

# *Genesis Part 4*

## *Leader Guide*

(NASB and ESV)

WRESTLING  
WITH GOD

A STUDY ON ISAAC,  
JACOB, AND ESAU  
(Genesis 24–36)

*Wrestling with God: A Study on Isaac, Jacob, and Esau*  
*Genesis Part 4 Leader Guide (NASB and ESV)*  
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## USING LEADER GUIDES

Leader Guides are intended for you, the leader, to guide your Precept Upon Precept® and In & Out® discussions. They are designed to help you reason through the content of the lessons and to ensure you have understood what your group should have learned from their study. The guides offer effective plans for leading discussions.

The Holy Spirit is your guide as you prepare. He is the one who knows what your group needs to apply to their lives. Pray for them as they study and for yourself as you prepare to lead the discussion.

These guides can be used for either the NASB or the ESV edition of the courses. ESV words follow the NASB after a slash / or are set off with parentheses.

### Leader Guides include the following:

- Lesson emphasis
- A logical order for the discussion
- Discussion questions
- Suggested visual aid(s)

### Practical tips for using the Leader Guide:

- **Don't simply "do" the lesson.**  
Stay with the lesson until you have a good understanding of it. This will give you a better grasp of how the Leader Guide takes you through the lesson.
- **You don't have to ask every question in the guide.**  
Often one question will be covered while discussing another question so there is no reason to ask it. Your goal is not to ask every question, but to ask enough questions to make sure your group understood the lesson and to help them apply the truths to their lives.

### Using the Leader Guide with In & Out


#### When your entire group uses In & Out

Compare an In & Out lesson with the Leader Guide. Use what relates to the In & Out lesson as a guide for the discussion. Don't teach what's not in In & Out lessons. Remember your goal in the discussion is for your group to discuss what they've learned, not for you to lecture on what you learned.

#### For groups studying both Precept Upon Precept and In & Out

Use the Leader Guides as designed for PUP, knowing that the In & Out assignments will be covered in the discussion. Make a note in the Leader Guide of what is not in the In & Out.

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**GENESIS, PART 4**  
**LEADER GUIDE**  
**Lesson 1**

Lesson emphasis:

- Genesis 24 and 25
- Birthright and firstborn

If you and your group studied Genesis Parts 1 and 2, begin this discussion by asking about the segments in Genesis mentioned in Day 1. Otherwise, begin with the next question.

Genesis 2:4	The generations of the heavens and the earth
5:1	The generations of Adam
6:9	The generations of Noah
10:1	The generations of Shem, Ham, and Japheth
11:10	The generations of Shem
11:27	The generations of Terah

Who is named in this statement in Genesis 25?

- 25:12 The generations of Ishmael
- 25:19 The generations of Isaac

**GENESIS 24**

What is the setting of this chapter according to verse 1?

Abraham was very old, approximately 140 years.  
He was blessed by God.

What is this chapter about?

Abraham sent his servant to get a wife for his son Isaac.

Verses 1-9

What is the sequence of events?

Abraham made his servant swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that he would not take a wife for Isaac from the Canaanites.

The servant was to go to Abraham's country and relatives / kindred to get Isaac's wife.

Abraham said God would send His angel before the servant to accomplish the task. However, there was a stern warning not to take Isaac there since the land of Canaan was the land promised for Abraham’s descendants / offspring.

If the woman was not willing to follow the servant back to Isaac, then he was free of his oath.

#### Verses 10-27

What happened in these verses? Use the map as a visual aid here.

Abraham’s servant went to the city of Nahor in Mesopotamia—probably Haran.

When he got there, he prayed.

Ask your group what they learned about the servant’s prayer.

The servant knew God as the Lord, the God of his master Abraham.

It also appears that he personally knew God because of his complete trust displayed in his prayer. He prayed for success to find a wife for Isaac at the spring. He knew she had to be from Abraham’s relatives, and he asked that he’d know the one God had appointed for Isaac.

Before the servant finished speaking, Rebekah came out. She was the very beautiful / attractive virgin daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, the wife of Abraham’s brother Nahor. Rebekah did what Abraham’s servant had prayed.

How was the servant’s response to finding Rebekah, his answered prayer?

The man bowed and worshiped the Lord, blessing the Lord for guiding him to Abraham’s brothers / kinsmen. He had prayed before, and he prayed after, thanking God for His guidance.

#### Verses 28-49

What happened next?

Rebekah went to tell her brother Laban who offered more hospitality to the servant. The servant recounted to Laban and Bethuel the reason for his coming to them. He restated what Abraham had told him, and in verse 40 it says that Abraham was sure of the success of this journey as was clear in verse 7, too. Even the prayer, worship, and blessing were recounted to Laban and Bethuel.

He then asked for their consent to his request for Rebekah to go with him and be Isaac’s wife.

Verses 50-61

What was the result of the request?

Laban and Bethuel recognized that it was from the Lord and agreed for Rebekah to go with the servant and be Isaac's wife.

Abraham's servant gave gifts to Rebekah, her brother, and her mother.

Even though her mother and Laban wanted Rebekah to remain with them for a while longer, the servant pressed for an immediate departure. Rebekah was consulted as to her wishes, and she agreed to go with the servant without delay.

Verses 62-67

How does this chapter end?

Isaac was in the field and saw them coming at evening.

The servant told Isaac of all that had happened.

Then Isaac brought Rebekah into his mother's tent and took her as his wife. He loved her and was comforted after his mother's death, which was three years prior.

Ask your group what they noted on their At a Glance chart as a possible theme for Genesis 24.

Abraham's servant brought Rebekah for Isaac's wife

Then ask about personal application from this chapter and give time to discuss.

**GENESIS 25**

What are verses 1-18 about? Tell your group to look at "Isaac's Descendants" as a visual aid.

Abraham's other sons by his last wife, concubine, Keturah

He gave them all gifts and then sent them away from Isaac who inherited all he had.

Verses 12-18 tell of Ishmael's descendants. He died at 137 years old.

Verses 19-34

Who are these verses about?

The generations of Isaac, Abraham's son

What are the events of verses 19-26?

Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah, Bethuel's daughter.

He prayed to the Lord on behalf of his wife Rebekah, because they had been married about twenty years, but she had not had a child. The Lord answered him, and she conceived.

Compare with Genesis 20:7, 17.

Then, when Rebekah’s children struggled within her, she inquired of the Lord herself.

Rebekah wanted to know what was going on inside of her; she didn’t know until God told her that she was carrying twins.

God told her that they were two nations in her womb:

Two peoples

One would be stronger than the other

The older would serve the younger

What happened when the two were born? Tell your group to look at “Isaac’s Descendants.”

Rebekah’s firstborn son was red and hairy all over. “Esau” possibly means hairy.

Jacob was the second born of the twins. He was born with his hand on his brother’s heel.

His name means “one who takes by the heel” or “supplanter.”

Isaac was sixty years old when his twins were born, fifteen years before his father Abraham died at the age of 175 years.

What happened in verses 27-34?

Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the field, and Isaac loved him because he had a taste for game.

Jacob was a peaceful / quiet man, living in tents, and Rebekah loved him.

Give time for your group to discuss any thoughts or application of this family situation.

Why did Esau sell his birthright to Jacob?

Jacob had cooked some stew and his brother came in famished / exhausted from the field.

Esau asked Jacob for a swallow of the red stuff / stew.

This is why he is called Edom, which means “red.”



Edom is the southern part of the modern country of Jordan.  
Esau was the father of the Edomites.

Esau despised his birthright; he sold it to his brother.

Jacob would not give his brother some stew until Esau sold the birthright to him.

Jacob gave Esau some bread and stew after Esau agreed to sell the birthright for it.  
Relate this to the prophecy in verse 23, the older shall serve the younger, and also to the meaning of Jacob's name.

What do the cross-references about the firstborn say?

Genesis 49:3-4

Reuben was the firstborn of Jacob, called his might and the beginning / firstfruits of his strength. Here it states that the firstborn was preeminent in the family line.

1 Chronicles 5:1-2

Although the firstborn was Reuben, the birthright went to Joseph's sons because Reuben had defiled his father's bed. Reuben was not enrolled in the genealogy according to his birthright.

Exodus 13:2, 11-15; Psalm 78:51

The first male offspring of every womb was devoted / consecrated to the Lord to remember when He killed every firstborn in Egypt.

Exodus 4:22-23

Israel is God's son, His firstborn. If Pharaoh wouldn't let Israel go, God would kill Pharaoh's firstborn son.

Deuteronomy 21:15-17

Again the firstborn son is referred to as the beginning / firstfruits of a man's strength and also has the right of the firstborn, receiving a double portion of all his father has.

2 Chronicles 21:1-3

Jehoshaphat's son Jehoram was given the kingdom because he was his firstborn.

Hebrews 1:5-8; Colossians 1:15-18; Romans 8:29; Revelation 1:5

Jesus is God's firstborn, His Son. He's the firstborn of all creation.  
He created all things; He has the preeminence of all, the rank of the firstborn.  
Jesus is also the firstborn of the dead.

The "firstborn among many brethren / brothers," from Romans 8:29, is a reference to believers being in the family of God, children of God, with Jesus being the firstborn.

What should the birthright or right of the firstborn have meant to Esau?

Esau was born first; he had the right of the firstborn, the birthright. Therefore, a double portion of the inheritance of his father should go to him. He was the beginning of Isaac's strength, to be preeminent in dignity and power.

So when he sold his birthright for a single meal—for an immediate physical desire—he despised all that his birthright held. For a passing moment he gave away his future and the future of his descendants.

You might ask your group what they learned about Esau from Hebrews 12 and Romans 9.

He was an immoral and godless person.  
He sold his birthright.

God had told Rebekah what would happen before it did, just as He had done with Abraham and others. The older, Esau, was not to be the preeminent and inherit the right of the firstborn. The younger, Jacob, was the one chosen / elected by God, even before they were born. He would be the stronger of the two and the one through whom the covenant promises would be fulfilled.

Romans 9:11 clearly states that before the twins were born, before they had done anything good or bad, God had made the choice / election for His purpose to stand. He is the one who said the older would serve the younger.

He wills, and things happen as He said. So does that make God unjust, uncaring, and unmerciful? No, never! God is God, and He has mercy on whomever He wills to have mercy. It is His choice, not man's choice.

Ask about a possible chapter theme for Genesis 25.

Abraham married Keturah, died; Jacob and Esau were born

Give time to discuss any application from these events or the whole lesson.

**GENESIS, PART 4**  
**LEADER GUIDE**  
**Lesson 2**

Lesson emphasis:

- Genesis 26–27
- Blessed by God

**REVIEW**

To begin this discussion, ask your group what they remember about Genesis 24–25. Tell them to look at the At a Glance chart if they can't remember.

Genesis 24

Abraham was old and blessed by God.  
He sent his servant to get a wife for his son Isaac.  
Rebekah came from Abraham's family to be Isaac's wife.

Genesis 25

Abraham had other sons by his last wife Keturah.

Ishmael's descendants are listed.

Jacob and Esau were born, and Esau sold his birthright to Jacob.

**GENESIS 26**

Verses 1-11

How does this chapter begin? Use the maps as visual aids.

There was a famine, just as there was during the days of Abraham when he went to Egypt. Because of the famine, Isaac went to Gerar to Abimelech king of the Philistines.

*NOTE: Abimelech might or might not be the same person associated with Abraham. Because men lived longer at that time, it is possible he was the same Abimelech. It is also possible that the name Abimelech was given to any Philistine king of the same family line.*

The Lord appeared to Isaac and told him not to go to Egypt but stay in his land. Gerar was part of the land promised to Abraham and Isaac.

Ask about the similarities between Isaac in verses 1-4 and Abraham from the cross-references.

Genesis 12:10

Abraham left the land when there was a famine. But the Lord specifically told Isaac not to go to Egypt which is where Abraham went because of the famine at that time.

Both Abraham and Isaac were blessed by God. Compare Isaac's blessing in verses 3-4 with what God said to Abraham at various times when He blessed him in Genesis 12, 13, and 15.

Land promised to descendants / offspring

Multiply descendants / offspring

By your descendants / offspring all families / nations of the earth will be blessed

What happened in verses 7-11, and are there similarities between Isaac and Abraham?

Because of fear Isaac lied, saying that Rebekah was his sister.

Abimelech discovered the truth, and Isaac confessed why he lied.

Abimelech put a sentence of death on anyone touching Isaac or Rebekah.

Genesis 20:1-18

Abraham had done the same thing for the same reason, but Sarah was his sister.

Verses 12-22

What are the events of these verses?

In the same year Isaac reaped a hundredfold because of God's blessing.

He became very wealthy, and the Philistines envied him.

Isaac settled in the valley of Gerar and reopened wells dug in Abraham's day. Wells were life at that time and in that place; they needed water for people and animals.

Quarreling resulted with the herdsmen of Gerar. So Isaac was forced to move and dig another well which he named Rehoboth. God had given him a place to be fruitful.

Abraham had dug a well which was seized by Abimelech's servant, Genesis 21:22-34.

Verses 23-25

Where did Isaac go, and what happened there?

He went to Beersheba, and the Lord appeared to him again.

God told him not to fear because He was with him.

How does this compare with verse 3?

The Lord told Isaac to stay in the land, and He would be with him.

Isaac did what the Lord said, stayed in the land.

Give time for your group to discuss application. How does God being with a person help with fear?

What else did the Lord say to Isaac?

Again God states that He will bless and multiply Isaac for the sake of Abraham.

God had first promised Abraham those very things, and Isaac was part of God keeping His promise to Abraham.

Isaac, as Abraham had done before him, built an altar and called on the name of the Lord.

#### Verses 26-33

What are these verses about?

It was obvious to Abimelech that God was with Isaac and blessed him.  
So Abimelech didn't want to be Isaac's enemy.

He made a covenant with Isaac for self-preservation.  
Isaac agreed not to harm Abimelech.

Compare this with Genesis 21:22-34.

The same thing happened between Abimelech and Abraham.  
Abimelech asked for a covenant as protection.  
He recognized God's blessing on both Abraham and then Isaac.

#### Verses 34-35

How does this chapter end?

There is a time reference here that Esau was forty years old when he married.  
That made Isaac one hundred years old at the time.

Esau married daughters of Hittites who were not pleasing to his parents. Relate this to Abraham sending his servant to his relatives for Isaac's wife in Genesis 24.

Ask your group what they noted on the At a Glance chart as a possible theme for Genesis 26.

Isaac and Abimelech

## GENESIS 27

### Verses 1-17

What happened in these verses?

Isaac was old and asked Esau to get some game for him to eat, and then he would bless his son before he died.

Rebekah heard and told Jacob what was about to happen and her plan to be sure that Jacob was the one blessed by Isaac, not Esau.

God told her that the older of her sons would serve the younger before they were born, chapter 25.

Rebekah was deceptive toward Isaac and toward Esau.

Jacob mentioned that they could be caught. He would be a deceiver in the sight of his father and bring upon himself a curse and not a blessing. Even that didn't stop Rebekah.

She prepared food for Isaac and a disguise for Jacob to appear as Esau.

She was very detailed in her deception, because she wanted Jacob to smell and feel like Esau, and she wanted the food to taste like Esau's.

Give time for your group to discuss favoritism and deception within families.

### Verses 18-29

Whose deception is described in these verses? Tell your group to look at the chart at the end of Day Three in the lesson.

Jacob wanted the blessing of his father, so he did as Rebekah planned. He lied, saying that he was Esau and that God had quickly given him the game to prepare. He let Isaac feel the skin of the kids on his hands and smell Esau's clothes on him.

Isaac was suspicious, but not suspicious enough to discover the truth.

Isaac blessed Jacob whom he thought was Esau. Verse 28 is an agricultural blessing, while verse 29 is the blessing of headship over his relatives.

Jacob became the one blessed of the Lord, as Abimelech said of Isaac.

Ask about the definition of “bless” given in the lesson and about the cross-references.

Genesis 12, 17, and 22

God blessed Abraham with specific promises about descendants / offspring, land, and blessing all families / nations of the earth.

Those promises were passed to Isaac, Genesis 26:3-5.

Verses 30-40

What happened after Isaac blessed Jacob?

No sooner had Jacob left than Esau came in from hunting. He prepared his food for Isaac and went in for his blessing. Isaac realized what had happened when Esau stood before him.

Even though Esau cried out with a great and bitter cry, Isaac had made Jacob Esau’s master, had given Jacob all his relatives as servants, and had sustained him with grain and new wine.

Esau related that his brother, the supplanter, had taken away his birthright by deceit and now his blessing, too. But what he said about the birthright was not true; he had willingly sold it to Jacob for a single meal.

Esau asked for a blessing from Isaac, and he wept before his father.

Relate this to Hebrews 12:15-17.

Esau, a godless man, sold his birthright for a single meal.  
When he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected.  
And even though he sought for it with tears, there was no repentance.

What was Esau’s blessing? Tell your group to look at the chart in the lesson.  
Discuss the contrast between Esau’s blessing and Isaac’s.

Today people might not call Esau’s blessing a blessing.  
live away from the earth’s fertility / fatness and heaven’s dew  
live by his sword  
serve his brother Jacob  
when he became restless, he would then break Jacob’s yoke from his neck

Verses 41-46

How does the chapter end?

Esau bore a grudge against Jacob because of the blessing.

His plan was to kill Jacob after Isaac died.  
Again Rebekah heard; she heard about Esau’s plan to kill Jacob.

She then planned to send Jacob away for a while until Esau cooled off. Rebekah told Jacob to go to her brother Laban in Haran. She would send for her beloved son to come home when his brother wasn't so angry.

Rebekah suggested to Isaac that Jacob needed a wife from her relatives, not from the daughters of Heth like Esau had done. Since these wives of his were also a grief to Isaac, she knew that she would have no trouble persuading him.

Ask your group what they learned about God and His sovereignty from these chapters.

Ask what they learned from this account about behavior within families or with others.

How does the concept of blessed by God relate to New Testament believers? Discuss the cross-references.

Acts 3:12, 25-26

In this passage Peter addressed “men of Israel.”

Verse 25 mentions the covenant with Abraham, that in his seed / offspring all families of the earth will be blessed. That was fulfilled in Jesus.

Verse 26 specifically says that blessing was to the Jews first. Jesus was of Israel and was sent to bless them first by turning them from their wicked ways.

Galatians 3:5-14

Paul wrote to the Galatians that Gentiles also received the blessing of Abraham by faith. The blessing of Abraham is salvation.

Both Acts and Galatians state that the blessing is for all the nations of the earth. So it is those who are of faith who are blessed with Abraham.

When people hear the gospel and respond in faith, then they receive the blessing of Abraham, salvation.

Give time for any personal application from this lesson.



**GENESIS, PART 4**  
**LEADER GUIDE**  
**Lesson 3**

Lesson emphasis:

- Genesis 27–31

**REVIEW**

To begin this discussion, ask what your group remembers as the main events of Genesis 24–27. Use the At A Glance chart and the chart “Isaac’s Descendants” as visual aids.

**Genesis 24**

Abraham was very old, approximately 140 years, and he was blessed by God. He sent his servant to get a wife for his son Isaac. Rebekah came from Abraham’s family to be Isaac’s wife.

**Genesis 25**

Abraham’s sons by Keturah.  
Jacob and Esau were born to Isaac; Esau sold his birthright to Jacob.

**Genesis 26**

God established His oath with Isaac, appeared to Isaac.  
Isaac and Abimelech made a covenant.

**Genesis 27**

Jacob deceived Isaac and took Esau’s blessing.

What was Esau’s reaction to Jacob’s deception?

Esau bore a grudge against Jacob and planned to kill him after his father’s death. Isaac was over one hundred years old at that time.

What was Rebekah’s response?

She told Jacob of Esau’s plan, telling him to flee to Haran to her brother Laban. Once Esau’s fury and anger subsided, she would send for Jacob.

Ask your group what they learned from their study of “fury” and “anger.”

Genesis 4:4-8

Cain was angry because of his brother. God accepted Abel’s offering, but not Cain’s. Later his anger led to murdering his brother. Compare this with Esau’s anger and what he planned for Jacob.

Genesis 18:30-32

The Lord gets angry, or at least Abraham thought He might.

Genesis 30:2

Jacob got angry with Rachel when she demanded that he give her children.

Hebrews 12:14-17

It seems that Esau's anger is connected here with bitterness, which causes trouble to all involved.

Ephesians 4:25-32

Believers are to put away anger and bitterness. Don't sin when angry.

Give time for your group to discuss application of this.

How does Genesis 27 end?

After Rebekah told Jacob that he should flee to Laban, she then went to tell Isaac her story of why Jacob was going to her relatives.

Esau had married two Hittites, and they brought grief to Isaac and Rebekah.

## **GENESIS 28**

Verses 1-9

How does this chapter begin?

Isaac agreed that Jacob should not take a Canaanite wife. He charged Jacob not to take a wife from the daughters of Canaan but to go to Paddan-aram to take a wife from the daughters of Laban.

He asked that God Almighty bless Jacob, make him fruitful and multiply him, and that he become a company of peoples. He asked the Lord to give the blessing of Abraham to Jacob and his descendants / offspring that Jacob would possess the land of his sojournings.

How did this affect Esau?

Esau then knew that his wives, daughters of Canaan, displeased his father. So, he went to Ishmael and married his daughter Mahalath. This indicated he wanted to please his father by taking a wife who was not from the daughters of Canaan but of a relative.

Verses 10-22

What are these verses about? Use the map “Abraham’s Sojournings” as a visual aid.

Jacob departed from Beersheba and went toward Haran. He spent the night on the way, placing one of the stones under his head. He dreamed of a ladder set on earth with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. The Lord stood above it and spoke:

I am the God of Abraham and Isaac.  
The land on which you lie, I will give you and your descendants/ offspring.  
You shall spread out to the west, east, north, south.  
In you and your descendants / offspring all families of the earth will be blessed.  
I am with you and will keep you wherever you go.  
I will bring you back to the land.  
I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised.

God confirmed the promise to Jacob as he did Abraham and Isaac.

What was Jacob’s response?

Jacob realized the Lord is in this place. He called it the house of God and the gate of heaven.

In the morning, Jacob took the stone on which he had laid his head, set it up as a pillar, and called the name of the place Bethel.

*NOTE: The marginal note in the NASB and the ESV says Bethel means “the house of God.”<sup>1</sup>*

Jacob then vowed that if God would be with him, keep him on his journey, and he returned to his father’s house in safety, the Lord would be his God, and he would give God a tenth of all God gave him.

Relate this to Genesis 14:17-20.

In Genesis 14, Abraham gave Melchizedek a tenth of all the spoils taken when rescuing Lot.

Although Rebekah and Jacob used deceit in order for Jacob to receive the blessing, God still kept His promise, and His plan was not thwarted.

Ask your group what they noted on the At a Glance chart as a possible theme for Genesis 28.

Jacob’s ladder dream, vow to the Lord

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<sup>1</sup> New American Standard Bible: 1995 update, marginal note (Gen 28:19) (LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995).

## GENESIS 29

What are the main events of this chapter? Use the map as a visual aid.

Jacob continued his journey until he came to a well close to Haran.

He met Rachel at the well. She was his mother's brother's daughter.

He met his uncle Laban and stayed with him.

Jacob agreed to serve Laban seven years to marry Rachel.

Laban deceived Jacob by giving him Leah instead. He told Jacob that he should complete the week of Leah, then he would give Rachel to him.

Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah. And the Lord saw that Leah was unloved and opened her womb, but Rachel was barren.

Who were the sons born to Jacob?

Leah bore

Reuben—"Because the Lord has seen / looked on my affliction; surely / for now my husband will love me."

Simeon—"Because the Lord has heard that I am unloved / hated, He has therefore (ESV does not have "therefore") given me this son also."

Levi—"Now this time my husband will become / be attached to me, because I have borne him three sons."

Judah—"This time I will praise the Lord."

Her attitude changed when she had her fourth child. Her focus was no longer on her husband but on the Lord.

Give time for your group to discuss any relevant application.

Tell them to look at their At a Glance chart to see what they noted as a possible theme for this chapter.

Jacob to Haran; wives—Leah and Rachel, four sons born

## GENESIS 30

How does this chapter continue the story?

Rachel became jealous of Leah and told Jacob to give her children or else she would die. Jacob’s anger burned against her even though he loved her.

Rachel gave her maid Bilhah to Jacob as a wife.

Relate this to Sarai giving Hagar to Abram in Genesis 16:1-3.

Bilhah bore

Dan—Rachel said, “God has vindicated / judged me, and has indeed / also heard my voice and has given me a son.”

Naphtali—Rachel said, “With mighty wrestlings I have wrestled with my sister, and I have indeed prevailed.” (ESV—and have prevailed)

Leah gave her maid Zilpah to Jacob as a wife.

Zilpah bore

Gad—Leah said, “How fortunate!” (ESV—Good fortune has come.)

Asher—Leah said, “Happy am I! For women will call (ESV—have called) me happy.”

God gave Leah more children.

Issachar—“God has given me my wages, because I gave my maid / servant to my husband.”

Zebulun—“God has endowed me with a good gift / endowment; now my husband will dwell with (ESV—honor) me, because I have borne him six sons.”

Dinah, a daughter

Then the Lord remembered Rachel and opened her womb.

Rachel bore Joseph—“God has taken away my reproach.”

And, “May the LORD give / add to me another son.”

From the names of their sons, it seems that both Leah and Rachel recognized God opens and closes the womb.

Ask your group what they learned from the cross-references concerning infertility.

Abraham, Leah, and Hannah all prayed that the Lord would open a womb, and He did.

At that time barrenness was looked on as affliction, reproach, and disgrace. Sarah, Rachel, and Elizabeth all recognized that God opens and closes wombs.

How does this chapter end?

Although Jacob knew it was time to return to his home, Laban wanted him to stay because the Lord had blessed him on Jacob's account.

They agreed that Jacob would receive livestock for more time working for Laban, and Jacob became exceedingly prosperous / increased greatly.

What is a theme for this chapter?

Jacob's other sons were born; he became prosperous

### **GENESIS 31**

What is this chapter about? Use the map as a visual aid.

Jacob left Laban to return home to Canaan.

Why did he go? What did he learn about the Lord?

The Lord told Jacob to return to the land of his fathers, and He would be with him.

Jacob called Rachel and Leah. He told them their father had cheated him and changed his wages ten times; yet God did not allow Laban to hurt him. In a dream, the angel of God came. God said He had seen what Laban had done. "I am the God of Bethel . . . arise, leave / go out from this land, and return to the land of your birth / kindred."

As God had promised at Bethel, He had kept Jacob. He was going to bring Jacob back to the land of Canaan, which He had promised to Jacob and his descendants / offspring. Jacob was recognizing God's hand in his life.

So, Jacob and his family left there to return to Canaan. But Jacob deceived Laban by not telling him that he and his family were leaving.

Verses 22-42

What happened in these verses?

On the third day, when it was told Laban that Jacob had fled, he pursued him seven days and overtook him.

God came to Laban in a dream and told him not to speak good or bad to Jacob. Laban asked Jacob why he had fled secretly and deceived him. Jacob became angry, saying he had worked for Laban for twenty years. God had seen his affliction and the toil / labor of his hands, so He had rendered judgment (ESV—God rebuked Laban).

Verses 43-55

Who and what are these verses about? How does this chapter end?

Laban asked Jacob to make a covenant as a witness between them.

Jacob took a stone and set it up as a pillar; then they made a heap of stones.

God would be a witness if Jacob mistreated Laban's daughters or took other wives. Neither would pass by the heap to do the other one harm.

*NOTE: Some in your group might notice that Laban called God the God of Abraham, Nahor, and their father, indicating Terah at least acknowledged God as his God.*

Jacob swore by the fear of his father Isaac, offered a sacrifice on the mountain, and ate a meal with his kinsmen. Early in the morning, Laban arose, kissed his sons and daughters and blessed them, then departed.

God kept His promise to Jacob and did not allow Laban to harm him, but came to Laban in a dream, saying he should not speak good or bad to him.

To end your discussion, you might ask your group what they've learned about God from these chapters on Jacob's life. Use the Journal on God as a visual aid.

God did not allow Laban to thwart His hand in Jacob's life.  
Although Laban changed Jacob's wages ten times, God prospered Jacob.

God promised Jacob that He would be with him, give him descendants / offspring, and bring him back to the land of Canaan.

He kept him during his time in Paddan-aram and was bringing him back to the land of promise. God keeps His promises and nothing can thwart His plan.

What is a theme for Genesis 31?

Jacob left Laban; Mizpah covenant

Ask your group if their lives show others that they believe these truths about God.





**GENESIS, PART 4**  
**LEADER GUIDE**  
**Lesson 4**

**Lesson emphasis:**

- Genesis 31–36
- Israel and Edom

**REVIEW**

Ask what your group remembers as the main events of Genesis 24–31. Tell them to look at their At a Glance chart, the maps, and “Isaac’s Descendants” as visual aids.

Rebekah came from Abraham’s family to be Isaac’s wife.

Jacob and Esau were born to Isaac; Esau sold his birthright to Jacob.

God established His oath—covenant—with Isaac, appeared to Isaac.

Jacob deceived Isaac and took Esau’s blessing; Esau planned to kill him.

Jacob went to his mother’s relatives for a wife.

On the way to Paddan-aram, Jacob had the ladder dream; God’s promise  
In Haran Jacob married Leah and Rachel; 12 sons and a daughter born

Jacob became prosperous

Lord told him to return to Canaan; Laban caught up with him—covenant, Mizpah

Laban asked Jacob to make a covenant as a witness between them.

Jacob took a stone and set it up as a pillar; then they made a heap of stones.

God would be a witness if Jacob mistreated Laban’s daughters or took other  
wives. Neither would pass by the heap to do the other one harm.

Jacob swore by the fear of his father Isaac, offered a sacrifice on the mountain, and  
ate a meal with his kinsmen. Early in the morning, Laban arose, kissed his sons and  
daughters and blessed them, then departed.

God kept His promise to Jacob and did not allow Laban to harm him, but came to  
Laban in a dream, saying he should not speak good or bad to him.

Continue to use the maps as visual aids throughout the discussion.

## GENESIS 32

What are the main events of this chapter?

*NOTE: Discuss each, but don't lose your time here; there is still a lot more to discuss.*

In verses 1-5, angels met Jacob as he went on his way from Paddan-aram back to the land of Canaan. Relate this to Genesis 28:10-17.

When he saw the angels he said, "This is God's camp." He named that place Mahanaim, which means "two camps" or "two companies." Compare with verse 7; Jacob divided his people, herds, and flocks into two companies.

Jacob sent messengers to his brother Esau in Seir in Edom.

### Verses 6-8

The messengers returned to Jacob with the news that Esau was coming and had four hundred men with him.

Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed and wanted favor from Esau.

He had bought Esau's birthright and got Esau's blessing by deception. Then Esau planned to kill him, so Jacob fled. He was gone for twenty years.

After dividing his people and possessions into two companies, what did Jacob do according to verses 9-12?

He prayed and reminded God that He had told him to return and He would prosper him. He said that he was unworthy of God's love and faithfulness toward him. Jacob was humbled. God was faithful to His promises.

Jacob's prayer—his request—was for deliverance. He reminded God that He had said He would prosper him. In verse 12 he prayed God's Word back to Him.

What happened in verses 13-21?

Jacob spent the night there and selected a gift for Esau.

Verse 20 says he wanted to appease Esau for acceptance.

What are the events in verses 22-32?

Jacob crossed the ford of the Jabbok and sent everyone else across the stream, and he was left alone. Then he wrestled with a man all night.

Verse 30 says this man was God. So, Jacob named the place Peniel because he saw God face to face, but his life was preserved / delivered.

This was his personal encounter with God, and God blessed him. God changed his name from Jacob to Israel. Jacob had been wrestling against God all his life, then he submitted to God.

Give time for your group to discuss any application relevant to the discussion of this chapter.

Ask what they noted on their At a Glance chart as a possible theme for Genesis 32.

Jacob wrestled with God—“Israel”

### **GENESIS 33**

#### Verses 1-17

How do the events continue?

Esau, Edom, came to meet Jacob, and their meeting was a pleasant reunion. Verse 4 gives the description.

Esau headed back down to Seir, and Jacob went to Succoth. Jacob built a house for himself and made booths for his livestock. They stayed at Succoth for a while.

#### Verses 18-20

What are these verses about?

Then Jacob went to Shechem. He bought some land there and made an altar.

He called the altar “El-Elohe-Israel,” meaning “God, the God of Israel.”

Previously Jacob had referred to God as the God of Abraham and Isaac, but here he called God the God of Israel, Jacob.

At Bethel, Jacob said that if God would be with him and keep him on his journey, and he returned to his father’s house in safety, then the Lord would be his God.

God had kept Jacob and had been with him on his journey. He had returned, and God was his God.

What is a possible theme for this chapter?

Jacob met Esau, returned to Canaan

You might ask your group for application about the Lord and/or Jacob’s life.

## GENESIS 34

What are the main events of this chapter?

*NOTE: Dinah was number eleven in the order of Jacob's children, so she probably wasn't very old when they left Paddan-aram, but in Genesis 34 she was at least a teenager. Quite a bit of time had passed.*

Shechem, the prince of the land, took Dinah, Jacob and Leah's daughter. He was in love with her and wanted to marry her.

The brothers were grieved / indignant and angry because of this disgraceful / outrageous thing in Israel. This is the first time that the land is called Israel.

Her brothers, Simeon and Levi—second and third-born of Jacob's sons—deceived Shechem and his father.

After the men of Shechem were circumcised, Simeon and Levi killed them while they were in pain. Then the rest of Jacob's sons came and looted the city and took their wives and children. Jacob said, "You have brought trouble on me . . . ."

How does Genesis 49:5-7 compare with this event?

What they did to the men of Shechem was cruel and violent, from anger and wrath. They suffered the consequences of that action later.

Ask about a possible theme for Genesis 34.

Dinah; Simeon and Levi killed Shechem and his men

## GENESIS 35

### Verses 1-8

How does this chapter begin?

Use the chart in Day Three of the lesson as a visual aid along with the maps.

God told Jacob to go live at Bethel and build an altar there.

Jacob gathered all the foreign gods they had like what Rachel had stolen from Laban, Genesis 31:30-35. Jacob hid them under the oak near Shechem.

They purified themselves before going to Bethel where the Lord had promised to be with Jacob wherever he went.

God protected them as they journeyed, and the cities around them were in great terror so that they didn't come after Jacob's family. God kept His promise, and He still does.

When they came to Bethel, he built an altar, and Jacob called the place El-bethel, The God of the House of God.<sup>1</sup>

God first revealed Himself there to Jacob when he fled from Esau about twenty years earlier.

Jacob recognized God's faithfulness in his life.

Ask your group if they recognize God's faithfulness in their lives. Give time for application discussion of what they've learned from their study of Jacob's life.

Verses 9-15

What happened in these verses?

God appeared to Jacob again and blessed him.  
He said Jacob was no longer his name; he was Israel.

How does this compare with God's promises to Jacob in Genesis 28?

God did what He promised Jacob, and Jacob kept his promise he'd made to God.

What God had promised to Abraham and Isaac, He promised to Jacob.  
Nations and kings from him  
Promised land of Canaan  
Descendants / offspring

Then Jacob, Israel worshiped the Lord with the pillar and the offering.

Verses 16-29

What are the main events of these verses?

They left Bethel and headed toward Ephrath, Bethlehem.  
Rachel died giving birth to Benjamin and was buried there.  
Reuben, the oldest son, laid with Bilhah, and Israel heard about it.

Jacob finally came to his father Isaac at Mamre, Hebron.  
Isaac died at 180 years old, and Jacob and Esau buried him.

Ask your group what they noted on their At a Glance as a chapter theme.

Benjamin born, Rachel died; Isaac died

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<sup>1</sup> *New American Standard Bible: 1995 update*, marginal note (Gen 28:19; 35:7).

## GENESIS 36

Use “Isaac’s Descendants” along with the maps for visual aids.  
Who is this chapter about?

Generations of Esau or Edom, father of the Edomites

Esau had three wives and five sons born to him in Canaan.

*NOTE: The wives’ names are not the same here as in Genesis 26:34. Either they had other names, like Esau, Edom and Jacob, Israel; or one or two wives had died and he married others. It seems that Ishmael’s daughter and Nebaioth’s sister had two names, Mahalath and Basemath, according to verse 3 and Genesis 28:8-9.*

He lived in the hill country of Seir.

Verses 20-30 tell about the Horites who descended from Seir and lived in that land. Verse 25 connects Oholibamah—Esau’s wife—with the descendants of Seir. She was the daughter of Anah, a chief of the Horites.

Eliphaz was his firstborn son.

Other names from Genesis 36 that are repeated throughout the Old Testament are Teman, Amalek, and the place named Bozrah.

What is a possible theme for this chapter?

The generations of Esau

Ask what your group learned from the cross-references about Amalek.

### Exodus 17:8-16

God’s prophecy that He would utterly blot out the memory of Amalek

Relate this to the promise God made Abraham that He would bless those who bless him, and curse those who curse him, Genesis 12:3. Isaac said it to Jacob when he blessed him in Genesis 27:29. Amalek came against Israel.

### Deuteronomy 25:17-19

This seems to refer to this same account in Exodus 17.

Then discuss what your group learned from the other cross-references about Israel and Edom. You don’t need to ask about each reference, only the ones they bring up for discussion.

### Numbers 20:14-21

The king of Edom would not let Israel pass through his land on their way to Canaan. This account seems to be at the end of the 40 years after Israel left Egypt.

Joshua 24:3-4

God gave Mount Seir to Esau. He established the borders for both Israel and Edom.

Obadiah

This is Obadiah's vision of Edom's judgment, destruction because of what they did to Israel.

To close your discussion, you might ask your group what they learned from this study about the Lord, His promises, Jacob, the nations of Israel and Edom.