

Hebrews 11

JACOB

Hebrews 11:20-21
 Genesis 27-50

Introduction

Jacob means heel-catcher or supplanter by popular etymology but perhaps “he whom God protects.” Akaba = guard; keep.

2 nd born twin son of Isaac and Rebekah	Genesis 25:21-26
At home with Isaac and Rebekah	Genesis 25
Buys Esau’s birthright	Genesis 25:29-34
Obtains Isaac’s blessing	Genesis 26-27
Flees from Esau	Genesis 27
Comforted by God at Bethel	Genesis 28:10-22
The dream/revelation	Genesis 28:10, 20-22
Serves with Uncle Laban	Genesis 29
Jacob prospers	Genesis 30
Flees from Laban & God tells him to return	Genesis 31
News from Esau on the homeward journey	Genesis 32
Jacob’s prayer	Genesis 32:9-12
Wrestling of God	Genesis 32:24-32
Reconciled to Esau	Genesis 33
Goes to Bethel	Genesis 35
Bereavement	Genesis 35 Genesis 42:25-35
The sons sent to Egypt in famine	Genesis 42
Reunited with his son Joseph	Genesis 46
Jacob’s prophecy and blessing	Genesis 48-49
Death	Genesis 49-50

Hebrews 11:20-21, “20 *By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. 21 By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.*”

Genesis 25:21-28, “21 *And Isaac intreated the LORD for his wife, because she was barren: and the LORD was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived. 22 And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to enquire of the LORD. 23 And the LORD said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the*

other people; and the elder shall serve the younger. 24 And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb. 25 And the first came out red, all over

like an hairy garment; and they called his name Esau. 26 And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel; and his name was called Jacob: and Isaac was threescore years old when she bare them. 27 And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents. 28 And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison: but Rebekah loved Jacob. ”

It is recorded that Jacob grew up to be a peaceable man, living in tents, preferring the quieter home life to the active dangerous career of a hunter. He was the favourite of his mother, whereas Isaac showed partiality toward Esau. It is clear that Jacob was close to his mother and both of them were spiritually sensitive and aware of their God given responsibilities to maintain the covenant, supporting Isaac’s leadership.

Now Esau, being an outdoor, rugged, ‘rough’ man was an illustration of the body/flesh man; more interested in a meal than his covenant responsibilities to God. This is why he did a “quick sale” of the Birthright to grab a “take away” that his brother had painstakingly prepared.

There was a lot riding on the successor to Isaac and the providence of God overrode and stepped around fleshly Esau. You have to ask the question: “was Esau even justified by faith?” I think he was more of a Cain type, lost and fleshly who was more intent on wine, food, women and sin.

Jacob was a smart business guy with a bit of flair for deception. Into this scene steps one of the most intriguing characters of the Old Testament. Read Genesis 27-50. Tracing the spiritual journey of Jacob is invaluable as he is an ensample of the faith.

It is clear from the outset that Jacob was a man of Faith. He was justified by faith and was ready to get the job done. Remember, God owned him. Exodus 3:6a, *“Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. ”* All three of these are men of faith who took the Word of God/the Covenant of God seriously.

I. THE MAN OF TWO NATURES

“Jacob is an outstanding illustration of the presence and conflict of the two natures within a believer. Jacob is good and bad; he rises and falls, yet in spite of his failures was a chosen instrument.

Jacob’s character then, is full of interest and difficulty because of its weakness and strength. His is not a life to be described by a single word as, for example, the *faith* of Abraham or the *purity* of Joseph. Jacob seemed to have a many-sided life. He was a man of *guile*, yet a man of *prayer*. Inconsistencies are everywhere. His life began with a prophetic revelation of God to his mother, but Jacob’s early years were a singular mixture of good and bad-the bad being very bad.

I. Jacob was the victim of his mother’s partiality. “Rebekah loved Jacob” (Gen 25:28). This fault must be kept in mind as we judge his character.

II. Jacob was selfish. When his brother came in from the fields faint with hunger, Jacob would not give him food without bargaining over it.

III. Jacob was naturally crafty and deceitful. He violated his conscience when he allowed his mother to draw him away from the path of honour and integrity. He practiced deception upon his blind father with the covering of kid skins. Then he told a deliberate lie in order to obtain a spiritual blessing. He further sinned upon most sacred ground, when he blasphemously used the name of the Lord to further his evil plans.”¹

II. BUYING THE BIRTHRIGHT

Genesis 25:29,30,33, “29 *And Jacob sod pottage: and Esau came from the field, and he was faint: 30 And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint: therefore was his name called Edom. 31 And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright. 32 And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me? 33 And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob.*”

It is important to read the record of the sale in detail. Jacob did not deceive Esau over this. “...you get the meal but it will cost you.” According to the Scripture, the birthright could be bought and sold and turned to the advantage of the seller **but the** birthright was the key to inheriting all the responsibilities of the father, including his leadership, property and possessions. It is clear that Esau was reckless to say the least.

¹ Lockyer, All the Men of the Bible, p166

Hebrews 12:14-17, “14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: 15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; 16 Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.”

God’s Word speaks against the Edomites who are the descendants of Esau:

Malachi 1:1-5, “1 The burden of the word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi. 2 I have loved you, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the LORD: yet I loved Jacob, 3 And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness. 4 Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the LORD of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them, The border of wickedness, and, The people against whom the LORD hath indignation for ever. 5 And your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, The LORD will be magnified from the border of Israel.”

On the other hand Jacob jumped at a ‘bargain.’ It turned out to be in the providence of God and the fulfilment of Genesis.

III. THE BLESSING OBTAINED BY SUPPLANTING ESAU! Genesis 27:1-29

Genesis 27:27-29 “27 And he came near, and kissed him: and he smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him, and said, See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the LORD hath blessed: 28 Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine: 29 Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee.”

Isaac was about to pronounce his blessing upon Esau, his elder son, but was thwarted by the deception practiced by Rebekah and Jacob. Jacob impersonated Esau and added direct falsehood to fraud. Thus, Jacob received his father’s blessing.

IV. THE FLIGHT FROM ESAU

Esau hated his brother because of his deception and its success and resolved to slay him. That caused Rebekah to panic and she sent him to Uncle Laban in Haran. He obtained his father’s blessing by promising not to marry the ungodly from Canaan or Egypt, but rather to marry a godly woman from their tribe.

V. THE DREAM AT BETHEL

Bethel – the presence of God in the house. God revealed His presence to Jacob with the VISION of the ladder and the angels of God. There God confirmed his covenant blessing to Jacob who followed on **BY FAITH**. God mercifully owned him and is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Oh the mercy of God and O the responsibility of Jacob to lead! Jacob met God and was humbled and fearful to carry on in the face of Esau's anger!

Genesis 28:13, *“And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed;”*

Genesis 28:15-19, *“19, And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of. 16 And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not. 17 And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. 18 And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. 19 And he called the name of that place Bethel: but the name of that city was called Luz at the first.”*

VI. JACOB SERVES LABAN Genesis 30:31-16

Arriving at Haran Jacob met Rachel, Laban's daughter, it was love at first sight. Jacob asks her father for her hand in marriage. Laban agrees on a dowry of seven years of hard labour but then deceives Jacob to marry his oldest daughter, Leah. The deceiver is deceived twenty times by his uncle Laban before he marries Rachel! Jacob is brought face to face with his own deceiving flesh nature and is humbled in the process. God loves shaping His man!

Do not resist the Potter's hand as he seeks to humble you and deal with the stony heart of flesh of the old nature. Only then will the new nature and Christ shine forth from your earthly vessel.

Jacob is blessed in his covenant desires, refusing to bow the knee to Laban's idols.

VII. JACOB FLEES LABAN Genesis 31:7-55

Jacob returns back to his father at Bethel. He could not go to see his mother as she had already died. Remember, the last time he saw his mother was when she sent him away.

VIII. THE MEETING WITH ESAU Genesis 32:1-23

Esau is a wild, fleshly and ungodly man who is now married to an ungodly lost woman against his father's wishes. His rebellion is plainly seen. Jacob sent messengers to Esau with a friendly greeting, hoping thus to pacify his brother who then sets out with 400 men! A crisis is looming. If God does not step in, Jacob's flesh and negotiating skills would not suffice.

"Goliath's are not brought down by the arm of the flesh!"

God intervenes to take His servant to a deeper death to self and reliance upon Himself.

IX. THE WRESTLING Genesis 32:24-27

Genesis 32:28-32, *"28 And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed. 29 And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there. 30 And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved. 31 And as he passed over Peniel the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh. 32 Therefore the children of Israel eat not of the sinew which shrank, which is upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this day: because he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh in the sinew that shrank."*

God wrestles with Jacob until he is broken – a Cross experience. Galatians 2:20, *"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."* He was brought to a place where he was leaning upon his staff, limping along. This is more than surrender, this is complete brokenness at the foot of the cross! During this night of prayer, the pre-incarnate Christ humbled His servant.

X. JACOB HELD ON FOR THE BLESSING AND A NEW NAME

Genesis 32:26-28 *"26 And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. 27 And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. 28 And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed."*

God renamed the renewed man, transforming his life. It is only as the earthen vessel is broken and humbled at the foot of the cross and there is a death to self – the old I is reckoned dead that the Christ of God can shine through.

Colossians 1:27b, *"...which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:"*

Christ through you for victory in life and service for God. Self becomes Servant. Bondslave/Doulos for Christ.

XI. JACOB'S PRAYER ANSWERED Genesis 32:9-12, Genesis 33:1-20

Genesis 32:11, *“Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children.”*

Jacob is reconciled to his brother, Esau. Healing and reconciliation takes place through the cross. (Like the healing of the waters of Marah!)

Genesis 33:10-11, *“10 And Jacob said, Nay, I pray thee, if now I have found grace in thy sight, then receive my present at my hand: for therefore I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me. 11 Take, I pray thee, my blessing that is brought to thee; because God hath dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough. And he urged him, and he took it.”*

The believer should endeavour to seek good relationships with his family even though they are not what they should be. Pray for them that ye may live a peaceable and godly life. Fighting families are not pleasing to the Lord, even if you are ‘right’ and they are ‘wrong’!!

XII. JACOB SETTLES IN CANAAN Genesis 33:1-20

Genesis 33:20, *“And he erected there an altar, and called it Elelohe-Israel.”*

Elelohe-Israel means, Mighty One, God of Israel. Jacob’s God is our God. Christ is the Mighty One!

XIII. JACOB GOES BACK TO BETHEL Genesis 34:1-35

Having been brought into collision with the people of Shechem because of the violation of Dinah and revenge taken by her brothers:- Jacob was commanded to go and dwell in Bethel. There God appeared unto him again, renewing the Abrahamic covenant.

Genesis 35:1-5, *“And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother. 2 Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments: 3 And let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went. 4 And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem. 5 And they journeyed: and the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob.”*

XIV. JACOB WORSHIPS GOD

Genesis 35:7, “*And he built there an altar, and called the place Elbethel: because there God appeared unto him, when he fled from the face of his brother.*”

Be sure to establish your altar:

1. Your heart with daily personal devotions.
2. Your family a time together with God praying as a family.

An altar is simply a place where humble, earnest, confession and yieldedness takes place.

XV. BEREAVEMENT Genesis 35:20

Genesis 35:20, “*And Jacob set a pillar upon her grave: that is the pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day.*”

Life is not all smooth sailing after ‘the wrestling’. Spiritual warfare steps in and trials come! While journeying from Bethel to Ephrath his beloved wife Rachel died whilst giving birth to her second son, Benjamin. Not long after that, Jacob lost his most beloved son, Joseph, who was sold by his brothers to Midianite traders. Genesis 37.

XVI. EGYPT

God in His providence organised for Joseph to go from the bottom of the well to top administrator for one of the greatest leaders of the ancient world... so that through him God would sustain His earthly, godly line.

The brothers are sent to buy food from the Egyptians. Jacob goes to meet Joseph and they all moved to Egypt. Later God delivered them by the blood – redemption by the blood.

XVII. JACOB’S DEATH

After living seventeen years in Egypt “the time for Israel to die drew near,” and, calling Joseph to him, Jacob acquainted him with the divine promise of the land of Canaan and took from him a pledge that he would bury him with his fathers. He then adopted Joseph’s sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, as his own and pronounced his benediction upon his sons. And when Jacob had finished blessing his sons, he “drew his feet into the bed and breathed his last” (49:33), dying at the ripe age of 147 (47:27-49:33) about 1854 BC. His body was embalmed, carried with great care and pomp into the land of Canaan, and deposited with his fathers and his wife Leah in the cave of the field Machpelah (50:1-13). His descendants were led out from Egypt by Moses and entered Canaan under the leadership of Joshua. The twelve tribes of which the nation was composed were named after his sons, with the exception of Joseph.

XVIII. CONCLUSION

1. Wait on God
 - Do not develop a ministry of deceit and deception. Be real, not deceptive.
2. Our carnal fleshly effort does not accomplish the work and will of God.
3. The wrestle
 - Every believer needs to be wrestled to ground, dying to self and human energy – that the life of God by His Spirit can shine forth. So others will see Christ in you.
4. As those of old relied on God’s word and its promises, so should we, doing it God’s way.
5. Always stay in Bethel and Canaan. Enjoy the blessings in the battle.

Philippians 4:13, *“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”*

Philippians 4:19-20, *“But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. 20 Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”*

WALK BY FAITH AND WALK IN VICTORY!