

Israel and His Sons

Lesson Four

Genesis 27-41

The saga continues. Jacob must now flee from the wrath of his brother. The name Jacob means "he deceives." In other words his name indicates a trickster. In this week's lesson we will see that he is not the only one capable of deceit. The tables get turned.

In time Jacob has twelve sons. The most famous of these sons is Joseph. In this session we will see the family problems that occur in Jacob's family especially as they pertain to Joseph. The stage is set for the shifting of the geographical location of the people God will use to bring about his nation. Let's begin.

And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing and said, "The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I kill my brother." And these words of Esau were told to Rebekah. And she sent and called Jacob and said to him, "Arise, flee to Laban, my brother, to Haran; and stay with him until your brother's fury turns away; then I will send and fetch you from there." And Isaac blessed him and said, "God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may be a multitude of people; and give you the blessing of Abraham, that you may inherit the land wherein you are a stranger, which God gave to Abraham." Thus Isaac sent away Jacob to Mesopotamia to Laban.

Note that the people in Canaan were descended from Ham. Ham was the son of Noah that found displeasure with Noah. It seems his descendants were also a rebellious and unlikable group. Abraham did not want Isaac to marry any of the local girls. Isaac and Rebekah were upset with the wives of Esau. In fact, Rebekah indicates that life would not be worth living if Jacob also took a wife from the local population. (Genesis 27:46)



Jacob's journey to Haran does not go without interruption. **Read Genesis 28:10-22** to see what happens on the way.

Describe what Jacob sees in the dream. _____

What does the Lord tell Jacob? _____

To whom had these words been spoken earlier? _____

To what particular offspring do these words refer? _____

What name did Jacob give the place? _____

What vow does Jacob make to God if God will protect him on his journey?

1. _____ 2. _____

Now, when Jacob went on into the land of the East, he came to a well in the field. And he said to the shepherds who were waiting there to water their flocks, "My brethren, where are you from?" And they said, "Of Haran are we." And he said unto them, "Do you know Laban, the son of Nahor?" And they said, "We know him, and behold, Rachel, his daughter, is coming with the sheep." Then Jacob went near and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Laban, and kissed Rachel. He lifted up his voice and wept, and told her that he was Rebekah's son. And she ran and told her father. And Laban ran to meet him, and embraced him, and kissed him, and brought him to his house.

JACOB AND LABAN

Genesis 29-32

Although the reception for Jacob appears to be warm and sincere, trouble lies ahead in his relationship with Laban. He has encountered a relative who is also capable of great deceit.

Read Genesis 29:14-30 to find the first incident.

What wages does Jacob request? _____

Does the time go by quickly or slowly for Jacob? _____

What trick does Laban play on Jacob? _____

What deal does Laban make with Jacob for Rachel? _____

Does Jacob have to wait seven more years for Rachel to be his wife? _____

Jacob and Laban are well matched in the game of trickery. **Read Genesis 30:25-43** for the next exchange between the two men.

What request does Jacob make of Laban (verse 26)? _____

How does Laban respond? _____

What wages will Laban give to Jacob? _____

What does Laban do that very day that shows he does not trust Jacob? _____

What does he do to increase his flock? _____

Jacob's trick works but only through God's intervention. Jacob recognizes that God intervened for him as indicated in Genesis 31:9.

Jacob does not apply his mating potion to every pair of animals. What criterion does he use? _____

But Laban and his sons were jealous of Jacob on account of his wealth. And the Lord said to Jacob, "Return to the land of your fathers; and I will be with you."

And Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field and said to them, "I see your father's countenance, that it is not toward me as before; and you know that with all my power I have served your father. And your father has deceived me, and changed my wages ten times; but God suffered him not to hurt me." And Rachel and Leah answered, "Whatsoever God has said to you, do." Then Jacob rose up and set his sons and wives upon camels; and he carried away all his cattle and all his goods to go to Isaac, his father, in the land of Canaan. And it was told Laban on the third day that Jacob had fled. And he pursued after him and overtook him in Mount Gilead. And God told Laban in a dream, "Take heed that you speak not to Jacob either good or bad." And Laban overtook Jacob and said, "Why did you flee away secretly, and not tell me? It is in my power to do you hurt; but the God of your father spoke to me last night, 'Take heed that you speak not to Jacob either good or bad.'" And Jacob and Laban made a covenant with each other. And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. And when he saw them, he said, "This is God's host." And he called the name of that place Mahanaim.

JACOB'S RETURN

Genesis 32-35

And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau, his brother, saying, "Your servant Jacob says, 'I have sent that I may find grace in your sight.'" And the messengers returned to Jacob saying, "We came to your brother Esau and also he is coming to meet you, and four hundred men with him." Then Jacob was greatly afraid and he divided the people that were with him and the herds into two bands and said, "If Esau comes to the one company and strikes it, then the other company which is left shall escape."

What is Jacob's strategy to ensure that at least part of his family will survive? _____

And Jacob said, "O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the Lord who said to me, 'Return to your country': I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which You have shown to Your servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan and now I am become two bands. Deliver me, I pray You, from the hand of my brother Esau." Then he prepared presents for Esau, and that night he took his wives and children and all that he had and sent them over the ford Jabbok. And Jacob was left alone.

What attitude do the underlined words of Jacob indicate? _____

Jacob had previously passed through this place on his way to Laban. At that time he had only his staff. On his return, he now has enough family, servants, and herds to divide into two large encampments. The Lord has indeed blessed him.

What action shows that Jacob feels there is hope in this situation? _____

Jacob does not have a peaceful night. **Read about it in Genesis 32:22-32.**



What does Jacob do all night? _____

What wound is inflicted on Jacob? _____

What does Jacob request? _____

What name is Jacob given? _____

What name does Jacob give the place? _____

Why? _____

With whom had Jacob wrestled? _____

And Jacob lifted up his eyes and saw his brother Esau coming with four hundred men. And he bowed himself to the ground seven times until he came to his brother. And Esau ran to meet him and fell on his neck and kissed him. And they wept. And Jacob said, "If now I have found grace in your sight, then receive my present at my hand." And Esau said, "I have enough; keep what you have." And Jacob urged him, and he took it. And

Jacob came to Shalem, a city of Shechem, and bought a parcel of a field where he spread his tent, and he erected there an altar. And God said to Jacob, "Arise, go up to Bethel and make an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you fled from the face of Esau, your brother." And Jacob did so. And Jacob came to Isaac, his father, to Mamre, which is Hebron. And the days of Isaac were a hundred and eighty years, and he died. And his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

How old was Isaac when he died? _____

JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS

Genesis 37

Jacob had many sons. Joseph was his favorite. Through Joseph, the family of Jacob will be moved to Egypt. It is in Egypt that God will make a nation of this family. Notice that the name of Jacob has been changed to Israel, the name of the nation. The story of Joseph and his brothers will set the stage for the nation to be built.

Joseph was not well liked by his brothers. **Read Genesis 37:1-11** to find out more about the hard feelings that existed.

What did Jacob make for Joseph? _____

Why did the brothers hate Joseph? _____

According to the dreams, who would rule over the brothers? _____

And his brothers went to feed their father's flock in Shechem. And Jacob said to Joseph, "Go, see whether it be well with your brothers and with the flocks." And when his brothers saw him afar off, they said, "Behold, this dreamer comes. Let us kill him and say, 'Some evil beast has devoured him'; and we shall see what will become of his dreams." And Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands and said, "Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness and lay no hand upon him"; that he might rid him out of their hands to deliver him to his father again. And when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him out of his coat of many colors and cast him into a pit. And the pit was empty. There was no water in it. And they sat down to eat bread.



Why does Reuben want to spare the life of Joseph? _____

This plan did not turn out the way Reuben intended. **Read Genesis 37:25-36.**

What comes along as the brothers are eating? _____

Whose idea is it to sell Joseph? _____

How much do they sell him for? _____

What "evidence" do they present to Jacob to convince him Joseph is dead? _____

Will Jacob be comforted? _____

JOSEPH IN EGYPT

Genesis 39-41

And Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard bought him from the Ishmaelites who had brought him there. And the Lord was with Joseph and made all that he did prosper in his hand. And Potiphar made him overseer over his house and all that he had he put into his hand.

And Joseph was a goodly person and well favored. And his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph and she said, "Lie with me." But he refused and said, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" And it came to pass about this time that Joseph went into the house to do his business and there was none of the men of the house there within. And she caught him by his garment saying, "Lie with me." And he left his garment in her hand and fled and got out. And she called the men of her house and said, "See, he has brought in a Hebrew to mock us; and when he heard that I cried with a loud voice, he fled and got out." And she laid up his garment by her until his lord came home. And she spoke to him saying, "The Hebrew servant that you have brought to us came in to me to mock me. And it came to pass as I lifted up my voice and cried that he left his garment with me and fled out."

And his master's wrath was kindled, and he put him into the prison where the king's prisoners were. But the Lord was with Joseph and showed him mercy and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison so that he committed to his hands all the prisoners. The keeper of the prison looked not to anything because the Lord was with Joseph, and that which he did, the Lord made it to prosper. And it came to pass after these things that the butler of the king of Egypt and his baker had offended their lord, the king of Egypt. And Pharaoh put them into prison.

Notice that even in this low period of Joseph's life, the Lord was with him. Again his leadership abilities are noticed. The Lord prospers his efforts. He has remained faithful to God even in very difficult circumstances that are entirely outside of his control. But the events that take place in prison will catapult Jacob into a leadership role in the Egyptian government.

Read Genesis 40 to find out how the foundation for these events is laid.

Why are the two officials dejected? _____

According to Joseph's interpretation of the dream, what will happen to the cupbearer? _____

What request does Joseph make of the cupbearer? _____

What will happen to the baker according to Joseph's interpretation of the dream? _____

Are Joseph's interpretations correct? _____

Does the cupbearer honor Joseph's request? _____

JOSEPH BEFORE PHAROAH

Genesis 41

Joseph finally does come to the attention of Pharaoh. **Read Genesis 41:1-13.**

How many years have passed? _____

What is Pharaoh's problem? _____

How many dreams did Pharaoh have? _____

Who remembers Joseph and what he can do? _____

And Pharaoh sent and called Joseph. And they brought him hastily out of the dungeon. And he shaved himself and changed his clothes and came in to Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said to him, "I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it. I have heard say of you that you can understand a dream to interpret it." And Joseph answered, "It is not in me. God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace." And Pharaoh told him his dreams. And Joseph said, "The dream of Pharaoh is one: God has showed Pharaoh what He is about to do. The seven good cows are seven years; and the seven good ears are seven years. The dream is one. And the seven thin and ill-favored cows that came up after them and the seven empty and blasted ears shall be seven years of famine. Behold, there come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt. And there shall arise after them seven years of famine. And all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land by reason of that famine following; for it shall be very grievous. And for that the dream was doubled to Pharaoh twice, it is because the thing is established by God and God will shortly bring it to pass. Now therefore, let Pharaoh look out for a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt. And let him take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years. And let them gather all the food of those good years that come, and

let them keep food in the cities. And that food shall be for store to the land against the seven years of famine, that the land shall not perish through the famine."

To whom does Joseph give the glory for the interpretation? _____

Pharaoh believes what Joseph tells him. **Read Genesis 41:41-57.**

Whom does Pharaoh put in charge of the operation? _____

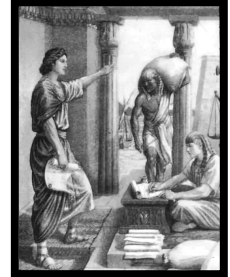
How high up in government is Joseph? _____

How old was Joseph when all of this happened? _____

What does Joseph name his sons? 1) _____

2) _____

Was the famine widespread? _____



REVIEW

1. Where is Jacob sent by Rebekah?_____
2. Who is the first relative Jacob encounters?_____
3. What must Jacob do in order to marry Rachel?_____
4. Does Jacob prosper in the land to which he fled?_____
5. Does Laban hurt Jacob when he catches up with him as Jacob is fleeing?_____
6. Does Jacob fear Esau?_____
7. Is Esau still angry with Jacob?_____
8. With whom does Jacob wrestle?_____
9. What is Jacob's new name?_____
10. Who is Joseph's father?_____
11. How do Joseph's brothers feel about him?_____
12. Which brother does not want Joseph killed?_____
13. What do the brothers ultimately do with Joseph?_____
14. Who frames Joseph?_____
15. Why?_____
16. With whom is Joseph imprisoned?_____
17. What special talent has the Lord given to Joseph?_____
18. Why does Pharaoh send for Joseph?_____
19. What is going to happen during the next 14 years?_____
20. What reward does Joseph receive?_____

