

JACOB'S TRIALS LED HIM TO VICTORY

Lesson Aim: Whatever we do to others, it will be done to us. We must forsake our sin and trust God.

Suggestion: Have the students read the Scriptures and answer the questions in the student lesson and insert the following questions where they fit the lesson for class discussion.

Jacob deceived his father and later he was deceived by Laban who made life miserable for Jacob. God helped Jacob, but Jacob did not forsake his sin until he wrestled with God.. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap" (Gal 6:7).

Why did God let Jacob leave Canaan? 27:41-28:3

First, God let Jacob leave Canaan because Esau threatened to kill Jacob (cf. 27:41ff). Second, Jacob needed a wife that was not of a cursed race, so God could bless the world through his seed. Jacob went to Haran, where his relatives lived, to find a wife. Even though Jacob's life would be filled with sin and sorrow, God knew that Jacob would return to Canaan and serve Him. God can use men's failures to accomplish His purposes because He knows the decisions that they will make and fits them into His sovereign plan.

What did the LORD say to Jacob in a dream at a place he named Bethel? 28:13-15

The LORD identified Himself as the God of Abraham and Isaac. The LORD assured Jacob that the land on which he was lying would be given to him and his posterity. Furthermore, he would have seed as much as the dust of the earth and all the families of the earth would be blessed through them (this will happen when Christ returns to earth and reigns as King of all nations). The LORD extended the Abrahamic Covenant to Jacob, even though he was an unbeliever at that time (this is evidence of the LORD's foreknowledge). The LORD knew that Jacob would trust in Him twenty years later after a wrestling match with him before he met with Esau (32:24-30). The LORD had promised to be with him and to keep him in Haran and would bring him back to this land where He would fulfill His promises regarding Israel (Christ will return to earth and gather all Israelite believers to the land of Canaan and give it to them to fulfill His promise to Abraham [15:18], to Isaac [28:2-3] and to Jacob [28:13-14]). All believers will be with Christ in His Millennial Kingdom (Rev 3:21; 20:4, 6).

How did Jacob respond to the LORD's message? 28:17-22

When Jacob awakened, he was afraid and recognized that the LORD had been there. He set up the stone he used as his head support and anointed it with oil and named the place Bethel, "House of God." This stone was not an object of worship but a memorial. Jacob responded to God's revelation in a conditional manner. He vowed to worship God and give Him a tenth of all he had if God would protect him, provide for him, and bring him back to his homeland. This was a most significant episode in Jacob's life for it signified that God was calling this deceiver to have fellowship with Him. God wants fellowship with all people, but He only draws those that hear and will respond to His call (Jn 6:44-45).

How did the LORD bless Jacob before he accepted Him as his God? 29:1-31:3

He led him to meet Rachel when he first arrived in Haran (29:1-6).

He gave him 11 sons and a daughter (29:32-30:24). He gave him great wealth in livestock (30:43-31:1).

He told him to return to Canaan and He would be with him (31:3, 11-13).

It will also honor God for us to count the blessings that He has given us (Eph 1:3-14).

How did God protect Jacob from Laban and Esau? 31:14-55; 32:1-23; 33:1-16

When Laban heard that Jacob had left with his family and cattle without telling him, he pursued him for seven days to take his children and cattle from him, but God warned him not to speak good or bad to him. They met and Laban finally made peace with Jacob and went home.

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When Jacob told Esau that he was coming home, Esau came to meet him with 400 men. This caused great fear in Jacob and he called for the God of his fathers to protect him (32:9-12); Esau warmly embraced him (33:4).

God also says to us, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you. So that we may boldly say, The Lord *is* my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Heb 13:5-6).

Why did God wrestle with Jacob? 32:24-30

Recall that God appeared to Jacob at a place he called Bethel, "the house of God." God promised Jacob that he would be with him and will keep him and bring him back to his land in Canaan. He thought that he was alone, but God promised to be with him. He had never had such an experience and it deeply moved him. He took the stone that he had used for a headrest during the night, stood it upright and poured oil on it to mark it as a memorial. Then he made a vow: "If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God" (Gen 28:20-21). God had been with Jacob for twenty years and blessed him richly, so now was the time to see if Jacob was sincere in his vow. The LORD wrestled with him physically and spiritually to help him keep his vow. That meant he would have to turn from his sins and turn to God to control his life. He resisted the LORD until He put Jacob 's thigh out of joint. Now all that Jacob could do was to hold on to the LORD and he would not let go until the LORD blessed him. The LORD had to bring Jacob to the end of his own strength so that he would depend completely on Him. That is when the LORD became his God. We should be thankful that the Lord wrestles with us to convert us and bring us into fellowship with Him. We have no natural desire to fellowship with Him, but when He wrestles with us, we are told to seek Him while He may be found and call on Him while He is near (Isa 55:6). We are told to make the decision to let Him save our souls, If we do not give Him permission to save us when He wrestles with us, we will be lost in Hell (Jn 3:36; 5:24).