

The Journey

Series 03: Covenant

Week 18: Jacob – Son of the Promise?

We are indebted to [Ethnos360](#) for providing the basis for these lessons

Review (Where We Have Been)

Over the last month, we have moved into God working in one family.

Remember this is God's redemption story of humanity.

We have seen our God masterfully create: our world, and all that is in it (plants, animals, and man and woman). We have seen God create marriage for the man and the woman. We have seen man's rebellion (his attempt to go it alone without God) and God's first gospel (Gen. 3:15) and his plan for redemption through the cryptic seed. Then we begin to see the serpent/Satan's continual attack and warping of the things God gives and creates. Satan and sin ravage God's created world. But as we have seen. Nothing stops God's plan.

So, we have found that the cryptic seed is coming from one family. Abraham's family to be exact. God promised him 3 things: Land, Nation, and Leader.

Abraham is now dead and gone and today we meet Isaac's two sons.

Big Idea

Grace is God giving us that which we do not deserve.

With Abraham God called him when he was not even looking for him. God watched over and guided Abraham to the point of even making an everlasting set of promises (a covenant) with him. God always fulfills His promises.

So, despite Abraham's sinful missteps God gave him and Sarah a son named, Isaac. God always fulfills his promises to us.

It may not be in our time, but it is in His timing.

Information (What They Need to Know)

Moses is sitting in a tent and is transcribing God's dictation of God's History of the world. This is for those who have come out of Egypt as part of the Exodus. Who brought them out of Egypt? Whom are they following? What is He doing? How has God worked in humanity?

Abraham's Son, Isaac, marries Rebekah

Genesis 25:20-21 (ESV) and Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel the Aramean of Paddan-Aram, the sister of Laban the Aramean, to be his wife. **21** And Isaac prayed to the Lord for his wife, because she was barren. And the Lord granted his prayer, and Rebekah his wife conceived.

After 20 years of barrenness, Rebekah and Isaac have two sons.

Genesis 25:23 (ESV) And the Lord said to her, "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you shall be divided; the one shall be stronger than the other, the older shall serve the younger." **24** When her days to give birth were completed, behold, there were twins in her womb. **25** The first came out red, all his body like a hairy cloak, so they called his name Esau. **26** Afterward his brother came out with his hand holding Esau's heel, so his name was called Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them.

Esau did not believe or value God's promises.

Esau was the firstborn. The older son. By the worldly system, he was the son to receive the blessing and a double portion of his inheritance (father's wealth). It is called primogeniture. As we are finding God has a completely different plan.

- Seth not Cain
- Shem not Ham or Japheth
- Abraham not Haran or Nahor
- Isaac not Ishmael
- Jacob not Esau
- Judah not Reuben or even Joseph
- Moses not Aaron
- David none of his brothers
- Solomon was the youngest

God has his own plan. God subverts ideas and expectations.

The promised deliverer would not come through the line of Esau.

Genesis 27 tells us that Esau was a skillful hunter.

We find that Esau has more in common with Cain than he does with his own brother, Jacob. He did not trust God like Abraham, Isaac and ultimately Jacob did. He was taught by Isaac and Rebekah all about God. All about the coming deliverer. And all about the promise of land, nation, and leader. He, no doubt, heard everything about his grandfather and his own mother's barrenness. And like so many he turned his back on God and the things of God. He chose a secular life, separate from God.

The New Testament helps bring clarity at times.

Hebrews 12: 16 (ESV) that no one is sexually immoral or unholy like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. **17** For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears.

At the end of Genesis 25 we have a very interesting interaction between Jacob and Esau. Esau could only think of the immediate and held no value for things long term. Because he was very hungry from being in the field, he gives up his birthright/inheritance (a double portion of Isaac's wealth) for a cup of red stew.

Esau gave up that which should have been priceless to him because he only lived in the moment. He only lived for his immediate satisfaction.

Fast forward to Genesis 27 Isaac is now much older. He is blind and his wife devises a plan to make sure the blessing goes according to what God told her Genesis 25:23 - "the older will serve the younger." And that Esau years ago flippantly gave his birthright to his brother. Isaac clearly favored his rugged son Esau and Rebekah favored Jacob. Favoring certain children is a whole other topic we will need to save for some other time. So, Rebekah devises a plan to trick Isaac so he will do as God directed. Esau again loses and as Hebrews says he finally grasped the importance of the blessing but it was far too late. Isaac tries to bless Esau but further reinforces that the blessings have gone to Jacob.

Esau tries to blame Jacob but remember, it was Esau that rejected his birthright. He rejected God. He cries and weeps not because he wants to turn and follow God but again it is because he wants immediate blessing and satisfaction.

Esau is one option. The option of rejection of God and his promises for immediate pleasure and satisfaction. It offers comfort and satisfaction in the immediate but long term it is empty and hollow. We find at the end of Genesis 26 that Esau wants to kill Jacob (Cain and Abel?) and he goes against his father and mother and marries multiple Hittite women who only caused problems in the family.

Esau's family line is forever known as Edomites (Edom means red in reference to his hair and the red stew) - If you have followed along with The Journey, you will remember the repeated encounters with Edom.

Let's look at the other side of the coin if you will.

Jacob believed God's promises

Jacob's name means, "to take by the heel" of "He Cheats."

And he certainly lives up to his name. I want to say at the outset that it is not that Jacob was some paragon of godliness or holiness. He certainly lives up to his name. We know that God chose Jacob. It was not because he was a good man. God chose that the deliverer would come through Jacob and his family as imperfect as it is. Remember all God must work with is sinners. Crooked, broken, sinful people. Jacob believed the words God gave to his mother. "The Older will serve the Younger." He believed the promises given to his Father and Grandfather for land, nation, and leader. Because God chose this devious liar of a man we can apply exactly what Tom said about Abraham Jacob's grandfather. "God works overtime to build us and our faith."

Jacob takes advantage of his brother. He tricks his father to receive the blessing. And after that, we know that Jacob needs to escape home because Esau is looking to kill him. So, Isaac and Rebekah send Jacob to Haran (where grandpa came from) to find a proper wife and to protect Jacob.

Jacob flees along on a 550-mile journey to Haran in Mesopotamia. He is alone, fleeing, at rock bottom. Wandering all that way is where we pick up Jacob.

Genesis 28:10 (ESV) Jacob left Beersheba and went toward Haran. **11** And he came to a certain place and stayed there that night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place to sleep. **12** And he dreamed, and behold, there was a ladder (staircase) set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven. And behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it! **13** And behold, the Lord stood above it and said, “I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring. **14** Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed. **15** Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land. For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.” **16** Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, “Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it.” **17** And he was afraid and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.”

God passes on the promises He had given to Abraham and Isaac

At that time Jacob did not have the early part of Genesis or any scripture like we do so this was how God spoke to him, in a dream. We see that God reaffirms his covenant with Jacob just as he did with Isaac and Abraham. Land, a nation, and a leader that would bless all the families of the earth. In his time of tremendous loneliness and abandonment, God reminds him that he is not alone.

But what about this staircase? I always thought it was cool that God showed Jacob a little behind the scenes of His work. But the meaning of that staircase is far bigger than that.

Jacob's dream is a contrast to Babel

If you remember the tower of Babel was where humanity tried to achieve control, salvation, security, and notoriety on their own terms apart from God. They reject God as their creator. Humanity has been pursuing and trying to achieve utopia and paradise on earth apart from Him.

This staircase on the other hand shows in spite of humanity's rejection God is still in authority and is still at work. God alone who stands above it is the true one in control. He is the only path to true security, and He carries all the notoriety.

God is at the top because the ladder is His. Jacob/ We would be stuck in our sin if not for God to plan and provide a way. Not by works or things we can do. We come to God with nothing. Empty-handed.

The ladder offers to raise us from out of our sin (just like Jacob) to the habitation or presence of God. Jacob like many of us is learning about God's grace. Jacob cannot manipulate his way into a relationship with God. The provision is from God Himself through the promised deliverer. Though broken we come to Him and He receives us. It takes us from the momentary pleasures of our world and introduces us to true life, true peace, true joy, and true satisfaction.

The ladder does not offer to improve fallen society or make people better. It takes us to God himself. The giver of all life. The God of heaven and the heaven of our God.

We just talked about, *whose the staircase is*. And *what the staircase offers*. Let's finally ask, *whom does the staircase represent?*

Application (What Do We Need to Do?)

John 1:43 follows the calling of Philip and Nathanael. Philip tells Nathanael to Come and See, Jesus. Jesus speaks to Nathanael and Nathanael asks how Jesus knows him. Jesus replies, "before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." Nathanael replied, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God? You are the King of Israel." Listen carefully to Jesus' reply to Nathanael.

John 1:50 (ESV) Jesus answered him, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these." **51** And he said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

Jesus performs his first miracle in Nathanael's hometown of Cana at a wedding.

Jesus is speaking of Himself. He is the deliverer promised. Jesus is the staircase by which humanity can have a relationship with God. The provision that God made for us to go to heaven is Christ alone. Sin severed our relationship back in Genesis 3. Man would be forever separated from God until Jesus. He made a complete

payment for our sins. The message that Jacob needed is the message that we need for our world today.

Listen to Jesus when he talks to Nicodemus in John 3 -

John 3:13 (ESV) No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.

Jesus is the only way.

John 14:6 (ESV) Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

There is only one way to escape the misery of sin in this world. God alone provided it. We cannot earn it or achieve it. It is a gift given by our loving gracious creator God. It is not to improve us. But to tear us out of our sin and to draw us into community with God. A restored relationship with our creator.

Jesus' work on the cross settled it all. It was His most vital work. Paying the price for our sins. Atoning for them. By taking our death. God said the payment for our sins is DEATH. Jesus Died for our sins. And thankfully he did not stay dead. He came to life three days later. Conquering the serpent. Crushing his head. And conquering death.

He arose and is sitting at the right hand of the Father. We have a choice. We either push away and reject God like Esau or in our sin and brokenness we can look upward to God and receive God's gift of new life/eternal life living and walking with Him and spending eternity with Him.

We all have that crystal clear choice.