

Jacob

- Genesis 25:19 – 50:14
- Jacob: literally, “one who takes the heel.” Figuratively was used to mean supplanter or deceiver.
 - Jacob took advantage of Esau’s weakness (who took the traditional position of the first-born lightly) to gain first position and a double portion of the inheritance (Genesis 25:29 – 34).
 - Jacob and Rebekah conspired to deceive Isaac so that Jacob actually would inherit the blessing (Genesis 27). However, Hebrews 11:20 indicates that Isaac intended to do the blessing that way anyway, so merely played along with the deception.
- His ministry and faithfulness in the Lord.
 - Hebrews 11:21, “By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshipped, leaning on the top of his staff” (Genesis 48). Apparently, God had told Jacob to reverse the usual order of blessing so that Ephraim would be blessed above his brother, Manasseh. As it turned out, Ephraim became the central portion and leader of the Northern Kingdom after the united kingdom divided. The tribe of Manasseh, although being more populous, never became a leading force.
 - Jacob predicted the important facets of each of the future tribes of Israel as they would develop up until the time of the Messiah (Genesis 49). Apparently, God used Jacob to predict that Judah would be the originator of the Messiah (49:10). The predictions about the other tribes became eerily true.
- Jacob, the supplanter or deceiver, was renamed Israel by God, which means “Prince with God” (Genesis 32:28). Jacob, although having several questionable episodes, interacted with God on several occasions.
 - (Genesis 28:10 – 22) While separating himself from Esau’s wrath, and to find a wife per his father’s instruction, Jacob fled to Syria, to the house of his uncle, Laban. Probably on the first night out, God appeared to Jacob and promised him the same land He had promised to Abraham, many descendants as was promised Abraham, and that he would be the ancestor of the Messiah as had been promised to Abraham. God could have accomplished all those promises to Abraham through Esau, but these promises diverted the lineage of the Messiah to the younger twin. In response, Jacob made some unsolicited promises: Jacob promised to accept God as his god if all went well on this trip and that he would donate a tenth of his profits to God. Note that Jacob required that he see the results before committing to God; he did not demonstrate much faith, but rather opted for sight.
 - (Genesis 29:31) Jacob had two wives because his uncle, Laban, had deceived him. Leah, the older and less attractive, was made fertile by God. Whether God intervened in any other of the pregnancies in this section (29:33 – 30:13) is unknown. Rachel and Leah both claimed that God had caused them to be fertile, but that fact is not confirmed in the text. However, Leah’s fifth son, Issachar, was conceived at the instigation of God (30:17), as was Rachel’s first son, Joseph (30:22).
 - Jacob’s husbandry plan for the sheep (Genesis 30:37 – 43) does not state in that passage if God caused the plan to work or if it just happened. Jacob attributed it to God, but that may or may not have been correct. However, later, Jacob recounted to Rachel a dream he had had in which God had told him how to succeed (31:10 – 13).

- Genesis 31:3) God specifically told Jacob to leave Syria and Laban’s household and to return to Isaac’s region of Palestine. God also promised to be “with him.” Further, God appeared to Laban and warned him not to harm Jacob (31:24, 29).
- (Genesis 32:1 – 2) Angels met Jacob as he and his family were returning from Syria to Palestine. The nature of the meeting is not described. However, Jacob did pray for protection from Esau (31:9 – 12).
- (Genesis 32:22 – 32) God wrestled with Jacob all night, leaving him with a damaged hip. During this encounter, God re-named him “Prince with God,” Israel.
- (Genesis 35:1) God instructed Jacob to settle near Bethel. Jacob also told his household to dispose of the idols they had brought with them from Syria. Upon arrival, he built an altar and sacrificed to God (35:2 – 7).
- (Genesis 35:9 – 15) God appeared to Jacob and repeated the re-naming and the land promise to Abraham.
- (Genesis 46:1 – 4) On the way to Egypt at Joseph’s invitation, God appeared to Jacob to reassure him that this was a good choice, that he would still be the father of a great nation, that he would live in peace in his days, and that his descendants would return to the promised land.
- “Jacob” is also used many times in the prophets and in Psalms as a figurative name for the nation of Israel. So, be sure to read the context to determine if God is referring to the person, Jacob, or the nation, Israel.