

## April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020

# God Prospers Jacob

### Genesis 28-30

#### BIBLE IN A YEAR READING PLAN

April 19 1 Kings 18-20	April 23 2 Kings 6-8
April 20 1 Kings 21-22	April 24 2 Kings 9-1
April 21 2 Kings 1-3	April 25 2 Kings 12-14
April 22 2 Kings 4-5	April 26 2 Kings 15-17

**Lesson Idea:** God accomplishes His purposes for His people by blessing them with His presence, protection, and promises. They should respond with worship and commitment.

#### Foundational Truths:

- God accomplishes His purposes of grace and blessing in spite of the sinfulness and selfishness of people.
- God reveals Himself as a God of blessing and presence.
- People should respond to God's revelation of Himself with awe and commitment.

#### **Genesis 28:1-5 (NASB) Confirming the Blessing**

1 So Isaac called Jacob and **blessed** him and **charged** him, and said to him, "You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan. 2 Arise, go to Paddan-aram, to the house of Bethuel your mother's father; and from there take to yourself a wife from the daughters of Laban your mother's brother. 3 **May God Almighty [El Shaddai] bless you** and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may become a company of peoples. 4 May He also give you **the blessing of Abraham**, to you and **to your descendants [lit. "seed"]** with you, that you may possess the land of your sojournings, which God gave to Abraham." 5 Then Isaac **sent Jacob away**, and he went to Paddan-aram to Laban, son of Bethuel the Aramean, the brother of Rebekah, the mother of Jacob and Esau.

#### **Verses 1-5 Confirming the Blessing**

- Review Genesis 27:1-38. How did Jacob originally receive his father's blessing?
- V 1-2. Why was it necessary for Jacob to leave Canaan to find a wife? (see also Genesis 27:41-46)

- v 3. What does the name "God Almighty" [*El Shaddai*] mean? Why did Isaac call on the Almighty God to bless Jacob?
- v 4. What is significant about Isaac confirming the "blessing of Abraham" upon Jacob and his descendants ("seed")?

#### Notes:

**Background.** Originally Jacob had received the blessing of his father by trickery (see Genesis 27). His mother and he conspired to deceive Isaac into giving him the blessing of the firstborn. It should be noted, however, that Jacob's prominence was prophesied while he and his twin brother Esau were still in the womb (Genesis 25:23). Moreover, in Genesis 25:29-34 Esau sold his birthright for a bowl of stew. Gen 25:34 concludes that in doing so that "Esau despised his birthright," meaning he showed contempt for it and did not value it as he should.

**Application: Do we value our birthright as children of the Almighty God? Do we sell out our relationship with God for things of this world that we desire or that suit our tastes?**

**v. 1-2.** Rachel desired Jacob to leave Canaan for two reasons: to find a suitable wife instead of marrying an idol-worshipping Canaanite woman, and to escape the vengeful wrath of his brother Esau. The first reason would help to keep Jacob and his line acknowledging and worshipping the one true God. The second reason was necessary to protect Jacob's line from extermination at the hands of his brother, before he could even get it started.

**v. 3.** As we saw back in Genesis 17 God began His address to Abram with: "I am *El Shaddai* (God Almighty)." Isaac knew that he was miraculously born by the act of this omnipotent (all-powerful) God. He sought to remind Jacob that nothing is impossible for the Almighty God, and that His blessing was what Jacob needed. The term "company of peoples" comes from the Old Testament root word meaning "to assemble" and marks the first use of the Old Testament term for "church" or "congregation," foreshadowing Jacob as the father of the nation that will bear his future name of "Israel."

**v. 4.** In Genesis 17:6-8 the covenant was not made to Abraham alone. It was also promised by

God to his descendants (literally “seed” or “offspring”). The word for who would receive the promises is in the singular form throughout all of these chapters of Genesis. As we saw while studying Genesis 17, the Apostle Paul made it clear that the singular “**seed**” in which all of the covenant promises find fulfillment is **Jesus** (see Galatians 3). We celebrate today that Galatians 3:29 concludes: *If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

Although Isaac was deceived into blessing Jacob in Genesis 27, he reaffirmed the blessing here in Genesis 28 without any coercion. He even heightens it by asking God to give to Jacob “*the blessing of Abraham.*” That blessing included both the blessing of “*offspring*” (“*seed*”) and the possession of the land of promise. Even though Jacob would be “sojourning” away from the promised land, Isaac trusted Almighty God to protect him and bring him back home.

**Application: Whose blessing are you most actively seeking for your life?**

### **Genesis 28:10-22 (NASB) Encountering the LORD**

*10 Then Jacob departed from Beersheba and went toward Haran. 11 He came to a certain place and spent the night there, because the sun had set; and he took one of the stones of the place and put it under his head, and lay down in that place. 12 He had a dream, and behold, a ladder was set on the earth with its top reaching 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 your father Abraham and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie, I will give it to you and to your descendants [‘seed’]. 14 Your descendants [“seed”] will also be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and in you and in your descendants [“seed”] 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 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.”*

*18 So Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on its top. 19 He called the name of that place Bethel; however, previously the name of the city had been Luz. 20 Then Jacob made a vow, saying, “If God will be with me and will keep me on this journey that I take, and will give me food to eat and garments to wear, 21 and I return to my father’s house in safety, then the Lord will be my God. 22 This stone, which I have set up as a pillar, will be God’s house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You.”*

### **Verses 10-22**

- V 10-12. What is significant about the ladder Jacob saw in his dream?
- V 13-14. How did God address Jacob?
- V 15. What promises did God make to Jacob?
- V 16-17. How did Jacob respond to the dream?
- V 18-22. What commitments did Jacob make to God?

### **Notes:**

**v. 10-12.** The ladder Jacob saw in his dream extended into heaven and angels were ascending and descending. This showed Jacob that God is transcendent above the world but actively involved in it. The movement of the angels up and down give an indication that they report to God for their orders then proceed to earth to perform His will. Hebrews 1:14 states that the angels are “*ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation.*”

**v. 13-14.** God introduced Himself to Jacob as **the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac**. Derek Kidner in the *Tyndale Commentary on Genesis* notes that this visitation of God to Jacob was “a supreme display of divine grace,” because it was unsought by Jacob and came with “no word of reproach or demand, only a stream of assurances flowing from the central ‘I am the Lord.’” The “**I am**” in this address is actually the Hebrew term that God later reveals to Moses as His covenant name: **Yahweh**. “Lord” translates the basic Hebrew term for God: **Elohim**. He connects Himself to the patriarchs and the covenant blessings by saying that He was the God of Abraham and Isaac. God confirmed the same blessings that had begun with Abraham to now be conferred upon Jacob. All the

families of earth would one day be blessed by his seed: **Jesus**.

**v. 15.** God promised both His presence and protection for Jacob's journey and guaranteed that it would come full circle when God brought him back to the land of his fathers. The promise of God ("I will be with you") would bring great assurance, as it should to us today. This is one of the most precious promises that runs throughout the Bible. Consider:

- **Deuteronomy 31:6** *Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the Lord your God who goes **with you**. He will not leave you or forsake you.*
- **Isaiah 41:10** *Fear not, for **I am with you**; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*
- **Matthew 28:19-20** *God therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, **I am with you** always, to the end of the age.*
- **Hebrews 13:5** *Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "**I will never leave you nor forsake you.**"*

When the Lord is present, we can count on His protection as well. He told Jacob that He would "keep" him wherever he went. The word carries the idea of guarding something that belongs to you and is very precious to you. God promised not to leave Jacob "until I have done what I have promised you." God always accomplishes His purposes.

**Application: Do you recognize the presence of the Lord in your life? Do you praise Him for His protection?**

**v. 16-17.** Jacob awoke and responded to the revelation of God with fear and reverence. He expressed his worship and commitment to the Lord. He recognized the presence of God, set up an altar of worship, and renamed the place "Bethel" which means "House of God."

**v. 18-22.** Jacob made commitments to God; an although they sound conditional on his part, they

represent a true dedication to the God who revealed Himself to Jacob. Kidner maintains:

*Jacob's reply is often condemned as mere bargaining; yet it was as thorough a response as he knew how to make. It expressed profound awe (16, 17), a preoccupation first of all with the One who had been encountered, not with the things that were promised. From this it issued in homage and in the vow to pledge himself in covenant. The vow was no more a bargain than any other vow (the 'if' clause is inherent in the form); it would be fairer to say that Jacob was taking the promise of 15 and translating it from the general into the particular. Further, he rightly saw his tithe (22b) not as a gift but as a giving back.*

**Application: How do you respond to the promises of God? What commitments have you made to Him?**

### **Genesis 29:1-30 Finding a Wife... or two?**

**Notes:** Jacob's journey was not an easy one, even with the promised presence of God. Jacob found his mother's family and fell in love with his uncle Laban's daughter, Rachel. But Jacob (whose name meant "deceiver" or "trickster") reaped the same type of deception which he sowed. Laban made him work seven years to marry Rachel, but then fooled him into marrying her sister Leah instead. Laban made Jacob work another seven years for the right to marry Rachel as well. During these marriages, the sisters strove for Jacob's affection and to give birth to his offspring (even offering their maid servants as surrogates when they themselves became barren). Laban talked Jacob into several more years of service and cheated Jacob out of his fair wages ten times (see Genesis 31:7). And despite the mess, God still kept His promises and accomplished His purposes by blessing Jacob with twelve sons who would become the namesake of the twelve tribes of Israel. In the chapters to follow, Jacob would eventually make it back to Bethel and worship the Lord there again.