

# Read through the Bible

Genesis  
Week 4



## Monday, November Fourth

Back in the day, the Great Explorations Children's Museum in St. Pete used to have a touch tunnel for kids. The idea was that a child would start at one end of a pitch-black tunnel and make their way through it by using their hands to guide the way. Before the kids would go through the tunnel, they were usually reminded by a staff member that if they got stuck or needed help, there would always be someone there for them. In today's passage, God assures Isaac that He will always be there for him.

*Read:* Genesis 26:1-35

*Reflect:* Use the passage to work through these questions

- What did Isaac do that was similar to what his father Abraham had done twice before? (see verse 7)
- How did Abimelek help Isaac see the error of his ways? (see verses 9-10)

Abimelek was a bit different than the previous leaders who had interacted with Abraham. In this case, Abimelek understood the consequences of what could have happened had one of his men slept with Rebekah, and he made sure Isaac knew this.

- Why did Abimelek come to visit Isaac after sending him away? (see verses 27-31)

In just a short time, God had significantly blessed Isaac and had turned him into a powerful individual within the region. Abimelek's desire to make a formal oath of peace with him after initially asking him to leave the region demonstrates just how much of a force Isaac had become.

*Respond:* Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

In today's passage, God comforted Isaac with these words as he found himself in the middle of a transition: "Do not be afraid, for I am with you" (v. 24). In what current situations and circumstances do you need to be reminded that God is with you?

## Tuesday, November Fifth

In *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back*, Cloud City leader Lando Calrissian welcomes members of the Rebel Alliance to his city and offers them safety from the evil Galactic Empire. However, as he opens a door and leads them into one of his guest rooms, they are greeted by Darth Vader and an army of stormtroopers. The Rebels quickly realize that they had been deceived by Lando. In today's passage, Isaac is deceived by members of his own family.

*Read:* Genesis 27:1-46

*Reflect:* Use the passage to work through these questions

- What did Isaac want Esau to do? (see verses 1-4)
- What did Rebekah want Jacob to do? (see verses 5-10)
- How does Genesis 25:28 reflect this reality?

Isaac's liking to Esau and Rebekah's liking to Jacob became problematic when the time came for Isaac to impart his blessing. Because Rebekah wanted what was best for Jacob, she was willing to deceive her own husband and rob her oldest son of his blessing.

- In what ways did Rebekah and Jacob deceive Isaac? (see verses 11-24)
- Why did Rebekah say what she said in verse 46?

Rebekah knew that if Jacob was to be spared from Esau's rage, she would have to come up with a cover story for why he had to leave. While Jacob would eventually get away to safety, the Bible leaves us with the impression that Rebekah never sees her son again. Perhaps the saddest reality in all of this was that it didn't have to happen this way. Specifically, if Rebekah and Jacob had been honest with Isaac and had allowed Esau to receive the blessing, they would have likely remained a cohesive family unit.

*Respond:* Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

Take some time today to pray for honesty in your relationships with others. Pray against the temptation to deceive others.

## Wednesday, November Sixth

Led Zeppelin's song *Stairway to Heaven* is considered to be the most popular rock song of all time. While the meaning of the song is obscure and largely unknown, it appears that the band drew its main image (the stairway to heaven) from a dream that Jacob had in Genesis chapter 28. In today's passage, we will explore that dream.

*Read:* Genesis 28:1-22

*Reflect:* Use the passage to work through these questions

- In spite of Jacob's deception, how did Isaac treat him? (see verses 1-5)
- What did Jacob see and experience in his dream? (see verses 12-15)

Jacob's dream of a stairway to heaven with angels ascending and descending on it puts forth the idea that God is accessible to His people. Jesus quotes this passage in the New Testament when He says, "Very truly I tell you, you will see 'heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on' the Son of Man" (John 1:51). In this sense, Jesus uses this passage to confirm that He is one who provides us access to God.

- Why did Jacob call the place where he slept 'Bethel'? (see verses 19-22 and the footnote for verse 19)

Besides Jerusalem, Bethel is the most mentioned city in the Old Testament. Jacob's founding of Bethel in this passage will be important for future events. In fact, God will refer to Himself as the God of Bethel in just a few chapters (see Genesis 31:13).

*Respond:* Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

Time and time again, the Bible reminds us that Jesus is the way and the truth and the life, and that no one comes to the Father except through Him (John 14:6). How might this reality embolden you to share this truth with somebody who does not know Jesus?

## Thursday, November Seventh

In the late 1990s, Walt Disney World was receiving a consistent complaint from its patrons: they were tired of waiting in long lines for rides. As a result, Disney launched the FastPass program in 1999 to try and alleviate the constant congestion. The idea was to give people a card or voucher that allowed them to come back to a ride at a certain time and skip the long line. Since then, the FastPass program has been wildly popular. In today's passage, Jacob has to wait a long time for someone he loves.

*Read:* Genesis 29:1-35

*Reflect:* Use the passage to work through these questions

- What did Jacob want in exchange for working for Laban for seven years? (see verses 15-18)

Jacob came from a wealthy family, but because of the circumstances that caused him to leave home (see Genesis 27), he had no money to his name. As a result, Jacob couldn't offer a gift of money or property in exchange for his marriage to Rachel (often called a dowry). Instead, he would have to work seven years to satisfy his future father-in-law, Laban.

- How did Laban deceive Jacob? (see verses 22-25)
- How did Laban offer to rectify the situation? (see verse 27)

It was hard enough that Jacob had to wait 7 years to marry the love of his life, but now, he would have to wait another 7 years?! Jacob clearly loved Rachel and would do whatever it took to marry her, even after being deceived by Laban.

- What did Leah hope would happen as a result of having children? (see verses 31-34)

*Respond:* Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

Jacob was willing to wait a long time (14 years in total) to marry Rachel. Consider a prayer request you have been waiting on. Ask God to grant you patience as you wait for His response in His time.

## Friday, November Eighth

A few years ago, city officials and developers set out to create a robust vision for a new St. Pete Pier. As a part of their process, people were tasked with researching other piers around the country. What did they look like? What did they have? What made them special and unique? By comparing the city's plans to other models, some hoped to create the best pier in the country – a shining example for other cities to laud and envy. In today's passage, Rachel and Leah compare themselves and, as a result, go to great lengths to “one-up” each other.

*Read:* Genesis 30:1-43

*Reflect:* Use the passage to work through these questions

- How did Rachel come up with a way to have children of her own? (see verses 1-6)

This is not the first time we've seen a surrogate situation in the book of Genesis (think back to Hagar and Sarah in Genesis 16). Unfortunately, Rachel's actions would end up sparking a baby competition with her sister, Leah.

- How did Leah respond to Rachel? (see verses 7-13)
- What does Rachel name her son? (see verses 22-24)

The baby competition between Rachel and Leah had clearly gotten out of hand, with both of them enlisting surrogates to keep up with each other. Little did they know, though, that Rachel's son, Joseph (the 11<sup>th</sup> child of Jacob), would become very important in the not-so-distant future. We'll save that story for the finale of Genesis (chapters 37-50)!

*Respond:* Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

Jealousy played an important role in the events of today's passage. In what ways do you find yourself jealous of others? Take some time to unpack those situations with God, and ask Him to instill in you a spirit of contentment in Him.

## Saturday, November Ninth

Hurricane Dorian demonstrated an interesting trend in how people view possessions. In the days leading up to the storm, people around the Tampa Bay area grabbed and hoarded commodities like gas, water, and bread. However, after the storm had passed and the area was spared, people were very generous in giving these same commodities to people in areas like the Bahamas. In just a few days, Americans had gone from possessive to giving. In today's passage, Jacob and Laban have a dispute over possessions.

*Read:* Genesis 31:1-55

*Reflect:* Use the passage to work through these questions

- What did God advise Jacob to do as a result of Laban's discontentment with Jacob's wealth? (see verses 1-3)
- How did Rachel and Leah view the situation? (see verses 14-16)
- Why was Jacob's statement to Laban in verses 31-32 problematic? (see verse 19)
- How did Rachel hide the fact that she had Laban's household gods? (see verses 34-35)

What exactly were these 'household gods'? Often referred to as *teraphim*, these small shapes and statues were false idols that people worshipped to supposedly bring blessings upon their household. Why Rachel would steal these from her father is unclear. Perhaps they were valuable, or perhaps she thought they would continue to bless her family as they moved to a new region. Nonetheless, Rachel was able to cleverly hide them from Laban, and in doing so, essentially saved her own life (v. 32).

- How did Laban and Jacob resolve things? (see verses 44-55)

*Respond:* Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

Consider the possessions that you have been blessed with. As the Thanksgiving season approaches, consider giving something to a family, friend, coworker, or neighbor in need.

## Sunday, November Tenth

Suppose you have a falling out with a friend. Let's say you did something that hurt the other person, and as a result, the two of you haven't seen each other for many years. One day, you decide to contact this ex-friend and invite her or him to lunch. As you approach the restaurant and see your friend sitting inside, you become fearful of how she or he will respond. In today's passage, Jacob contacts his brother but fears how he will respond.

*Read:* Genesis 32:1 - 33:20

*Reflect:* Use the passage to work through these questions

- What did Jacob fear? (see 32:6-8)

You can imagine that Jacob must have been scared out of his mind to see his brother, Esau, again. After all, he had tricked Esau into giving up his birthright (Genesis 25), and he had deceived his father into giving him Esau's blessing (Genesis 27). Rebekah had hoped that by sending Jacob away for a while, Esau's rage would subside. The question now was whether or not her theory would ring true.

- What name did the man give Jacob? (see 32:28)

If you have a footnote for 32:28, it probably says that the name Israel most likely means "he struggles with God." This name would be indicative of God's people throughout their future history in that they would continue to struggle with Him in a variety of situations and circumstances.

- Who did Jacob recognize as the man? (see 32:29-30)
- How did Esau respond to Jacob? (see 33:4)

*Respond:* Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

Esau could have very easily lashed out at Jacob, but he chose to show him grace instead. Consider how you might show grace to someone today.

Questions? Comments? Contact Pastor Chris at [chris.futch@oursaviorfl.org](mailto:chris.futch@oursaviorfl.org) or (727) 344-2684.