

Bible Stories for Adults

Jacob Flees and Returns

Genesis 28 - 36

Opening

Gathering: Tell of a time you tried to deceive someone, only to be deceived yourself.
How did it make you feel about what you had tried to do?

Today's Focus: To recognize that God keeps His promises, even when we don't keep ours and when we don't trust Him as we should.

Key Verses: *God's gifts and His call are irrevocable.* Romans 11:29

I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go ... I will not leave you until I have done what I promised you. Genesis 28:15

May the Lord keep watch between you and me when we are away. Genesis 31:49-50

Opening Prayer

Lesson

It's All in a Name (*Genesis 25*)

- How did Jacob and Esau get their names? = *He grasps the heel* means *he deceives* (pulling my leg)
Genesis 25:24-26 = Esau (*hairy*) was born hairy, Jacob (*he grasps the heel*) held Esau's heel
- How did Esau personify the wild, rugged nature implied by his name?
Genesis 25:27-28 = He was an outdoorsman, a skillful hunter; Jacob was indoors mama's boy
- How did Jacob personify the deceitful con-artist nature implied by his name?
Genesis 25:29-34 = Stole Esau's first-born birthright for stew; shows Esau's poor discernment

A Stolen Blessing (*Genesis 27:1-41*)

- How did Jacob's deceit show itself later in life?
Genesis 27:6-7, 14-19 = He deceived his father Isaac to get God's blessing in place of Esau
- What blessings did Isaac end up giving to Jacob and Esau?
Genesis 27:28-30, 38-40 = God's promises to Abraham passed to Jacob, Esau cursed
- Was Esau cursed because Jacob did right in deceiving Isaac for God's blessing?
Romans 9:10-18 = No, result was part of God's plan from the start (Jacob's approach wasn't)
- How did Esau feel about what had happened?
Genesis 27:36, 41 = Hated Jacob for it and planned to kill him after Isaac died

Jacob Flees (*Genesis 27:42-28:9*)

- What did Rebekah plan to do to protect her favorite son Jacob?
Genesis 27:42-45 = Send him to her brother Laban until Esau's anger subsided
- How did Rebekah again use deceit to convince Isaac to send Jacob away?
Genesis 27:46-28:2 = Had Isaac send Jacob away to find a wife from the family
- Did Isaac do this to get rid of his less favorite and deceiving son?
Genesis 28:3-5 = No, he saw God's hand in blessing Jacob, remembered call to keep separate
- How did Esau react when he learned why Jacob left?
Genesis 28:6-9 = Saw he was wrong marrying outside the family, married Ishmael's daughter

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Jacob's Ladder (*Genesis 28:10-22*)

- How did God confirm to Jacob that he was the heir to His blessing? = After 40 miles over mountains
Genesis 28:10-12 = Came to him in a vision as Jacob traveled to Haran
Stairway was probably like the stairs on the sloping side of a ziggurat (temple-tower like Babel)
- What promises did God make to Jacob in this vision? = Everything He had promised to Abraham
Genesis 28:13-15 = Promised land, many descendants, protection, blessed to be a blessing
- How did Jacob respond to this vision God gave him? = Abraham built an altar at Bethel (Gen 12:8)
Genesis 28:16-19 = He worshiped God and consecrated the place
- How did Jacob respond to the blessings God had promised to him? = Conditions promised in v13-15
Genesis 28:20-22 = Because of promises, pledged to be faithful & promised to return a tithe

Jacob Meets Uncle Laban (*Genesis 29:1-14*)

- How was Jacob able to find the family of his uncle he didn't know in a place he didn't know?
Genesis 29:1-2, 4-6 (1-6) = God led him to the right place at the right time to meet Rachel
- How did God show His presence with Jacob during this meeting?
Genesis 29:3, 7-10 (7-10) = God gave strength to move the stone that usually required many
- How openly was Jacob received by his uncle?
Genesis 29:13-14a (11-14a) = Accepted him as part of the family

Like Nephew, Like Uncle (*Genesis 29:14-30*)

- What pay did Jacob want for his work as a shepherd for Laban? = Rachel – *ewe*, Leah – *wild cow*
Genesis 29:14b-18 = The hand of Rachel in marriage after 7 years of work
- How did Laban respond to Jacob's request? = He deceived the deceiver
Genesis 29:19-23 = Accepted, but then switched daughters on Jacob at the wedding
- Where had Laban's deceitful nature been evident before?
Genesis 24:29-31, 53 = Catered to Abraham's servant because of riches he saw
- How did Laban explain his action and use it to get 7 more years of work out of Jacob?
Genesis 29:26-27, 30 (26-30) = Custom to marry older first, offered Rachel for 7 more years

Jacob's Children (*Genesis 29:31-30:24*) = Write names of sons on board in order under mothers' names

- How did God respond to Jacob's love for Rachel and dislike for Leah? = Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah
Genesis 29:31 (31-35) = God gave Leah 4 sons, kept Rachel barren (Jacob loved her more)
- How did Rachel respond to Leah's fertility and her barrenness? = Dan, Naphtali
Genesis 30:1-3 (1-8) = She had Jacob have 2 sons through her maid Bilhah, like grandpa
- What did Leah think of her sister's tricks? = Gad, Asher
Genesis 30:9 (9-16) = She had Jacob have 2 sons through her maid Zilpah, Also tried magic
- Did Leah regret doing this when God opened her womb again? = Issachar, Zebulun, Dinah
Genesis 30:17-18 (17-21) = No, she thought it pleased God; had 2 more sons & a daughter
- Notice the meanings of the names given Jacob's sons and compare with their blessings in Genesis 49
- What did God do for Jacob after ending the competition at 11 kids? = Joseph
Genesis 30:22-24 = He blessed Rachel with Joseph (name – asked God for another son)
- How did Jacob feel about this son of his loved wife? = Next week's story, Chose favorites like parents
Genesis 37:3-4 = He loved him more than the others, they hated Joseph for it
- What happened when Rachel had her second son? = Benjamin
Genesis 35:16-19 = She died in childbirth bearing Benjamin

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Jacob's Becomes Wealthy (*Genesis 30:25-31:12*)

- Why did Laban want Jacob to stay longer than the 14 years? = Blessed to be a blessing
Genesis 30:27-28 (25-30) = He knew that God had blessed him by Jacob's presence
- What compensation did Jacob request?
Genesis 30:32 (31-33) = No pay, just the blemished livestock
- How did Laban try to cheat Jacob out of his wages?
Genesis 30:35 (34-36) = He cleaned the flocks of blemished animals before Jacob could
- Had Jacob made this request because he knew God would provide for him and bless him?
Genesis 30:37-39 (37-42) = No, he planned to cheat Laban out of flocks by divination
A vivid sight during conception was thought to leave its mark on the embryo
- Did God punish Jacob for his lack of trust?
Genesis 30:43 = No, He blessed Jacob despite his faithlessness
- Did Jacob recognize these blessings were from God?
Genesis 31:5-9 (1-9) = Yes, only God could provide the blessings despite Laban's efforts
- What helped Jacob recognize that God's hand was at work?
Genesis 31:11-12 (10-12) = God told him so in a vision

Jacob Flees From Laban (*Genesis 31:13-21*)

- What else did God tell Jacob in this vision?
Genesis 31:13 (3) = To leave Laban and return to Canaan
- How did his wives feel about leaving their home and family?
Genesis 31:14-16 = They no longer felt like part of the family, Unhappy with Laban's deceit
- How did Jacob's deceitful nature show itself in this leaving?
Genesis 31:20-21 (17-21) = He snuck out and didn't tell Laban he was leaving

Laban Chases Jacob (*Genesis 31:22-55*)

- How did Laban respond to Jacob leaving without a goodbye, and why? = Hundreds of miles
Genesis 31:22-23 (1-2) = Chased after him, felt that Jacob had taken what was his
- Did Laban punish Jacob or try to take back his livestock and wealth? Why or why not?
Genesis 31:26-29 (24-29) = No, because God had warned him to take care with Jacob
- If he was unable to take things back from Jacob, why did he continue with the chase?
Genesis 31:30, 34-35 (30-35) = Wanted to find the gods Rachel had stolen, Rachel deceived
- How did Jacob respond to his encounter with Laban?
Genesis 31:36, 42 (36-42) = He had dealt respectfully although Laban had deceived
- How did Jacob and Laban decide to bury the hatchet? = Mizpah means watchtower - God will watch
Genesis 31:44-45, 49-53 (43-55) = Made a covenant of peace in God's name

Jacob Comes Back Home (*Genesis 32:1-12*)

- How did God confirm to Jacob that he was doing the right thing?
Genesis 32:1-2 = Sent his angels to meet him as he entered Canaan
- What did Jacob find important to do as he neared his father's land?
Genesis 32:3 (3-5) = Prepare Esau for his return – Let Esau know he wouldn't take anything
- How did Esau reply to the news of his brother's return?
Genesis 32:6 = Headed out to meet Jacob with 400 men
- How did Jacob respond to this news? = Divided everything into 2 groups in case Esau attacked one
Genesis 32:10-11 (7-12) = Thanked God, asked for protection, reminded of promises

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Jacob Wrestles With God (*Genesis 32:22-32*)

How did God respond to Jacob's request? = Object lesson that struggles now are with God, not men
Genesis 32:24, 28 (22-32) = Changed name to Israel (*he struggles with God*) - life transition
What reminder did God leave with Jacob of this encounter?
Genesis 32:25, 31 = An injury at his hip would be ever-present reminder

Jacob Manipulates Esau Again (*Genesis 33*)

What had Jacob done the day before to manipulate Esau in preparation of their meeting?
Genesis 32:13, 16, 20 (13-21) = Send herds in stages as gifts to prepare Esau
How did he show his preferential love for his family when he met up with Esau?
Genesis 33:2-3 (1-3) = Put the most expendable in front; seven bows signify total submission
Did the gifts have their desired effect? = Gifts would make Esau indebted
Genesis 33:4, 8-11 (4-11) = Yes, Jacob poured on the flattery and made Esau keep the gifts
How did Jacob deceive Esau one last time?
Genesis 33:13-14, 17 (12-20) = Sent Esau ahead, promised to meet in Seir, went to Succoth

Dinah and the Shechemites (*Genesis 34:1-31*)

What happened to Jacob's daughter after settling near Shechem?
Genesis 34:2 (1-4) = Shechem, a local noble, raped her
Was the rape a spur-of-the-moment act or did he have other intentions?
Genesis 34:11-12 = No, he wanted to marry her
How did Jacob's sons use deception to get revenge? = Attacked & killed them while healing
Genesis 34:13, 15, 24-25 (5-31) = Made Shechem & men get circumcised
What lesson did this story give to the Israelites who would later return?
Genesis 34:14 = Not to intermix with uncircumcised, Jews were called to remain separate

Jacob Returns to Bethel (*Genesis 35:1-29*)

Did Jacob stay at Shechem after the incident? = Had everyone get rid of all idols, cleansed the family
Genesis 35:1-2, 5 (1-6) = No, they moved to Bethel as God commanded
How did God respond to Jacob's faithfulness in following Him back to Bethel?
Genesis 35:10-12 (7-15) = Restated his new name, repeated His promises
Who died after Jacob had returned to Canaan?
Genesis 35:19, 27-29 (16-29) = Rachel died in childbirth, Isaac died at 180 after seeing Jacob

Response

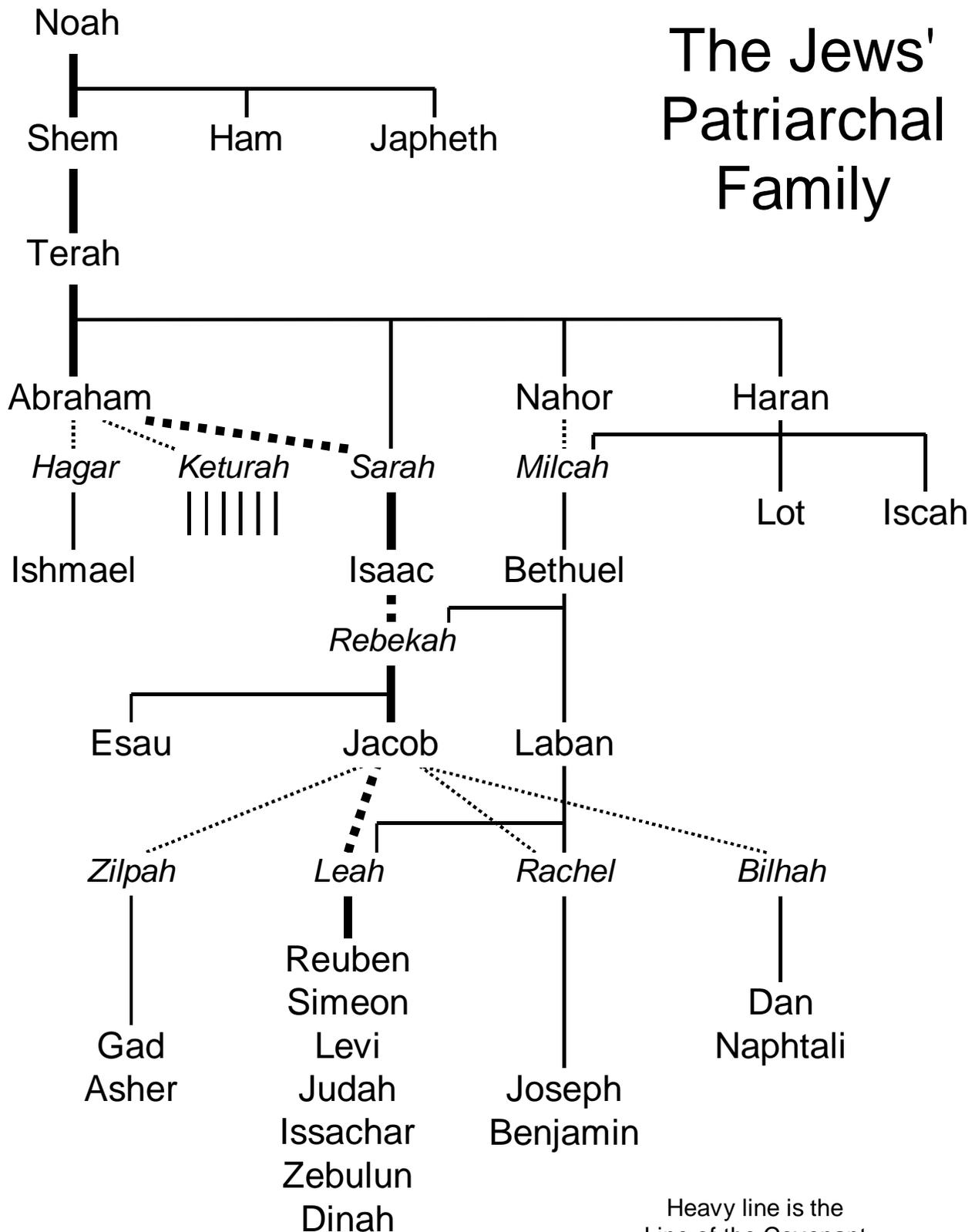
1. When have I held a grudge against someone when I should have forgiven them?
(*Genesis 27:41; 37:4; 50:15-21; 1 Samuel 17:20-30; Matthew 5:38-48; 2 Corinthians 2:5-11*)
2. Do I show preferential love to certain members of my family and less to others?
(*Genesis 17:18; 25:28; 29:30; 37:3-4; 48:17-20; 1 John 3:11-20*)
3. Do I say that I trust God, and then turn around and do things my own way?
(*Genesis 30:37-42; 31:20-21; 1 Samuel 28; Proverbs 14:12; Isaiah 55:8; Matthew 14:28-31*)
4. Do I struggle with God to get closer to Him or to go further from Him?
(*Genesis 32:24-32; Ephesians 6:10-12; Job 30:20-23; 40:1-14; Colossians 1:28-2:3*)
5. Am I patient enough to wait 20 years for God to prepare me for His purpose?
(*Genesis 12:4; 31:38-42; 41:46; Joshua 14:6-11; Acts 7:20-23, 29-30, 34-36; 2 Peter 3:8-9*)

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The Jews' Patriarchal Family



Heavy line is the
Line of the Covenant