

Study Guide



The Line of Jacob Is Established

Distribute before session 1 for use in session 1.

Genesis 25:12–28:22

Resources for Worship

Use these resources for your daily study and at the week's assembly.

Remember families in your prayers this week. Pray that God might give parents wisdom and patience in rearing their children and might bring them up in the nurture and worship of the Lord. Pray that God might help children love, respect, and obey their parents, as God intends. Each day pray for a different, specific family by name, including the first names of all who are members of that family.

Hymn

Lord, open now my heart to hear,
And through Your Word to me draw near;
Preserve that Word in purity
That I Your child and heir may be.

Your Word it is that heals my heart,
That makes me whole in ev'ry part;
Your Word of joy within me sings,
True peace and blessedness it brings.

To God the Father, God the Son,
To God the Spirit, three in one,
Honor and praise forever be
Now and through all eternity!

Johannes Olearius; tr. Henry L. Lettermann

Prayer

Heavenly Father, You are the one who made us Your family through Your Son, Jesus Christ. Teach us to live in the love of Christ, so that the grace and peace of Your Spirit will abide throughout the home into which You have placed us. Amen.

Digging Deep

My Personal Study for Week 1

Day 1 • Read Genesis 25:12–34

1. Before dealing with the covenant lifeline through Isaac, Genesis records the line of the elder son, Ishmael (25:12–18). What promises did God keep concerning Ishmael? See Genesis 16:11–12 and 17:20.

2. a. Read Genesis 25:19–22. What did both Isaac and Rebekah do when faced with a problem?

b. What about prayer makes it a vital part of any Christian marriage?

3. God's announcement that Rebekah would become the mother of not one but two sons was certainly good news to her. What was probably strange or disquieting in the additional information about her twin boys?

4. **Challenge question.** God chose Jacob, not Esau, to carry the lifeline forward (Genesis 25:23). Note the Lord's restatement of this choice in Malachi 1:1–3. (Esau became the ancestor of the Edomites, traditional enemies of Israel, who lived south of the Dead Sea.) What important truth of the Gospel is underlined by God's choice of Jacob (Romans 9:10–13)?

5. Read Genesis 25:24–26. What significance do you see in Jacob grabbing Esau’s heel? See Genesis 27:36.

6. As with parental favoritism today, the favoritism shown by Isaac and Rebekah (25:27–28) spelled twin troubles ahead. What does James say about people who “play favorites” (James 2:9)?

7. Hebrews 12:16 provides additional insight into Esau’s character. His exchange of his birthright for a momentary gratification (Genesis 25:29–34) implies a guilt greater than squandering certain advantages in this life (a double portion of the estate and headship of the family). Esau was also despising the priestly functions and possession of the covenant promises that went with this position. How might we give away long-term “birthrights” for immediate gratification today?

9. Abraham and Isaac were at fault in what they did. Nevertheless, God continued to bless these patriarchs in spite of their moral lapses. What does this tell you about the way God deals with His people (Psalm 117:2)?

10. In what way might it be said that Isaac’s great blessings became a temporary curse to him, according to Genesis 26:14–22?

11. a. Note the various promises God gave to Isaac in Genesis 26:3–5, 23–24. How did Isaac respond to them (Genesis 26:6, 25)?

b. *For personal reflection. Sharing optional.* How do you respond to God’s blessings?

12. How is Proverbs 16:7 illustrated by the events described in Genesis 26:28–29?

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Day 2 • Read Genesis 26:1–35

8. Ninety-seven years had passed since Abraham’s encounter with a previous Abimelech. (Abimelech literally means “father is king”; no doubt it was a title used as a proper name.) What similarities and differences do you see between Isaac’s actions in Genesis 26:1–13 and his father’s actions in Genesis 12:10–20 and Genesis 20:1–18?

13. Why do you think Esau’s marriage to the two Hittite women would be the cause of so much grief (Genesis 26:34–35)? Refer to Genesis 24:3.

Jacob's Marriage: The Line Flourishes

Distribute after session 1 for use in session 2.

Genesis 29:1–31:21

Resources for Worship

Use these resources for your daily study and at the week's assembly.

As you begin your daily study this week, pray for couples who are beginning, or about to begin, their marriage. Include marriages to take place (or that have recently taken place) in your church, among your relatives, or within families of your friends. Or pray for couples whose marriages have been announced in your local newspaper. Remember also your own marriage, the marriage of your parents, or the marriages of your children. Ask God to bless those marriages with love and mutual respect and faithfulness.

Hymn

Lord of glory, You have bought us
 With Your lifeblood as the price,
 Never grudging for the lost ones
 That tremendous sacrifice;
 And with that have freely given
 Blessings countless as the sand
 To th' unthankful and the evil
 With Your own unsparing hand.

Grant us hearts, dear Lord, to give You
 Gladly, freely of Your own.
 With the sunshine of Your goodness
 Melt our thankless hearts of stone
 Till our cold and selfish natures,
 Warmed by You, at length believe
 That more happy and more blessed
 'Tis to give than to receive.

Yes, the sorrow and the sufferings
 Which on ev'ry hand we view
 Channels are for gifts and offerings
 Due by solemn right to You;
 Right of which we may not rob You,
 Debt we may not choose but pay
 Lest that face of love and pity
 Turn from us another day.

Eliza S. Alderson, alt.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, forgive us for thinking that our own cunning and ingenuity are responsible for the material and spiritual blessings You have given us. Like Jacob, even in the midst of injustice, grant us a perseverance that endures adversity while recognizing Your bounty. Amen.

Digging Deep

My Personal Study for Week 2

Review question: Why didn't Isaac simply retract the blessing he had unintentionally given to Jacob and give it, instead, to Esau, as he had intended?

Day 1 • Read Genesis 29:1–14a

1. Read Genesis 29:1–8. Buoyed by God's promise at Bethel, Jacob would cover more than 400 miles before encountering his uncle Laban. The well was near the city of Haran. This well actually was a cistern covered by a large, flat stone with a small opening in the center covered by a smaller stone. Wells in ancient times were good locations to obtain information or to find someone you were looking for. The language of Haran was Chaldee or Aramaic, known to Abraham's family, which also spoke Hebrew. The young shepherds were waiting for stronger men to help them move the stone or had agreed to water the animals only when all the flocks and shepherds were present for equal water distribution. How does Jacob's comment in Genesis 29:7 reveal his own experience or background?

2. List several character traits exhibited by Jacob in Genesis 29:9–14.

3. What previous visit might Jacob’s arrival have recalled to Laban’s mind (Genesis 24)?

b. What characteristics do these passages suggest that Christians seek in a mate (1 Corinthians 7:39; 1 Peter 3:1–7)?

4. a. What information or topics do you think Jacob related among “all these things” referred to in Genesis 29:13?

8. Jacob willingly and gladly gave up seven years of his life to win Rachel (Genesis 29:20). What did Christ give up to win us?

b. What incident might Jacob have left out of his account in saying what had brought him to Haran?

Philippians 2:5–8

5. This episode from Genesis 29 recalls the earlier romantic story involving Rebekah. What similarities and differences do you see as you look back at Genesis 24:10–67?

Hebrews 12:2

9. In Jacob’s time and place brides were heavily veiled, and extensive feasting and drinking accompanied weddings. Perhaps these factors help account for how Jacob failed to recognize his bride as Leah rather than Rachel. In what way did Jacob, by this cruel deception, experience what he himself had done to someone else (Genesis 27:18–35)?

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Day 2 • Read Genesis 29:14b–30

6. Laban had a month to observe his houseguest’s industrious nature. Read Genesis 29:14b–15. In what way does Jacob seem to exemplify the principle Paul expresses in Colossians 3:23–24?

10. The bridal week was a seven-day celebration (Judges 14:10, 12), during which time the groom and bride were addressed as king and queen. Laban’s proposal (Genesis 29:26–30) was later forbidden (Leviticus 18:18). What options did Jacob have once he discovered that he had spent his wedding night with Leah rather than Rachel?

7. a. What appears to have been the reason Jacob was attracted to Rachel rather than to Leah (Genesis 29:17–18)?