



Kingdom
Conference

Jacob

Becoming a True Israelite
Indeed

Kingdom Conference 2024

As Jacob looked back over his life, he described his days as few and evil. Antagonism with his brother, striving for the promises, fleeing from home, consumed in the day by drought and in the night by frost, deceived, bereaved and betrayed. Yet despite all this, in retrospection, he could see that God was always watching over him for good and he blessed his grandchildren invoking the angel which redeemed him from all evil. Jacob's perspective was fundamentally different to that of the men of the world, he knew that his life was a pilgrimage, he was looking to something unseen beyond the days of mortality and pain.

Jacob remembered being in the tent with his grandfather, a man who greatly impressed him for the conviction of his life. Listening to the discussions with his father and feeling a glow in his heart grow brighter every time the family promises were brought up. His mother had assured him that he would have a part but in their zeal, they had deceived his father who would have blessed his twin in his stead. His life then was catapulted on a course that would change him forever. He left home, never to see his mother again but taking her love with him alongside the deep reverence and fear of his father for the one true God.

Jacob's life felt like one long wrestling match until having barely escaped from his uncle, the time came when he would have to face up to his brother. Following cries of fear and of faith, he found himself alone, yet clinging on through intense pain and tears to the man in the dark. Completely crushed Jacob would never let go of the One before whom he went. It was when Jacob found himself utterly unable to do anything to save himself that he found the secret of true strength and was given the name to which many would aspire for all succeeding generations.

Jacob would go on to see that the only One who is truly Power is able to bring good from evil, life from death, working that which is impossible with man, able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think. In so appreciating this, Jacob learned the simple truth that unfolds the sure path to the promises: "Therefore turn thou to thy God, keep mercy and judgment, and wait on thy God, continually."

Introduction

My dear brothers, sisters and young people. In July, Lord willing, we will gather together to prepare for the coming of our Lord. Our focus for the week will be on the life of Jacob. A man who lived thousands of years ago but who has had a tremendous impact on the world both in terms of his descendants and how believers through the years have been encouraged by his example divinely recorded. 'Few and evil' were his days and yet they prepared him for eternity. His life, family and job situation were all far from perfect but this encourages us that in a world that is so dark and messy, God is still working with us to prepare us for glory. If we humbly learn the lessons of this man, then in God's grace we will not only see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of God but we will enter in with them.

This workbook is designed to make sure that we all are familiar with the basics of the life of Jacob and to promote further individual in-depth study.

The workbook is relatively short, however, it is hoped that you will be inspired to dedicate your time to look in depth at the life of Jacob as this will not only help to make the discussions at conference more profitable but also the lessons uncovered will stay with you for life.

In the inspired record we are given a window into the hopes, fears and deep emotions of a man we hope one day to meet. Coming to know men and women of Scripture can strengthen us immensely in the days of our pilgrimage.

If there are any questions about the workbook or items that you would like to discuss about the life of Jacob, then please send me an email.

As Boaz would say, 'Yahweh be with you'. May God bless our studies of the word and may it be seen in the day of Christ's return that we too are Israelites indeed, in whom there is no guile.

With love in Israel's hope,

Brother Luke Foley

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Section 1 – Reading

Jacob's life from birth to death is recorded for us through Genesis 25-50. Read through his life and reflect on the events that take place, see if you can put yourself there and really make it live. It is recommended to have a pen/pencil with you to write down any questions that occur to you as you go through the book. It's quite a few chapters but if you're able to read through his life in one sitting that may be the most beneficial way of putting it together in your mind.

Section 2 – Structure

Skim through the chapters again and make a note of the different sections Jacob's life is split into as recorded for us. It may be useful to mark any findings in your Bible.

To see how the life of Jacob fits into the book of Genesis as a whole it may be useful to go through and highlight the word 'generations' in Genesis.

Make a note of key themes and repeated words that you find in the record of Jacob's life.

Section 3 – Background Research

Do either of the following:

- 1) Find a Christadelphian series of talks on the life of Jacob and listen to them, taking notes as you go.
- 2) Find a Christadelphian book on Jacob and read through it, taking notes as you go.

Go to the webpage www.kingdomconference.co.uk/pages/work-book.html and fill out the Google form to let us know which series/book you have used.

Resource note:

www.christadelphianbibletalks.com and www.christadelphianvideo.org may be useful for finding talks.

Books on Genesis may be helpful such as the green expositor by Brother H. P. Mansfield.

Section 4 – Basic Questions

Introduction to Jacob

We often think of the fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob together. God has chosen to reveal Himself as the God of these 3 men:

And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, Yahweh God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is My name for ever, and this is My memorial unto all generations. Exodus 3.15

It has been suggested that Abraham represents to us the Father, Isaac represents His son Jesus and Jacob represents us – the ecclesia. As such we see a complete revelation of God choosing to reveal Himself as our Father, manifesting Himself in His son and then ultimately in an earth full of people with His character. Can you think of any verses identifying Abraham as the father?

Isaac as the son?

Jacob as the ecclesia?

We will find as we go through the life of Jacob and see him grow that he becomes an example to every member of the ecclesia of how we all develop through the joys and trials of life. May we learn from him to be like him and grow to be faithful men and women that wait on their God continually.

Where else do we learn about Jacob in the rest of the Bible? Write down any passages that will be useful for us in coming to understand the record of his life better. Hosea 12 is a key passage.

The birth: Genesis 25:19-28

In Genesis 25:19-20 how are Isaac and Rebekah introduced to us?

How long did Isaac and Rebekah wait for children and how did they respond to this trial?

What is the significance of the children struggling within Rebekah?

Where and why is the end of Genesis 25:23 quoted?

Contrast what we learn about Esau & Jacob from their birth, early years and the meaning of their names? (It is worth checking where else the Hebrew word translated 'plain' in v27 occurs).

Having a prophecy about the destiny of your sons would have a big impact on you. What does Isaac loving Esau and Rebekah loving Jacob tell us about the characters and marriage of this faithful couple?

In the record of Isaac's children, we see 2 twin boys having the same parents and same upbringing but ending up on 2 totally different paths.

Genesis 25:29-34: Selling the birthright

What is the background to this incident?

Why does Jacob want the birthright? Was Jacob right to try to obtain the birthright this way?

What do we learn about Esau from his willingness to sell the birthright? What do we learn from the inspired commentary about this event in Hebrews 12?

Why was Esau called Edom and what does this signify?

What is the contrast in outlook between Jacob and Esau and how can we learn from this? Is there any way in which we could be in danger of despising our birthright or not appreciating our calling?

Deceiving Isaac: Genesis 27

Genesis 26 in the middle of the record about Jacob is a chapter which does not mention him. How does this chapter impact on chapter 27?

What are the references to Isaac being close to death in this chapter and how long did he live afterwards?

Why does Isaac want venison before blessing Esau?

Why isn't Rebekah involved with such an important occasion and why does she respond by talking to Jacob but not to Isaac?

Jacob is told by his mother to obey her voice although he is a full-grown man. How should we respect our parents as adults?

How does Jacob respond to being asked to deceive his father?

Rebekah says to let any curse as a result of the deception to come on her. What does this tell us of her love for Jacob and did a curse ever come?

Is there any significance in the way in which Jacob pretends to be Esau? Is there any relation to Zechariah 13:4?

What's the implication of Jacob asking Isaac to sit?

Does Jacob lie to his father? Is Isaac suspicious?

What does the blessing entail and does it include any of the promises to Abraham?

When was/will the blessing fulfilled?

Why does Isaac tremble so much when Esau comes in and what does this tell us about his relationship with God?

How does Hebrews 12 pick up on Esau crying and how does this relate to us?

Esau talks of the birthright and the blessing as separate things, how are they different or are they the same?

What blessing does Esau get and how was/will it be fulfilled? (Note v39 should perhaps be translated that Esau will dwell away from the fatness of the earth)

Perhaps somewhat unexpectedly, the event demonstrating Isaac's faith that is picked out in Hebrews 11 is the blessing of his sons. In what way do we see Isaac's faith in this chapter?

Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing. How do the Scriptures relate hatred and murder? How should we react when we feel wronged?

How does Esau's attitude to Jacob continue with Edom's attitude to the nation of Israel?

Jacob is told by his mother to flee until Esau forgets, what does this tell us about Esau?

Why does Rebekah involve Isaac in the sending away of Jacob?

Does Rebekah get to see Jacob again before she dies?

Rebekah and Jacob are not directly condemned in Genesis. However, Hosea 12 provides an inspired commentary on the life of Jacob. It says that God will punish Jacob according to his ways.

What are the parallels between what Jacob did to his father and what Laban does to Jacob?

What are the parallels between what Jacob did to his father and what Jacob's sons do to him?

How could Rebekah and Jacob have responded instead of deceiving Isaac?

The Lord tells us how that a true Israelite is one in whom there is no guile. Jacob is sent to the master of deceit to learn this lesson. This is maybe the opposite to what we'd expect. What do we learn from this?

Fleeing to Bethel: Genesis 28

Why is Jacob sent to Laban for a wife? How does this relate to the kind of wife Abraham wanted for Isaac and what do we learn about the kind of marriage partner we should seek?

How is Jacob now blessed?

What is the Hebrew word for multitude in v3?

Esau seems to have eventually realised that his father is not happy about his wives but why isn't his mother mentioned in v8?

Jacob flees and goes to Bethel, how far would this journey be?

What is the significance of Jacob's dream? How is the dream picked up at the end of John 1 and why?

Can you image how Jacob would be feeling emotionally before and after the dream?

What does Jacob mean by his vow at the end of the chapter?

What is the significance of giving a tenth?

Bethel means 'house of El', what's the significance of this and what's the significance of the pillar that Jacob anoints? There's 3 New Testament passages that relate back to this occasion which help, John 1:43-51 , Matthew 16:13-20, 1 Timothy 3:14-16.

How can we become more aware of the angels working in our life?

Finding a wife: Genesis 29

What is the significance of the incident at the well at the beginning of the chapter? What do we learn about Jacob from what he says to the shepherds?

How would Jacob feel seeing Rachel having only just arrived in the country?

When do we first read about Laban and what do we know of him?

What do we learn about Leah and Rachel from how they are introduced to us?

How would Leah have felt marrying Jacob and then seeing his reaction in the morning?

How would Jacob feel waking up next to Leah? How should he have responded in the situation? Should he have taken a second wife given the circumstances? How could God's assurance given Jacob at Bethel have helped him to remain calm in such a dramatic situation?

Why is there such a desire to have children? Is this true of all the faithful? How does it contrast with the general attitude in the Western world amongst young people today?

What do we learn from how Leah names her first 4 sons? Where is her focus? Does it change as she has more sons?

Growing family: Genesis 30

Jacob's response to Rachel's frustration at being barren indicates a great awareness of God's providence. How should we react in similar situations and how do we think of it in terms of knowing that all things work together for good to those that love God and are the called according to His purpose?

Why are there so many barren women in Scripture?

Why does Rachel give Bilhah to Jacob and do you think this was a good thing to do?

What is the dynamic like between Rachel and Leah and what do we learn from how all the children are named?

What is the significance of the mandrake incident?

Why does Jacob decide to leave?

When Jacob agrees to work for cattle, why does he then lay rods before the cattle? What is the significance of this seemingly strange ritual?

Fleeing from Laban: Genesis 31

Why does Jacob now leave at last?

How do Laban's daughters view their father? What lessons can we take from considering Laban?

Why does Rachel steal and what do we learn about her weaknesses from this and how she tricks her father? Does she grow spiritually in the rest of her life?

How do we further learn of Jacob's character in this chapter?

How was Jacob as an employee? What verses indicate how we should work in any jobs we have or may have, regardless of how unrighteous our employees may be?

Why is Laban often called the Syrian? Do we learn anything of the Syrians, who later will be in conflict with Israel, from Laban?

How do the events in this chapter prepare Jacob for the dramatic trial he is about to face when Esau is coming to meet him with 400 men in the next chapter?

Wrestling: Genesis 32

What is the significance of angels meeting Jacob at the beginning of the chapter?

What thoughts would be going through Jacob's mind as he anticipated his first encounter with Esau since leaving?

Why does Esau bring 400 men to meet Jacob?

What can we learn from Jacob's prayer to help our prayers?

How does Jacob address Esau and why does he send a present? What message is he trying to send Esau related to their past?

Jacob is brought to a point in his life where he is utterly unable to save himself, the best he can do is to split his company in two in the hope that half of them might be saved! He is about to learn what it means to be a true Israelite.

What extra information does Hosea 12 add to the account of Jacob's wrestling?

What does the name Israel mean?

Where does Jacob's true strength lie? How has Jacob changed to go from being 'Jacob' to being 'Israel'?

In what way did the Lord learn the same lesson as Jacob?

In what way will the nation of Israel have to learn the same lesson as Jacob?

What is the significance of the name Peniel and Jacob passing it as the sun rises?

Meeting Esau: Genesis 33

How does the meeting go in contrast to Jacob's expectations?

How does Jacob refer to his children?

Why does Jacob connect seeing Esau with the face of God and what are we being told?

Why did Jacob say he will come to Esau in Seir? Does he ever do this?

What is the significance of Succoth?

What does Shalem mean?

Where else are we told about the land that Jacob buys when he comes to Shechem?

Dinah: Genesis 34

How would the incident with Dinah affect Jacob?

How does Jacob respond to everything that happens in this chapter?

Back to Bethel: Genesis 35

Why does Jacob need to return to Bethel?

Why is there a need to put away strange gods?

Do we read of the 'terror of God' anywhere else?

What is the significance of Deborah dying at this point?

Why does Jacob have his name changed to Israel when this has already happened in chapter 32?

What are the parallels and contrasts with Jacob's two visits to Bethel?

How do Jeremiah and Micah pick up on Rachel's death? What is so significant about Rachel's death?

Why is Jacob suddenly called Israel in v21?

What are the consequences of Reuben's fornication?

Esau had said he would kill Jacob when Isaac dies, what happens instead?

Edom: Genesis 36

What do we learn from Esau's genealogy?

Joseph: Genesis 37

The book of Genesis can be structured around the repeated word - 'generations'. We see from v2 that we are entering a new section of the book and the attention is going to shift from Jacob to focus on his son Joseph.

There is still a lot to learn about Jacob in the subsequent chapters and to get a complete picture of his life we will skim through the relevant incidents.

How would Joseph's dreams affect Jacob?

Corn in Egypt: Genesis 42-43

How has Jacob's family stayed together despite the children having grown up?
What are the family dynamics?

What is Jacob's outlook on life like?

Joseph alive: Genesis 45-46

Why does Jacob get called Israel at the end of chapter 45?

Why does Jacob stop in Bethel on his way to see Joseph? Is he questioning something?

Jacob is a man that seeks God's direction in life. How can we be like this?

How does Jacob respond to seeing Joseph?

Meeting Pharaoh: Genesis 47

Why does Pharaoh ask Jacob his age and how does Jacob respond?

What is the significance of Jacob blessing Pharaoh?

Jacob's life revolves around the truth and so even in an encounter with the ruler of Egypt his faith shines through when asked a simple question. How does filling our life with the things of God help us to preach?

The faith of Jacob: Genesis 47-48

What is Jacob's request at the end of his life and how would this affect his family?

Genesis 47:31 could be translated as Israel bowing himself on the top of his staff which fits with Hebrews 11:21. This is the 1 particular verse related to Jacob in Hebrews 11, what do we learn about the faith of Jacob here? Why might Hebrews highlight this part of Jacob's life when he did so much else?

Jacob's prophecy: Genesis 49

How does Jacob address his sons in this chapter?

What is the significance of Leah being mentioned in v31?

Burial: Genesis 50

How does Joseph respond to his father's death?

What is the significance of the details of Jacob's burial?

When will Joseph and Jacob next be reunited?

Jacob grew a lot in his life and God prepared him for the life to come. May we be like Jacob and continually grow as we go through this life, for our days may be few and evil but there is something far greater to come.

Conclusion

How would the account of Jacob have helped the Lord Jesus?

What are the main themes in Genesis in relation to Jacob?

What are the main lessons you have taken so far from Jacob's life?

Do you have any questions that you would like to ask Jacob after the resurrection?

Section 5 – Further Study

These questions may require longer answers than some of the previous questions. Answer them on separate pieces of paper and insert them into your workbook.

- 1) Look up the occurrences of Esau outside of Genesis. What do we learn from these and prophecies about Edom that pick up on Esau? (e.g. Amos 1, Obadiah)
- 2) Write a list of contrasts between Jacob & Esau, Israel & Edom.
- 3) Read through Jeremiah 30-31 and note the links to Jacob. What is the significance of these chapters being based on Jacob's life?
- 4) How does Hosea present Jacob to us in chapter 12?
- 5) What types can you find in the life of Jacob?
- 6) Write a character sketch of each of the main characters in Jacob's life.
- 7) Trace Bethel through the Scriptures and write an overview of how this place develops in the Biblical record.

Section 6 – Conclusion and Sharing

Are there any unanswered questions that have occurred to you during your study? Write them here, try to answer them before conference and if not remember to ask them during the week. 😊

Write at least 3 exhortations that you have taken from your studies. Consider how these can be implemented in your life and make a difference to your character.

Take a neat expositional point or lesson that you have been excited to find during your studies. Share this point with at least 2 friends!