



Genesis: The Book That Started It All

Weekly Devotionals | November 23, 2025

OPEN with prayer.

Find a quiet place where you can set aside distractions. Ask the Lord to meet you in His Word.

In Genesis 27-30, Jacob, after buying the birthright from Esau, takes Esau's blessing from their father, Isaac, by disguising himself as his hairy twin brother. Forced to flee from Esau's wrath, Jacob has a remarkable encounter with God. He then seeks refuge with his uncle Laban and marries Laban's daughters, Leah and Rachel. It's clear that God's favor is on Jacob as his family and his flocks increase.

READ Genesis 26:34–28:9

- This section begins and ends with insight into Isaac and Rebekah's displeasure with Esau's wives (also mentioned in 27:46). Why are Isaac and Rebekah displeased? What impact does it have on our reading of the story of Jacob's deception of Isaac? In other words, what is the effect of framing this narrative with observations about Esau's wives?
- Does the story of this family's fractured and dysfunctional relationships resonate with you? Notice any place the Holy Spirit seems to be drawing your attention to. Spend some time reflecting on what He wants you to notice or what healing He wants you to receive.

READ Genesis 28:10-22

Jacob flees Esau's anger. Stopping for the night, he has a dream in which he encounters God. These types of God-encounters are called "theophanies." (Abraham experienced his own theophany in Genesis 15). The "stairway" referred to was not a ladder with rungs, but likely a vision of a ziggurat, an ancient temple structure meant to represent a connection between heaven and earth. In Genesis 11, humans had attempted to build a ziggurat for their own glory, but their attempts to reach "heaven" failed. Here, it is *God* who reaches down to men—to one man, Jacob.

- Look back at Genesis 12:1-4 and 26:24. What promises did God make to Abraham and Isaac? How does He reaffirm those promises to Jacob?
- How does Jacob respond to his encounter with God? What does his response (28:16-22) “get right” about God?
- Are there ways in which Jacob’s response to God is still immature?

READ Genesis 29:1–30:43

Jacob arrives in Harran and is received by his uncle, Laban. There he quickly falls in love with Laban’s daughter, Rachel, and agrees to work for seven years to pay her bride price. But in an ironic reversal, the trickster gets tricked. Just as Jacob disguised himself to steal Esau’s blessing, Laban disguises his daughter Leah as Rachel to “steal” Jacob’s labor; Jacob must work another seven years to earn to marry Rachel, too. Leah begins to have children, but Rachel is unable to bear children for many years, and the burden of infertility is born by a third generation of women in Abraham’s family. Just as Sarah did with Hagar, Rachel and Leah both offer their maidservants as concubines to Jacob. Eventually, Rachel has a son of her own. Jacob ultimately has 12 sons. (For a complete, concise list, see Genesis 35:23-26). He becomes a wealthy and successful herdsman.

- Proverbs 1:8-19 describes what happens to people who ambush and steal from others. While it is too harsh to attribute to Jacob’s actions all the crimes committed by “sinful men” in the Proverbs passage, what insight do Proverbs 1:18-19 give us about Laban’s actions toward Jacob?
- Jacob’s polygamous marriages (to two sisters, no less) sound a little like the trashiest of reality TV shows. Compare Jacob’s family life to the description of God’s plan for marriage in Genesis 2:21-25. How does this contrast demonstrate the ongoing need for God’s plan of redemption?
- What questions and thoughts do you have about God providing so much abundance and blessing for Jacob?

READ Genesis 31:1-21.

Jacob explains to Rachel and Leah that God has commanded him to leave Laban’s household and return to the land of his father, Isaac. In verse 13, God reminds Jacob of their encounter 20 years before at Bethel. God is still with Jacob, just as He was when Jacob first fled from Esau.

- When Jacob encountered God, he set up a pillar (Genesis 28:18) to mark the moment. God reminds him of that pillar in Genesis 31:13. What “pillars” have you set up in your life to remind you of times when you’ve encountered God?

READ Romans 9:6-17.

In Romans, Paul reflects on the lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as evidence that it is God’s sovereign will and His mercy, not human worthiness, that determine blessing.

- How does reading this passage in Romans help you see the story of Jacob in a different light?

REFLECT

- Think about moments in your life when you’ve had a God-encounter. It probably wasn’t a full theophany, but have you ever had a clear conviction that God was present with you? How did you know? How did you respond?
- Can you recall times when you have “schemed” like Jacob and Laban to get what you wanted by deceiving or manipulating those around you? Don’t be too quick to dismiss this question. Many of us find small but not-quite-honest ways to get what we want. Invite the Holy Spirit to help you notice any patterns God wants to mature in you.
- The story of Rachel and Leah resonates with many people, especially the way in which Leah is overlooked and unwanted. If Leah’s experience resonates with you, consider meditating on Genesis 29:31, “the Lord saw that Leah was not loved” and Psalm 34:18, “the Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.”
- Recall times in life when you’ve received God’s blessings even when you didn’t particularly “deserve” them and thank Him for those moments of kindness and grace.