



WEEKLY CHRISTIAN FOCUS

WCF WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM JACOB (also named Israel)?

Matthew 8:10

When Jesus heard this, he was amazed and said to those following him, "Truly I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith. **¹¹I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.** ¹²

Greetings dear friends,

Well, what **can** we learn from dear Jacob, the last of the three main Patriarchs? Jacob, the son of Isaac, and the grandson of Abraham, the second generation into the great promises God made to Abraham to bless every generation of faith after him.

So much has been written and also made into movies about all these men.

This week, I was reading the story of Jacob, and I came across something that really moved me and made a deep impression on me. But it is not the usual things of his life that we have been accustomed to hearing, **but rather something that happened in his last days. I will explain shortly.**

First though, let's list the main things that happened in his life in a short form for anyone reading this who may not be familiar with him. So much happened in his life though, that even THIS condensed synopsis is quite long.



A summary of Jacob's Life. Stuff Jacob did:

1. Jacob was born to Isaac and Rebecca. He was a twin boy, and was the younger twin. His (older) brother was Esau.

2. The Lord told his pregnant mother that the 'older son would



serve the younger'. Genesis 25:21-28

3. In young adulthood now, Jacob, with the prompting of his scheming mother Rebecca, steals Esau's birthright* in exchange for a bowl of lentil stew, which Esau was hungry for.



4. His mother advises him to deceive her husband, poor old

nearly blind Isaac. He is disguised with Esau's clothes, (Stolen therefore) and Jacob goes in to his father pretending to be Esau, and receive the blessing of Isaac. Isaac is deceived and 'blesses' Jacob, thinking him to be the firstborn Esau.

5. Esau, eventually returning to the home (tents) meets his father and is declined the

First-born blessing.

6. Esau determines to kill Jacob.

7. Rebecca immediately tells Jacob to flee (far away and back to Mesopotamia, to her ancestral homeland) in the town of Haran to her brother. Genesis 27:41-46. **Although Rebecca anticipated that things would calm down and Jacob would return in a short time, she never actually saw her son again in this life!**



8. On his way to Haran, Jacob has the amazing dream of the ladder reaching up to heaven with the angels of God ascending and descending on it. Genesis 28:10-22.

The Lord was above the ladder and reconfirmed the mighty promises, He had given both Abraham and Isaac before, that he (Jacob) would be the father of nations and that God promised to be with him wherever he went, and also to bring him back to this land (today called Israel)

9. In the morning before moving on, Jacob made a pillar to the Lord, the stone upon which he rested his head and vowed to God to serve Him, and to surely give a tenth of his possessions/fortunes to God. (This is the second mention of the 'tithe' in the Bible.)



10. To keep this as short as we can, Jacob arrives at Haran, meets his uncle Laban, (Rebecca's brother). He stays with him, working for him in husbandry for 21 years, marries two of his daughters, Leah and Rachel. Who bore him many sons, especially Leah.

11. Laban was crooked just like Jacob, and eventually great friction rose between them. 21 years have passed by and he flees one night with his two wives, some concubines and all the livestock that legally was his and flees back to the land of his fathers. He has twelve sons by now. Upon finding this out, Laban pursues him and his daughters through the night, but they make their peace and Jacob leaves safely.

12. Jacob is aware that he is about to meet his brother Esau at some point and fears for his life and

all his wives and children.

After dividing the people that was with him, and the flocks, and herds, and the camels, into two bands; hoping one of the bands can escape. Jacob then calls unto the Lord in prayer.

Genesis 32:8-11

And said, If Esau come to the one company, and smite it, then the other company which is left shall escape.

9 And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the Lord which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee:

10 I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands.

11 Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children. Eventually they meet and also make their peace and embrace.



The night before they meet, **Jacob wrestles with either an angel who has appeared to him all night long. The angel, or whoever it really was, possibly God in a human form, dislocated Jacob's hip and also changes his name from Jacob (the deceiver) to Israel (Prince with God).**

13. **Jacob is now back in the Promised Land after a 21 year hiatus in exile, with his entire family. Genesis 33:17-20. He buys land from the inhabitants, originally at the town of Succoth.**

14. **The terrible thing his sons did. Time would fail me to explain this in a sentence, but two of his**

son's ended up killing the prince of the land, his son and the inhabitants of one city. Jacob had to move immediately. He travelled to Bethel where God appeared to him at first. The truly gruesome story is found in Genesis 34 and 35. His father Isaac dies around this time. Now we find him in Bethel in the land of Canaan.

15. **At this time Joseph, Jacob's second youngest son, begins having dreams of greatness which greatly annoy his older brethren,** as well as the multi-coloured special tunic Jacob had made for him, his brothers are very jealous and you know the story, they sell him to Midianite



traders heading for Egypt. They lie to Jacob and say a wild beast must have killed him, 'look here is his lovely tunic we 'found', which they had already doctored with animal blood. **Jacob is bereft and never emotionally recovers from the 'death' of Joseph!** What a dirty business.

But wait! Around 25-27 years pass by. Jacob and his remaining family remain where they are in the land of promise. All seems well until the famine comes to them probably twenty years after Joseph left them.

Since I was a young man, I have never been able to read the story of Joseph and his brothers and his father without weeping profusely. It always deeply moves me.

There Jacob, having lost his son under mysterious circumstances, is not getting any younger.

Perhaps you have experienced or seen a situation where your family is broken or disrupted and you never see some of them again? Life tries to go on, and you try to survive whatever

tragedy or sorrow that happened or whatever event it was that turned so many things upside down.

But Jacob knew the Lord inside his heart, he had seen the faith of his father Isaac, and his grandfather Abraham. He retained his faith that God was in control, and like the verse: Romans 8 ²⁸ 'And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose'. Jacob trusted God, which must have helped him bear some of the pains of his life.

Finally, the story of Joseph's intertwines with his family in Egypt, and Jacob's sons come back from collecting food for the famine from Egypt. Joseph has become the second leader in Egypt and had made himself know to his brothers.



Let's pick up the near ending of Jacob's life at this point:

Genesis 45:26

And they said to him, Joseph is still alive! And he is governor over all the land of Egypt! And Jacob's heart began to stop beating *and* [he almost] fainted, for he did not believe them.

²⁷ But when they told him all the words of Joseph which he had said to them, and when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived [and warmth and life returned].

²⁸ And Israel (Jacob) said, It is enough! Joseph my son is still alive. I will go and see him before I die.

Genesis 46

So Israel (Jacob) made his journey with all that he had and came to Beersheba [a place hallowed by sacred memories] and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac.

² And God spoke to Israel in visions of the night, and said, Jacob! Jacob! And he said, Here am I.

³ And He said, I am God, the God of your father; do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will there make of you a great nation.

⁴ I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also surely bring you [your people Israel] up again; and Joseph will put his hand upon your eyes [when they are about to close in death].

How wonderful that God yet again reveals Himself to Jacob and speaks with him, telling him the future.

⁵ So Jacob arose *and* set out from Beersheba, and Israel's sons conveyed their father, their little ones, and their wives in the wagons that Pharaoh had sent to carry him. *It was a very long journey, at least Jacob was carried there by his strong sons. God bless the practically-minded Pharaoh. The Lord made provision for him.*

⁶ And they took their cattle and the gains which they had acquired in the land of Canaan and came into Egypt, Jacob and all his offspring with him:

⁷ His sons and his sons' sons with him, his daughters and his sons' daughters—all his offspring he brought with him into Egypt.

No man (or woman or child, left behind, as the American military say.)

So we see, that this was a generation-changing trip, no longer living in the Land of promise but rather in a heathen country at the direction of God and its King! Jacob perhaps may have even known the promise which God made to

his grandfather Abraham, that his descendants would be there 400 years. Genesis 15:13 and Exodus 15:13

Jacob arrives in his new land of Egypt!

Jacob and Joseph reunite after 25+ years of separation

Genesis 46:28

And he sent Judah before him to Joseph, to direct him to Goshen *and* meet him there; and they came into the land of Goshen.

²⁹ Then Joseph made ready his chariot and went up to meet Israel his father in Goshen; and he presented himself *and* gave distinct evidence of himself to him [that he was Joseph], and [each] fell on the [other's] neck and wept on his neck a good while.

³⁰ And Israel said to Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen your face [and know] that you are still alive.

³¹ Joseph said to his brothers and to his father's household, I will go up and tell Pharaoh and say to him, My brothers and my father's household, who were in the land of Canaan, have come to me.

How beautiful and deeply powerful! Joseph even prepared some evidence for Jacob to show it really was him. Praise the Lord. Jacob, now very old, was beyond satisfied, seeing his son after so many years again. They wept on each other's necks a good while!

As we have seen, Jacob's life was extremely difficult and troubling and a struggle from birth to now, with some highlights mixed in of great joy, and this was the final joy, to see his beloved son.

Genesis 47 and what I love about Jacob's meeting with Pharaoh.

⁵ And Pharaoh spoke to Joseph, saying, Your father and your brothers have come to you.

⁶ The land of Egypt is before you; make your father and your brothers dwell in the best of the land. Let them live in the land of Goshen. And if you know of any men of ability among them, put them in charge of my cattle.

⁷ Then Joseph brought in Jacob his father and presented him before Pharaoh; and Jacob blessed Pharaoh.

⁸ And Pharaoh asked Jacob, How old are you?

⁹ Jacob said to Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are 130 years; few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and they have not attained to those of the life of my fathers in their pilgrimage.



¹⁰ And Jacob blessed Pharaoh and went out from his presence.

¹¹ Joseph settled his father and brethren and gave them a possession in Egypt in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses (Goshen), as Pharaoh commanded.

Jacob, met the Pharaoh, it doesn't appear for a long time, Joseph following protocol, presents Jacob to him. You will notice that Jacob blesses Pharaoh, and not the other way around. The Pharaoh is interested in Jacob's great age. I love it when Jacob humbles himself and says his life has not been a positive one and even evil and few and have not been as 'successful' as his fathers. I do believe he really thinks that. The short meeting ends, and Jacob moves with his huge family into Goshen.

Jacob lives another 17 years in Goshen. He became 147 years old.

****He makes Joseph vow to bury him back in the land of promise. Shortly after this as Jacob knows he will die, he gathers his strength to bless his sons the blessings of which are found in Genesis 49. He also blesses Joseph's two sons Ephraim and Manasseh in chapter 48.**

Jacob dies now. Here is the last piece of the jigsaw puzzle of his life in these verses below:

Genesis 49:

²⁹ He charged them and said to them, I am to be gathered to my [departed] people; bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite,

³⁰ In the cave in the field at Machpelah, east of Mamre in the land of Canaan, that Abraham bought, along with the field of Ephron the Hittite, to possess as a cemetery.

³¹ There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife, there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife, and there I buried Leah.

³² The purchase of the field and the cave that is in it was from the sons of Heth.

³³ When Jacob had finished commanding his sons, he drew his feet up into the bed and breathed his last and was gathered to his [departed] people.

Jacob is given great honour in his death as we see in this passage. Please note even the Egyptian high officials were involved in this great events, some of them travelled to the border between Egypt and the land of Canaan apparently.

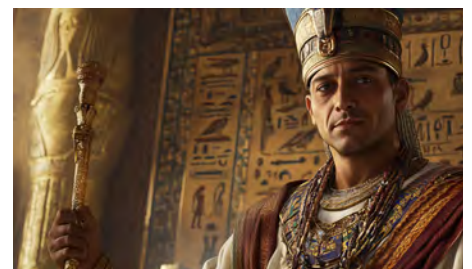
Genesis 50: 50 Then Joseph fell upon his father's face and wept over him and kissed him.

² And Joseph ordered his servants the physicians to embalm his father. So the physicians embalmed Israel.

³ Then forty days were devoted [to this purpose] for him, for that is the customary number of days required for those who are embalmed. And the Egyptians wept and bemoaned him [as they would for royalty] for seventy days.

⁴ And when the days of his weeping *and* deep grief were past, Joseph said to [the nobles of] the house of Pharaoh, If now I have found grace in your eyes, speak, I pray you, to Pharaoh [for Joseph was dressed in mourning and could not do so himself], saying,

⁵ My father made me swear, saying, I am about to die; in my tomb which I hewed out for myself in the land of Canaan, there you shall bury me. So now let me go up, I pray you, and bury my father, and I will come again.



⁶ **And Pharaoh said, Go up and bury your father, as he made you swear.**

⁷ **And Joseph went up [to Canaan] to bury his father; and with him went all the officials of Pharaoh—the nobles of his court, *and* the elders of his house and all the nobles *and* elders of the land of Egypt—**

⁸ And all the household of Joseph and his brethren and his father's household. Only their little ones and their flocks and herds they left in the land of Goshen.

⁹ **And there went with [Joseph] both chariots and horsemen; and it was a very great company.**

¹⁰ And they came to the threshing floor of Atad, which is beyond [west of] the Jordan, and there they mourned with a great lamentation and extreme demonstrations of sorrow [according to Egyptian

custom]; and [Joseph] made a mourning for his father seven days.

¹¹ When the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning at the floor of Atad, they said, This is a grievous mourning for the Egyptians. Therefore the place was called Abel-mizraim [mourning of Egypt]; it is west of the Jordan.

¹² Thus [Jacob's] sons did for him as he had commanded them.

¹³ For his sons carried him to the land of Canaan and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, east of Mamre, which Abraham bought, along with the field, for a possession as a burying place from Ephron the Hittite.

¹⁴ After he had buried his father, Joseph returned to Egypt, he and his brethren and all who had gone up with him.

Hallelujah! Jacob has gone home. His journey is over and he's on his way to the true Promised Land.

Jacob knew about the Heavenly City, as did Isaac and Abraham. As we see in these verses:

Hebrews 11:9

[Prompted] by faith he dwelt as a temporary resident in the land which was designated in the promise [of God, though he was like a stranger] in a strange country, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs with him of the same promise.

¹⁰ For he was [waiting expectantly and confidently] looking forward to the city which has fixed *and* firm foundations, whose Architect *and* Builder is God.

¹² So from one man, (Abraham) though he was physically as good as dead, there have sprung descendants whose number is as the stars of heaven and as countless as the innumerable sands on the seashore.

¹³ These people all died controlled *and* sustained by their faith, but not having received the tangible fulfilment of [God's] promises, only having seen it *and* greeted it from a great distance by faith, and all the while acknowledging *and* confessing that they were strangers *and* temporary residents *and* exiles upon the earth.

¹⁴ Now those people who talk as

they did show plainly that they are in search of a fatherland (their own country).

¹⁵ If they had been thinking with [homesick] remembrance of that country from which they were emigrants, they would have found constant opportunity to return to it.

¹⁶ But the truth is that they were yearning for *and* aspiring to a better *and* more desirable country, that is, a heavenly [one]. For that reason God is not ashamed to be called their God [even to be surnamed their God—the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob], for He has prepared a city for them.

What did you enjoy or were impressed by in God's Word today about Jacob? Please write in to us and share your thoughts!
Our love in Christ,
Jerry for the WCF Team

** Abraham died at the age of 175 years Genesis 25:7-11
Isaac died at the age of 180 Genesis 25: 27-29
Jacob died at the age of 147 years old

WHY WAS JACOB IMPORTANT IN

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Jacob and Joseph!



ABOUT THAT WORD TRANSLATED “SUBSTANCE” IN THE 11TH CHAPTER OF HEBREWS:

When they translated the New Testament from the Greek nearly 400 years ago they were still puzzled by the word “hupostasis”. Now they knew from the way this word “hupostasis” was used in some Greek literature and so on that it apparently was something fairly substantial, pretty sure, some very sure evidence of some kind, so they translated it “substance”.

Hupostasis (ὑπόστασις) is a Greek term meaning “substance,” “essence,” or “foundation,” literally translating to “a setting under” or “that which stands under”

Biblical Usage: In the New Testament, it signifies substance, essence, or, in a more abstract sense, confidence, assurance, and conviction. (e.g., Hebrews 11:1: “Faith is the hupostasis of things hoped for”).

Legal Usage: Historically referred to a foundational document, such as a “title deed” of ownership.

Now faith is what? THE TITLE DEED!

In fact, you could put it this way:
“Now faith is the title deed to
things hoped for, the evidence of
things not seen”

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