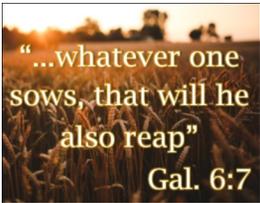


Poetic Justice

Jacob painfully experienced the concept of “reaping what you sow.” While starting off as a deceiver, he spent many years suffering from the sour end of deception. Early in life Jacob took advantage of his brother’s hunger and desperation, and used food as a bargaining chip for Esau’s birthright. Later in life, Jacob’s uncle Laban would frequently change Jacob’s wages, wielding power and using Jacob’s helplessness against him. Jacob was also tricked into marrying the wrong sister. But then again, he had tricked his father into blessing the wrong son! Jacob had to learn the hard way that “what goes around comes around.” In the end, the hard lessons taught him to trust in God instead of relying on deceit and trickery. We would be wise to learn from Jacob’s mistakes instead of repeating them ourselves. Remember, “whatever a man sows, that will he also reap.” (Gal. 6:7)



Questions

Try to find the answers to these questions as you read through Genesis 12-26 this week. If you have children, go over these questions with them and have them try to answer the questions also!

- 1) Which brother was a hairy man? Jacob or Esau? _____
- 2) What name did Jacob give to the place where he had a dream of angels ascending and descending a stairway between heaven and earth? _____
- 3) How many years did Jacob end up working in order to marry Rachel? _____
- 4) Rachel’s maidservant was named _____ and Leah’s maidservant was named _____.
- 5) Which one of Jacob’s wives stole Laban’s household gods? _____
- 6) Why was Jacob’s name changed to Israel? _____
- 7) Which two of Jacob’s sons killed the men of Shechem? _____
- 8) What nation/nationality came from Esau? _____

Trusting God: Sometimes the Lord’s help comes in unexpected ways. Consider what God did just before Jacob met Esau. Jacob was terrified that his brother was coming to kill him. He worried for his family, and made preparations so that as many as possible would live. The night before the brothers met, the Lord appeared to Jacob and wrestled with him. In the end, Jacob was left with an injured hip and a limp. Not exactly how you want to enter a battle! Further, the only blessing Jacob received was a name change. But God had promised to protect Jacob, and He did. God didn’t lead Jacob into the hands of an angry brother; He led him to a beautiful reunion and a peaceful reentry to his homeland. Sometimes, it is our weaknesses that teach us true strength, which comes from trusting God. To remember this, try memorizing the verse below this week!

Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

2 Corinthians 12:10

“That You May Grow Thereby...” 3

A weekly Bible reading plan



Genesis 27-36

Jacob: The Father of a Nation

Overview

Having read about Abraham and Isaac, we now come to the third major individual of Genesis; Jacob. The name ‘Jacob’ means “he grasps the heel” which is an idiom meaning “he deceives.” Jacob definitely lived up to his name early in life. Aided by his mother, Jacob was successful in tricking his father to bless him instead of Esau (ch. 27), but this trickery angered his brother, and Jacob had to flee Canaan for his life. Jacob settled with his uncle Laban, where he fell in love with Rachel. He agreed to work for 7 years to marry her, but then Jacob got a taste of his own medicine. He was actually married to Leah, Rachel’s older sister, and had to agree to another 7 years of labor in order to marry the woman he loved. Between these two women and their maidservants, they would bare 12 children that would become the 12 tribes of Israel. Jacob’s travels taught him to trust in and rely on the Lord, and the man that returned to Canaan was a very different individual than the man that left. After wrestling with God (32:22-32), Jacob’s name was changed to Israel. Chapters 33-36 tell of Jacob’s reunion with Esau (a happy event!) and his travels throughout Canaan. Jacob might look like an unlikely hero, but his story is one of sanctification, showing the transforming power of following God!

Suggested Reading Schedule

Monday: Gen. 27-28

Tuesday: Gen. 29-30

Wednesday: Gen. 31-32

Thursday: Gen. 33-34

Friday: Gen. 35-36

Visions of God

Two key events in the narrative of Jacob’s life are his visions of God. The first occurs in Genesis 28:10-22 when Jacob is fleeing the land of Canaan (the land promised to Abraham and Isaac.) The next major vision occurs in Genesis 32:22-32 when he’s coming back into Canaan. If you want some deeper study, re-read these passages, and look for or ask yourself the following questions:

- ◇ What are the key differences in the visions?
- ◇ What are the key similarities?
- ◇ What changes do you see in Jacob between the visions?
- ◇ What changes do you see in Jacob after the last appearance?



Jacob’s Children

Genesis 29:31—30:22; 35:16-18

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Leah | 1. Simeon |
| | 2. Reuben |
| | 3. Levi |
| | 4. Judah |
| Bilhah
(Rachel’s
Servant) | 9. Gad |
| | 10. Asher
Dinah (daughter) |
| Zilpah
(Leah’s
Servant) | 5. Dan |
| | 6. Naphtali |
| Rachel | 7. Issachar |
| | 8. Zebulun |
| | 11. Joseph |
| | 12. Benjamin |