-32:21  
and answer the following questions.

Why are Laban's sons upset with Jacob?

How many years has Jacob been in Paddan Aram (see 31:41)

Why does Jacob finally decide to leave?

What did Rachel steal?

How did God protect Jacob from Laban?

What does the pillar/heap signify about Jacob and Laban's relationship?

Why do you think God had his angels meet Jacob?

### Read through Genesis 31-32:21 again

List out Jacob's gift to Esau.

Summarize the different parts to Jacob's prayer.

What phrases or actions show Jacob's fear? What phrases or actions show Jacob's faith?

*The Lord said to Jacob, "Go back. . . I will be with you."*



## ATTEND

## REFLECT

What is your main takeaway from this passage?

What challenged you or encouraged you?

What did you learn about the character of God?

How did this week's study affect your perspective on God, yourself, and/or your life?

## ACT

Note **one specific thing** you can do this week to put into practice what you learned from this passage?

Note **one specific person** you can share something you learned with.

Name **one specific change** you will make in how you relate more deeply to God who **Commits**. *(to bind or obligate oneself, as by pledge or assurance; devote or engage oneself to a person or thing)*

Who will you tell so they can support you as you act on God's word?



# WRESTLE

Gen 32:22-33

## PREPARE

Jacob has prayed and sought God's help. He has planned and sought to appease Esau with gifts. He has protected his family and separated himself from them. He's done all he knows to do to deal with the problem at hand. And God's response to Jacob? He wrestles with him all night long as tho they are equally matched, and then with a mere touch, God clobbers him!<sup>1</sup> What in the world?! God prepares Jacob to meet Esau by maiming him? Jacob will walk with a limp for the rest of his life from this encounter with the Living God, but that is not all that happens here. God asks Jacob some poignant questions that get to the core of his identity. Jacob may be meeting Esau with a limp yes, but he is also meeting Esau with a new understanding. God has begun the process of healing Jacob's inner wounds and he begins to relate more honestly with his brother. He still falls short of full honesty with Esau and full obedience to God's command to return to Bethel and his family will pay dearly for it. (Gen 34) But He is changing. As you read be watching for these indicators of transformation and what brings them about.

### Pray

asking the Holy Spirit to help you understand God's word.

Read Genesis 32:22-33  
and answer the following questions.

When did Jacob know who he was wrestling?

What could 'the man' be alluding to with his question in vs. 27?

After Jacob's hip is injured, what does he do?

How is Genesis 33:4 similar to Luke 15:11-32?

What actions and words demonstrate Jacob's repentance over stealing the blessing from Esau?

Where did God tell Jacob to go? (see 31:3, 13) What is significant about this location?

Where is Jacob settling? (33:17-20) How many miles from Bethel is this?

Read 1 Samuel 15:22. Has Jacob given God obedience or sacrifice?

### Read Genesis 32:22-33 again

Who initiated the wrestling match?

How did this wrestling match prepare Jacob to meet Esau given that it weakened him physically?

*I will not let you go unless you bless me!*

## ATTEND

## REFLECT

What is your main takeaway from this passage?

What challenged you or encouraged you?

What did you learn about the character of God?

How did this week's study affect your perspective on God, yourself, and/or your life?

## ACT

Note **one specific thing** you can do this week to put into practice what you learned from this passage?

Note **one specific person** you can share something you learned with.

Name **one specific change** you will make in how you relate more deeply to God who **Clobbers**. (*"We must know we serve a God who is greater than us, and we cannot conquer much of anything until He conquers us."* - David Guzak)

Who will you tell so they can support you as you act on God's word?





# COVENANT

## PREPARE

Gen 34-36

Jacob's detour in Shechem costs his family dearly with the rape of his daughter and the retribution his sons enact. After Jacob's remarkable encounter with God, we are told of one of the lowest points in his family and that his household has acquired many foreign gods. How can that be? We might prefer the narrator to leave out horrific and faithless moments in the lives of God's people, but that would paint an incomplete picture of their need for God's grace. When Jacob returns, God again changes his name and throughout the rest of his life we will see both natures at play - sometimes he is Jacob the deceiver, other times he is Israel, surrendered to God. So too with our own faith journey. Romans 7-8, Ephesians 4:20-32 and Galatians 5:16-26 speak of this battle between our old self and our new identity in Christ. Jacob's wrestle with God marks the *beginning* of His new nature, not the full completion of it. As you read look honestly at the mixture of cowardice, failure, depravity, idolatry, return, repentance, and restoration.

Pray

asking the Holy Spirit to help you understand God's word.

Read Genesis 34-36  
and answer the following questions.

What is Jacob's sons' view towards women and towards what has happened to their sister?

Based on Genesis 17 what makes Jacob's sons actions deceptive.

What two commands did God give Jacob in 35:1

Before Jacob could return, what did he instruct his family to do? Why? (35:2)

Why do you think Jacob buried the idols under the oak tree at Shechem?

Compare and Contrast God's words at Bethel. (Genesis 28:13-15 with 35:9-12)

What does Chapter 36 tell us about Esau and his descendants?

**Read Genesis 34-36 again.**

What do you learn about the danger of compromise and the grace of God from these chapters?

What moments from chapter 35 do you think carry significance to Jacob?

Why did God not quit on Jacob?

*you will no longer be called Jacob*

## ATTEND

## REFLECT

What is your main takeaway from this passage?

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## ACT

Note **one specific thing** you can do this week to put into practice what you learned from this passage?

Note **one specific person** you can share something you learned with.

Name **one specific change** you will make in how you relate more deeply to God who **Restores**. *(He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Psalm 23:3)*

Who will you tell so they can support you as you act on God's word?



## SUMMARY OF PART 3

Take a moment to reflect and note your main takeaways.

Which of God's attributes do you find most meaningful?

How did your understanding of Grace deepen through your study of Jacob and his family?

Jacob spent much of his life striving for love, acceptance and worth. How did God meet him in his wounds and heart-ache?

*In contrast to 'the account' of Esau and his land and kings (36), 'the account' of Jacob shows his flocks and family as nomads who eventually become slaves in Egypt. (37-50) Here we have the Worlds work and movement through the mighty, the first-born, the smart, beautiful and powerful contrasted with God's work and movement through the ugly, the weak, small, and insignificant. We see this pattern woven all throughout scripture culminating with God coming to earth as a baby, born to die a criminal's death. He comes through scheming Jacob, not rugged Esau, through homely, rejected Leah, not beautiful, beloved Rachel. So it is with us; "But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us." (2 Corinthians 4:7)*

## GOD'S ATTRIBUTES FROM PART 3

- Prevails (Gen 27 BLESSING)
- Accessible (Gen 28-29 COVENANT)
- Overcomes (Gen 30 MESSY)
- Commits (Gen 31-32:21 RETURN)
- Clobbers (Gen 32:22-33 WRESTLE)
- Restores (Gen 34-36 COVENANT)

## FOR YOUR CONTINUED PURSUIT



Sermon Series on the Life of Jacob. From [gracecomm.org/messages](https://gracecomm.org/messages), scroll through past Sunday Morning messages or visit: [www.gracecomm.org/media/series/tmnww8m/gospel-in-the-life-of-jacob](https://www.gracecomm.org/media/series/tmnww8m/gospel-in-the-life-of-jacob)

*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.*



## GOD'S ATTRIBUTES FROM PART 1

- Creator (Gen 1:1-2:3 CREATION)
- Gives Life (Gen 2:4-25 HUMANKIND)
- Pursues (Gen 3 FALLEN)
- Warns (Gen 4-5 HUMANITY)
- Rescues (Gen 6-8 FLOOD)
- Promise Keeper (Gen 9 COVENANT)
- Intervenes (Gen 10-11 BABEL)

## GOD'S ATTRIBUTES FROM PART 2

- Calls (Gen 12 CALLED)
- Reassures (Gen 13-14 GOING)
- Shield & Great Reward (Gen 15 COVENANT)
- Sees (Gen 16-17 COMMITMENT)
- Draws Near (Gen 18 CONVERSATION)
- Judges Sin (Gen 19 CONSEQUENCES)
- Promise Keeper (Gen 20-21 LAUGHTER)
- Provides (Gen 22 TESTED)
- Guides (Gen 23-24 PROVISION)
- With Us (Gen 25-26 COVENANT)



