

The Pentateuch

Study Guide

LESSON
NINE

THE PATRIARCH JACOB



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HOW TO USE THIS LESSON AND STUDY GUIDE

This study guide is designed for use in conjunction with the associated video lesson. If you do not have access to the video, the study guide will also work with the audio and/or text versions of the lesson. Additionally, the lesson and study guide are intended to be used in a learning community, but they also can be used for individual study if necessary.

- **Before you watch the lesson**
 - **Prepare** — Complete any recommended readings.
 - **Schedule viewing** — In the Notes section of the study guide, the lesson has been divided into sections that correspond to the video. Using the time codes found in parentheses beside each major division, determine where to begin and end your viewing session. IIM lessons are densely packed with information, so you may also want to schedule breaks. Breaks should be scheduled at major divisions.
- **While you are watching the lesson**
 - **Take notes** — The Notes section of the study guide contains a basic outline of the lesson, including the time codes for the beginning of each section and key notes to guide you through the information. Many of the main ideas are already summarized, but make sure to supplement these with your own notes. You should also add supporting details that will help you to remember, describe, and defend the main ideas.
 - **Record comments and questions** — As you watch the video, you may have comments and/or questions on what you are learning. Use the margins to record your comments and questions so that you can share these with the group following the viewing session.
 - **Pause/replay portions of the lesson** — You may find it helpful to pause or replay the video at certain points in order to write additional notes, review difficult concepts, or discuss points of interest.
- **After you watch the lesson**
 - **Complete Review Questions** — Review Questions are based on the basic content of the lesson. You should answer Review Questions in the space provided. These questions should be completed individually rather than in a group.
 - **Answer/discuss Application Questions** — Application Questions are questions relating the content of the lesson to Christian living, theology, and ministry. Application questions are appropriate for written assignments or as topics for group discussions. For written assignments, it is recommended that answers not exceed one page in length.

Notes

I. Introduction (0:20)

Genesis 25:19-37:1 reveals how God humbled and shaped Jacob into one of the most admired patriarchs of Israel.

II. Structure and Content (3:04)

Seven major divisions of the account of Jacob's life:

- First Division: Beginning of Struggle (25:19-34)
- Second Division: Isaac and Philistines (26:1-33)
- Third Division: Hostile Separation (26:34–28:22)
- Fourth Division: Time with Laban (29:1–31:55)
- Fifth Division: Peaceful Separation (32:1–33:17)

- Sixth Division: Jacob and Canaanites (33:18–35:15)
- Seventh Division: End of Struggle (35:16–37:1)

The basic outline of the life of Jacob forms a large-scale “chiasm.”

Chiasm: A literary structure in which sections before and after a centerpiece parallel or balance each other

Chiastic structure of Jacob's story:

- The first and seventh divisions deal with the struggle between the brothers and between the nations that descended from them.
- The second and sixth divisions describe encounters between the patriarchs and other groups in the Promised Land.
- The third and fifth divisions focus on the times when the brothers parted ways.
- The fourth division, Jacob's time with Laban, forms a turning point in Jacob's story.

A. Beginning of Struggle (9:26)

Three episodes show how the struggle between the brothers began:

1. Before birth (9:40)

The twins fought in their mother's womb.

The struggle between Jacob and Esau anticipated a struggle between "two nations" or "two peoples" (25:23).

2. At birth (10:30)

First identification of two nations:

- Esau (described as "red") was the ancestor of Edom.

- Jacob was the father of the nation of Israel.

3. As young adults (11:25)

Jacob enticed Esau to exchange his birthright for "red stew."

B. End of Struggle (14:39)

Moses focused on Jacob and Esau and the nations they represented in three parts:

1. Jacob's lineage (14:56)

Jacob's descendants formed the nation of Israel.

2. Isaac's death (15:29)

Both Esau and Jacob buried Isaac.

3. Esau's lineage (16:05)

Combined genealogies report various segments of Esau's line.

Although the struggle between Jacob and Esau had ended, the brothers still separated.

C. Isaac and Philistines (16:53)**1. Initial peace (17:50)**

King Abimelech gave Isaac permission to stay in the region.

2. Enduring peace (18:25)

Isaac and Abimelech made a treaty of peace at Beersheba.

A number of parallels to Abraham's life highlight the fact that Isaac and Jacob were Abraham's successors:

- Abraham dealt with a Philistine king named Abimelech (20:1-18).
- Abraham dug wells and lived among Philistines (21:30, 34).
- Abraham entered into a treaty with the Philistines at Beersheba (21:22-34).

These comparisons showed that God approved of Isaac's peace with the Philistines.

D. Jacob and Canaanites (19:47)**1. Conflict at Shechem (20:01)**

- Shechem, son of Hamor, violated Jacob's daughter Dinah.
- Jacob's sons Simeon and Levi attacked and killed the Shechemites.

2. Assurance at Bethel (21:01)

- Jacob consecrated himself and his family to God.
- God assured Jacob that he was his father's successor.

Parallels between Abraham and Jacob in these chapters:

- Both set up altars to the Lord in Shechem (12:7; 33:20).
- Both moved from Shechem to Bethel and built altars (12:8; 35:6-7).

These connections showed that God approved of Jacob's conflict with the Canaanites.

E. Hostile Separation (22:49)**1. Esau's Hittite wives (23:10)**

Esau discredited himself by taking Hittite wives.

2. Jacob's deception (23:29)

Jacob secured Esau's blessing by deceiving his father Isaac.

3. Esau's Ishmaelite wives (24:06)

Esau took Ishmaelite wives in defiance of his parents.

4. Jacob's dream (24:18)

God affirmed that Jacob was Isaac's heir in a dream at Bethel.

F. Peaceful Separation (24:35)**1. Jacob's preparation for Esau (24:49)**

- Jacob prepared to meet Esau by sending messengers and gifts ahead of him.
- Jacob was humbled as he wrestled with an angel and received God's blessing (Hosea 12:4).

2. Jacob's reconciliation with Esau (26:22)

The brothers meet and then part on peaceful terms.

G. Time with Laban (27:13)

Jacob's time with Laban divides into five main segments:

1. Jacob's arrival (27:26)

2. Laban's deception of Jacob (27:37)

3. Jacob's children (27:46)

4. Jacob's deception of Laban (27:57)

5. Jacob's departure (28:09)

These pivotal chapters brought about a radical transformation in Jacob.

III. Major Themes (30:30)

The same themes that Moses emphasized in the life of Abraham appear again in the life of Jacob.

A. God's Grace to Israel (32:10)

1. Original Meaning (32:32)

Moses stressed divine grace in Jacob's life in three ways:

- Past Grace
 - God showed Jacob grace even before he was born (Genesis 25:23; Romans 9:11-12).

 - God's favor to the tribes of Israel also rested on God's mercies in the past (Deuteronomy 7:7-8).

- Ongoing Grace
 - God's ongoing grace in Jacob's life taught the Israelites how much they needed ongoing grace in their own lives.

- Moses drew attention to displays of God's grace that were particularly relevant for his original audience:
 - Safety among Philistines (26:26-33)
 - Victory over Canaanites (34:1-31)
- Future Grace

God promised that Jacob's descendants would rule over Esau's descendants (Genesis 25:23).

Other promises of future grace:

- Jacob's dream at Bethel (28:10-22)
- Jacob's worship at Bethel (35:11-12)

2. **Modern Application (40:09)**

The three stages of Christ's kingdom represent ways the New Testament teaches Christ's followers to find God's grace:

- Inauguration

Displays of past grace in Jacob's life, help us recall God's past grace to us in the first advent of Christ (Romans 5:20).

- Continuation

God's ongoing grace in Jacob's life reminds us to seek and depend on God's ongoing mercies today (Hebrews 4:16).

- Consummation

When we see God's assurances of future grace to Jacob, we should remember God's future grace for us (Ephesians 2:7).

B. Israel's Loyalty to God (42:35)

1. Original Meaning (43:23)

Moses stressed how God transformed Jacob into his loyal servant to call his original audience to be loyal to God in their own day.

When Jacob returned from his time with Laban, he became a new man:

- Contrition toward Esau (Genesis 33:8)

- Contrition toward God (Genesis 32:10)

- New name (Genesis 32:28)

- Sincere worship (Genesis 35:3)

Moses wanted his audience to face the ways they had been disloyal to God, and to imitate Jacob's loyalty in their own day.

2. **Modern Application (51:05)**

- Inauguration

We should keep in mind how Christ was so loyal to God's commands that he willingly died on the cross in our place.

- Continuation

Jacob's life still calls on us to consider our own loyalty to God (Hebrews 12:1-2).

- Consummation

The theme of loyalty reminds us that we will one day be transformed into God's perfected, faithful servants (1 John 3:2).

C. God's Blessing to Israel (54:32)

God's covenant with his people always involves blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience.

1. Original Meaning (54:44)

Moses emphasized the blessings God gave Jacob to remind his audience that God had given them many blessings as well.

- Jacob received blessings despite his disloyalty.
- Jacob received God's blessing in response to his loyalty.

2. Modern Application (57:27)

- Inauguration

Jesus had no sin, but because he was faithful to the Father, he received great blessings.

Through our union with Christ, we share in Jesus' blessings (Ephesians 1:3).

- Continuation

Christ pours out blessings on his people throughout the continuation of his kingdom.

God has promised the wondrous blessing of his Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 1:21-22; Ephesians 1:13-14).

- Consummation

When we see God's blessings to Jacob, we're reminded of the blessings we'll receive at the consummation of Christ's kingdom.

D. God's Blessings through Israel (59:39)

1. Original Meaning (59:56)

God commissioned the people of Israel to take the lead in fulfilling humanity's original commission (Genesis 12:2-3).

The same twofold process of blessing and cursing that God revealed to Abraham was repeated to Jacob (Genesis 27:29).

Moses pointed out how Jacob interacted with various people in his day to teach Israel how to treat this or that group in their day:

- Canaanites: God commanded Israel to destroy them.
- Philistines: The focus is on peace with Philistines.
- Paddan Aram: The Israelites were to live at peace with their relatives on the northern border.
- Edomites: Israel was directed to live humbly and at peace with their relatives, the Edomites.

2. **Modern Application (1:06:34)**

- Inauguration

Jesus, Israel's King, came offering God's blessings to all people on earth (John 12:47-48).

- Continuation

God's blessings continue to spread to the nations through the ministry of the church (2 Corinthians 5:20).

- Consummation

The offer of peace to the nations will be withdrawn, but those who have trusted Christ will enter the kingdom of God (Revelation 5:9-10).

IV. Conclusion (1:08:56)

3. Describe Isaac's interactions with the Philistines. What did Isaac's peace with the Philistines mean for Moses' original audience?

4. Why did Jacob's encounter with the Canaanites in Genesis 33:18–35:15 turn into conflict? How did Jacob respond to the situation?

5. Describe the antagonism between Jacob and Esau that caused their hostile separation in Genesis 26:34–28:22.

6. What events led to the peaceful separation between the brothers in Genesis 32:1–33:17?

7. What occurred during Jacob's time with Laban in Genesis 29:1–31:55? Why is this episode pivotal in Moses' account of Jacob's life?

8. How was God's grace to Jacob particularly relevant for Moses's original audience?

9. In what ways did Moses use Jacob's life to inspire his audience to show loyalty to God?

10. What evidence do we see in Scripture that God blessed Jacob both despite his disobedience and in response to his obedience?

11. What was God's special commission to Abraham in Genesis 12:2-3, and how is this commission reflected in the story of Jacob?

Application Questions

1. We learn in Genesis 25:23 that God showed grace to Jacob even before he was born. How does this verse influence your understanding of God? How might it also impact our relationships with unbelievers?
2. When Jacob submitted to God at Jabbok he was given the new name Israel. How is this name change similar to what happens to us at conversion? Did you experience something similar after submitting your life to God?
3. Jacob received grace from God despite his own failings. What are some examples of times when you received grace despite your own failings? How might your experiences encourage those in your area of ministry?
4. How might God's grace despite your failings help you be compassionate towards those in your churches that have failed in various ways?
5. Moses emphasized that God fulfilled his promises to Jacob and all of Israel. What promises does God give the church today, and how might these stories reinforce your hope that God will continue to be faithful in our day?
6. What is the final "Promised Land" for Christ's church? What assurances do we have that we will one day inherit this land?
7. How does it humble and encourage you to recall that Jesus obeyed where you sinned, and that he has imputed his perfect righteousness to you?
8. In the continuation of the kingdom, we are called to lives of obedience. In what areas of your life do you find yourself most challenged to obey God? What are some areas where the people you serve experience this challenge, and how can you best encourage them?
9. Reflect on some specific blessings that God has granted you. How have these blessings helped you face challenges in your life?
10. What are some practical ways you and your congregation can extend God's blessings to those who do not yet follow Jesus?
11. How should the hope of Jesus' return and the consummation of his kingdom impact your preaching and teaching today?
12. Take a moment to read 1 John 3:1-3. In what ways will we be like Jesus? And how can you and your congregation prepare for this day in the present time?
13. What is the most significant thing you learned in this lesson?

Glossary

admoni – Hebrew word (transliteration) for "red" that derives from the same family of words as "Edom"

akeeb – Hebrew word (transliteration) for "heel" that derives from the same root as the name "Jacob"

chiasm – Literary structure in which sections before and after a centerpiece parallel or balance each other

consummation – Third and final stage of inaugurated eschatology when Christ will return and fulfill God's ultimate purpose for all of history

continuation – Second or middle stage of inaugurated eschatology; the period of the kingdom of God after Christ's first advent but before the final victory

Edom – Name of the nation descended from Esau

inauguration – First stage in inaugurated eschatology; refers to Christ's first coming and the ministries of his apostles and prophets

Israel – Hebrew word meaning "God struggles" or "God fights"; new name given to Jacob after he wrestled with the angel; also, the nation descended from Jacob

Rebekah – Isaac's wife and the mother of Jacob and Esau