

A Word from Kathy

It is one thing to know about God or to hear others talk of the relationship they have with Him. It is an entirely different thing to have a personal relationship with the sovereign God of the universe.

Jacob had heard about God from his father, Isaac. He has listened to the stories of his grandfather Abraham's call and the promises given to him by God. Now the time had come for God to speak to Jacob personally. He must come to know God for himself. As you read and study this chapter, remember God takes us from where we are; he sees the possibilities that lie ahead and longs for us to know him.

Jeremiah 29:11 *"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.*

Pray and ask God to reveal himself clearly to you this week as you spend time in His word.

Observation

1. In Genesis 28 we see Isaac blessing Jacob once more and instructing him about finding a wife. What instructions did he give Jacob concerning his marriage (Vs. 1-2)? Verses
2. In verses 3-4 we read Isaac's prayer and blessing. What specifics did you see in Isaac's prayer that coincided with the Abrahamic Covenant promises? (God had made certain promises to Abraham, and now they were being passed on to Jacob.)
3. Jacob begins his journey from Beersheba to Paddan Aram to find Laban and get a wife from his mother's kinsmen. Locate Beersheba and Paddan Aram on a map. How long a journey was this?
4. Verses 6-8 tell us that Esau realized how displeasing his Canaanite wives had been to his father. We have seen that Esau thought little of the things of God; his birthright was of so little value that he sold it for a bowl of stew. Are you beginning to get a picture of the kind of man Esau was? What would you say Esau valued above all else?
5. When Esau realized his wives were so displeasing to his father, what did he decide to do?

6. What does going to Ishmael represent? Think back on our time studying Ishmael; was he the child of promise or Sarah's idea to help God out? Do you believe Esau understood any of this? Was he interested in God's sovereign plan?
7. Verses 6-19 give details of Jacob's journey from Beersheba to Haran. Jacob stops for the night; he finds a stone for a pillow and falls asleep. It is probably a little over 50 miles from Beersheba to Bethel (Luz); I am sure he was quite tired. What did he see in his dream? Who spoke to him? What specifically was said to Jacob? Where have we heard these things before?
8. When Jacob awoke, what did he realize about the place he had stopped to rest that night? In the morning what did he do that displayed his heart of worship? What name did he give this place? Do you know what that name means? In Genesis 12:8 we saw someone else do this very same thing as he worshipped God. Who was it?
9. Look up the word "vow" and define it. How important is a vow? Look up Ecclesiastes 5:4-5 and briefly state what you learn about a vow.
10. Jacob says "***If*** God will be with me and will watch over me on this journey I am taking and will give me food to eat and clothes to wear so that I return safely to my father's house, ***then*** the LORD will be my God and this stone that I have set up as a pillar will be God's house, and of all that you give me I will give you a tenth."
What are your thoughts as you read this vow? Do you think Jacob still has a few lessons to learn on humility and what it means to follow God?

Application

11. Most people find it less painful to learn from others mistakes. What lessons did you see in this chapter that you would rather learn from just observing others?
12. Jacob is just getting to know God Almighty (El Shaddai-the All Sufficient One) personally in this chapter. In what ways did God extend his gifts of mercy and grace in his dealing with Jacob?
Mercy is God in loving kindness withholding judgment due.
Grace is God giving generously to us what we do not deserve;
what we have not earned and do not merit.

13. Esau realized that his marriages to the two Hittite women had caused great distress to his parents. To gain his father's approval, he quickly took another wife; this time it was from Abraham's descendants. Do you think he prayed about this action before doing so, or was it another hasty decision made in his own reasoning? Have you ever been in a situation where you were aware of a wrong decision you made? Did you stop, pray, and wait to hear from God, or did you quickly come up with a plan to try and make things right? How did that work out for you?
14. Jacob had a long journey ahead of him. The journey from Beersheba to Haran was approximately 550 miles. Do you suppose this long journey gave him time to think about all that had taken place in his home over the years as these two brothers had grown up? Do you think he had regrets? Do you suppose he played the events over in his head, considering ways he could have handled many of the situations differently?
15. Have you ever spent time going back over events that you thought you could have handled better? Are there any situations you can think of in your own family right now that pop into your head where you wish the outcome could be different?
16. Is there anything you can do right now, with God's help, to change the outcome? What are you willing to sacrifice in order to see the Lord move in your home?
17. Have you met with God and truly heard from him. We must be willing to get alone and hear from God if we are to respond correctly.
18. Have you made any promises to God? What vows have you made to God? Are you keeping them and fulfilling them? Has God been faithful to do all he has promised you?
19. What promises has God made to you if you are a child of his? If you have trouble thinking of some, try looking at these verses to identify the promises.

Romans 8:1 *Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,*

Isaiah 41:10 *So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*

Joshua 1:9 ...Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."

Matthew 11:28-29 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

Isaiah 40:29-31 He gives power to the weak and strength to the powerless. Even youths will become weak and tired, and young men will fall in exhaustion. But those who trust in the Lord will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint.

Romans 8:37-39 overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us. And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

20. Choose one of the following and write a short paragraph.

- a. Describe the God who loves you and that you love and serve.
- b. Write a prayer of gratitude to the Lord; be as specific as possible.

21. Find someone this week to share at least part of what God has revealed to you through your study of Genesis 28.