

Saga of Jacob II

Michael Heiss—March 10, 2012

Good morning! We're going to continue with our *saga of Jacob*. We are going to go on somewhat of a whirlwind tour of his life. If you will remember, last time we left off with Jacob heading 'out of Dodge' at the request of his mother. After all, he had been part of a plot with his mother to deceive Isaac into blessing him, and it worked.

Start with me now in Genesis 27 and we will pick up the story. Esau finds out about it, obviously, and he reacts somewhat violently.

Genesis 27:41: "And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him. And Esau said in his heart, 'The days of mourning for my father are at hand—then I will kill my brother Jacob.'" Such brotherly love! Rebekah hears it; she's got to get her son out of there, but she can't just send him away, so she has to get Isaac's help.

Verse 46: "And Rebekah said to Isaac, 'I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth. If Jacob takes a wife of the daughters of Heth, like these of the daughters of the land, what good is my life to me?'" What she's thinking of, in part, is Esau's example.

Genesis 26:34: "And when Esau was forty years old, he took as wives Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite. And they both were a grief of spirit to Isaac and to Rebekah" (vs 34-35). They were not pleased at all, and they certainly did not want Jacob to do this. This is a good excuse to get Jacob out.

Genesis 28:1: "Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him, and commanded him. And he said to him, 'You shall not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan. Arise, go to Padan Aram, to the house of Bethuel your mother's father. And take a wife from there of the daughters of Laban your mother's brother. And may God Almighty bless you...'" (vs 1-3). You'll notice in vs 3-4 that indeed the blessing is to come upon Jacob; he accepts it full bore.

Verse 5: "So, Isaac sent Jacob away...."
Verse 7: "And that Jacob obeyed his father and his mother..."

Out he goes, and we know that he came upon a certain place (v 11) and we've read this before where God appears to him and promises Jacob that He's going to be with him and bring him back.

Genesis 29:1—Jacob on his journey: "Then Jacob moved on and went to the land of the sons of the east." The Hebrew reads a little differently. It's

kind of funny in a way; it doesn't say that Jacob journeyed on, it says 'lifted up his feet.' How else would you move? Remember, these are not the days of boats and planes and trains. He didn't have plane or a train; didn't have a motorcycle, didn't have a bicycle; he didn't even have a donkey. But he had two strong legs and feet, so he *lifts them up* and he takes a hike. Mind you, this hike is from Beersheba in the south of the land of Judea, clear up through Syria, through Lebanon, up the Fertile Crescent and down. This is quite a hike!

When he gets there, v 2: "And he looked, and behold, a well *was* in the field! And, lo, there were three flocks of sheep lying by it..."

Verse 4: "And Jacob said to them, 'My brethren, where *are* you from?' And they said, 'We *are* from Haran.' And he said to them, 'Do you know Laban the son of Nahor?' And they said, 'We know *him*.' And he said to them, '*Is* he well?' And they said, 'He *is* well....'" (vs 4-6).

Something of interest: At that time in the development of the Hebrew language there was no word for 'yes.' Don't ask me why, I have no idea, but there was not word for 'yes,' and that will tell you why they answered the way they did. "...Do you know Laban...?' And they said, 'We know *Him*.'" Why didn't they say, 'yes'? *They didn't have a word for 'yes.'*

"...And, behold, his daughter Rachel comes with the sheep" (v 6). This is something very interesting in the Hebrew. Rachel means *ewe—female sheep*. What kind of a sound does a female sheep make, or any sheep make? *Baa! Baa!*—the bleating of sheep—right? If you were a Hebrew reading this, listening to this aloud, you would laugh, chuckle. My reading it in English means nothing to me. But if you read it in Hebrew and think in Hebrew it's funny. The Hebrew word for 'Rachel comes': the masculine form is 'ba'; the feminine form is 'bae' In Hebrew, 'Rachel' the female sheep 'bae' and it is cute in the Hebrew.

Likewise if you come down to v 9: "While he still spoke with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep..."

V 11: "Then Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice and wept."

V 10: "...and watered the flocks..."

The Hebrew word for 'water' and 'to kiss' is the same word. The consonants are the same, only the vowel pointing is different. Anytime you see two Hebrew words with the same consonants, they're

similar. It's talking about water, moisture, saliva, and there's your connection. It was often said, 'be careful how you pronounce these words' or else you're liable to say, 'Jacob kissed the sheep and watered Rachel.' Be careful how you pronounce the Hebrew!

Verse 13: "And it came to pass when Laban heard the news..." and welcomes Jacob.

Verse 15: "And Laban said to Jacob, 'Because you *are* my kinsman, should you then serve me for nothing? Tell me, what *shall be* your wages?' Now Laban had two daughters..." (vs 15-16). We know the story, it's love at first sight; Jacob is in love with Rachel.

Verse 18: "... 'I will serve you seven years for Rachel...' [v 19]: ...And Laban said, '*It is* better that I give her to you than I should give her to another man...' [v 20]: ...So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him **a few days**, for the love he had for her."

Genesis 27:44—This is where Rebecca is telling Jacob to leave, *go!* "And stay with him **a few days...**" It's to indicate a short period of time. Unfortunately for Rebecca, she had no way of knowing these few days would be a lifetime! She was never going to see him again. The price she paid for helping to trick Esau. That's one of the tragedies of life.

Finally, he served for seven years. Genesis 29:22: "Then Laban gathered together all the men of the place and made a *wedding* feast." Jacob is rejoicing! He's going to go into Rachel that night and enjoy the night with her. **WRONG!** Laban is a shyster! Is he ever a swindler! 'The biggest crook in the east.' *He slips in Leah!* Why Jacob didn't see it or know it, I have no idea, except it was dark and the wine must have been flowing. Oh, the wine must have been flowing that he could not tell the difference; but he couldn't!

So, Jacob is angry, v 25: "... 'What *is* this you have done to me? Did I not serve with you for Rachel? Why then have you tricked me?'" ***This is God at work!*** Did not Jacob trick Esau, as well as Isaac? *Yes!* You're going to see through the rest of this sermon how God step-by-step is going bring Jacob down this way. Jacob is still God's servant. God loves Jacob, and He's going to make him a powerful prince, but He's got to work on Jacob.

Verse 26: "And Laban said, 'It must not be done this way in our country... [Oh yeah, sure, Laban! We know!] ...to give the younger before the firstborn. Fulfill her week, and we will give you this one also for the service which you shall serve with me still another seven years.' So, Jacob did so, and fulfilled her week. Then *Laban* gave Rachel his

daughter to *Jacob* as wife also. And Laban gave Bilhah his handmaid to his daughter Rachel to be her handmaid. And *Jacob* also went in to Rachel. He also loved Rachel more than Leah..." (vs 26-30).

Think of this way: Laban is getting 14 years of free service out of Jacob. He's marrying his daughters off. He has complete control of everything, all the wealth. Such a deal! The rest of Gen. 29 comes with disputes and jealousies of sisters. The same is true of Gen. 30—Rachel and Leah and the children that are born.

Finally, Jacob says to Laban, Genesis 30:25: "Then, when Rachel had borne Joseph, it came to pass that Jacob said to Laban, 'Send me away so that I may go into my own place and to my country. Give me my wives and my children *for* whom I have served you, and let me go, for you know my service which I have done you.' And Laban said to him, 'I pray you, if I have found favor in your eyes, stay... [Here Laban speaks the truth]: ...for **I have learned by experience that the LORD has blessed me because of you**'" (vs 25-27).

Laban understands that like in Egypt with Potipher and Joseph, when God was with Joseph. Laban knows there's a connection between God and Joseph. In his own crooked way, he understands it.

Verse 28. And he *also* said, 'Name your wages and I will give it.' *Jacob* said to him...: (vs 28-29)—and from v 31-33 is the contract. We're not going to spend much time on it, except to say that 'certain types of flocks will be mine, certain will be yours'—but look at the crook that Laban is.

Verse 35: "And that day *Laban secretly* took out the he-goats that were striped and spotted, and all the she-goats that were speckled and spotted, every one that had white in it, and all the black from among the lambs, and gave *them* into the hand of his sons." This was the type of flock that would belong to Jacob.

Laban is conniving to give Jacob the weak and the ones that he shouldn't have. But God revealed to Jacob genetics and breeding techniques. You will read the breeding techniques as you go through. In fact, look at:

Genesis 31:11: "And the Angel of God spoke to me in a dream... [Jacob is] ...saying, 'Jacob!' And I said, 'Here I *am*.' And He said, 'Lift up your eyes and see all the rams which leap upon the flock that they *are* striped, speckled, and mottled..." (vs 11-12). We don't have the full story here, but God revealed to Jacob techniques of breeding as well as techniques of genetics.

You know the story: if you have one black cow, one white cow and you cross them, you get one black and one white and two speckled. Jacob

understood that. He was able to separate them and breed them accordingly. What was the result?

Genesis 30:43: “Thus the man increased exceedingly, and *had* many flocks, camels, donkeys...”

Genesis 31:1: “And he heard the words of Laban’s sons, saying, ‘Jacob has taken away all that *was* our father’s...’” Now it’s time for Jacob to leave. Finally, it is God Who says it! God tells him it is time to leave:

Verse 3: “And the LORD said to Jacob, ‘Return to the land of your fathers, and to your kindred, and I will be with you.’”

So, to make a long story short, Jacob is back, secretly. He doesn’t tell Laban that he’s leaving. Laban, of course, hears about it and is in hot pursuit.

Verse 19: “...Rachel stole the house idols, which were her father’s.” I believe that there’s a specific reason why she took those house idols, and it wasn’t to worship them. There’s another reason. I don’t believe she was worshipping these gods.

Verse 25: “Then Laban overtook Jacob....” But God came to him and said, ‘Laban, you say neither good nor bad to Jacob.’ In other words, ‘you watch your tongue, Jacob is My man; be careful!’ Laban blusters and they go about trying to find the house idols. Can’t find them, and then they make this pact (vs 44-55).

Notice one particular verse here; this, I think, gives us the key as to why Rachel stole those house idols. Verse 52: “This heap *is* a witness, and the pillar *is* a witness, that I will not pass over this heap to you, and that you shall not pass over this heap and this pillar to me for harm.” What kind of harm?

Scholars say they’ve found evidence that house idols were not merely idols or objects of worship, but they were deemed *a position*. If you had certain idols with markings on them, that was the deed to your land, to your assets. This is not absolute. Scholars think this and that, and who knows if they’re really right. If it is true, think of what that would mean. As long as Laban is alive his lands are safe. What happens when he dies and later on Jacob—if he’s still alive—or his sons go back across and say, ‘Hey, your dad lost this to my dad in a poker game; we have the title to your lands’? *They could take over!* That is why he said, ‘You’ll not pass over this heap and this pillar to me for harm.’ I believe that to really be the case. They weren’t worshipping them. It was worth the land!

Gen. 32—Jacob is being prepared to meet Esau his brother. He’s afraid of Esau and he offers a prayer to God—in four verses—which, when I first read it years ago, I was vastly, incredibly moved by

it. It is one of the most moving prayers I’ve ever read and it’s only four verses long. You will get the feel of Jacob, his mind and how he thinks. He is being humbled.

Genesis 32:9: “And Jacob said, ‘Oh God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the LORD, Who said to me, “Return to your country and to your kindred, and I will deal well with you.” I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which You have done to Your servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I have become two bands. Deliver me, I pray You, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, lest he come and strike me, *and* the mother with the children. And You said, “I will surely do you good, and make your seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude”’” (vs 9-12). May we all pray that way; an amazing humble prayer by Jacob.

Verse 13: “And he lodged there that night....” He’s dividing up the bands to meet Esau and then comes the famous wrestling match:

Verse 24: “And Jacob was left alone. And a Man wrestled there with him until the breaking of the day. And when *the Man* saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the hollow of his thigh. And the hollow of Jacob’s thigh became out of joint as he wrestled with Him. And He said, ‘Let Me go, for the day breaks.’ And *Jacob* said, ‘I will not let You go except You bless me.’ And He said to him, ‘What *is* your name?’ And he said, ‘Jacob.’ And He said, ‘**Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel...** [the mighty El] ...for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed.’ And Jacob asked and said, ‘I pray You, reveal Your name.’ And He said, ‘Why do you ask after My name?’ And He blessed him there. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel... [place of God] ...*saying*, ‘For I have seen God face-to-face... [Peniel El Peniel] ...and my life is preserved’” (vs 24-30).

This was God in human form, limiting Himself. Jacob would not let go! If there’s any one word that you can think of when you hear the name ‘Jacob’ and think of his character, it is *perseverance; steadfastness; he would not give up!* May we be as strong as Jacob was! How many do you know of whom it is said, ‘He struggled with God and with men and have prevailed.’ This Jacob is a very, very important man, and becomes even more important.

Genesis 33:1: “And Jacob lifted up his eyes and looked. And behold, Esau came...” and lo and behold, Esau has forgotten it. Esau has land, cattle, sheep and says ‘Forget it, my brother, don’t worry about.’ They make up and there’s peace. But tragedy is going to strike him again.

Genesis 34:1: “And Dinah the daughter of Leah, whom she bore to Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land.” Well, she might have gone out to see the daughters of the land, but she certainly wound up seeing one of the men of the land.

Verse 2: “And when Shechem, the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her and lay with her, and defiled her.” So, Jacob in a sense loses the virginity of his own daughter. You know the story of what Simeon and Levi did and the circumcision of the men of the land, and killed them.

We’re passing over this because it doesn’t pertain to Jacob as much, until we get to Genesis 35:1: “And God said to Jacob, ‘Arise, go up to Bethel and live there. And make an altar there to God...’ [v 2]: ...Then Jacob said to his household, and to all that were with him, ‘Put away the strange gods among you, and be clean, and change your garments.’.... [v 4]: ... And they gave all the strange gods...”

And as they’re moving on almost the worst thing that could ever happened to Jacob occurs. His beloved Rachel died in childbirth. As she’s dying, she says in v 18: “And it came to pass as her soul was departing—for she died—that she called his name Benoni. But his father called him Benjamin.” Benoni means *son of my sorrow*. She knows she’s dying. Jacob says, ‘Benomi’—son of my right hand. We will never hear Jacob use the name ‘Rachel’ again until shortly before his death when he’s speaking to Joseph in Egypt. He remembered her. And actually he only had her for a short period of time. Remember, Jacob lives 147 years. He spent 7 years working for Rachel and another 7 years he has her, 6 more years in Laban’s land and she dies within a year. He might have only had her for 15 years. Rebekah and Isaac were together for at least 60 years. Jacob didn’t have Rachel for that long. It’s a tragedy!

Verse 19: “And Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem. And Jacob set up a pillar upon her grave....” (vs 19-20). Then we find that Jacob finally comes to Isaac. He’s home; he finally made it home. He came to his father Isaac.

Verse 29: “And Isaac expired and died, and was gathered to his people, old and full of days....” From this you might get the feeling that he died shortly thereafter. No! Let’s get a timeframe:

- Isaac lived 180 years (v 28)
- Jacob lived a 147 years
- Isaac was 60 when Jacob was born
- *That leaved him at 120 years*
- Jacob lives to 147

- *He lives 27 years after Isaac dies*

And of those 27 years 17 were spent in Egypt—the last 17—which means he spent only 10 years in the land of Canaan before going down to Egypt.

- Joseph is 17-years-old when sold into slavery in Egypt
- Joseph spends 13 years in Egypt—in Potipher’s house and prison
- Then another 7 years during the years of plenty

Pharaoh makes him ruler of Egypt—‘only on the throne will I be greater than you’—but for all practical purposes he *is* Pharaoh in Egypt. He said, ‘Nobody shall move without your permission.’ There’s 13 years, plus 7, plus 1 or 2 more years when famine strikes until Jacob comes down to Egypt. That’s roughly 22 years, which means that of those 22 years Isaac was still alive for a least 12 of them.

While Joseph was in Egypt, Isaac was still alive living his life. Just like we read the story of Isaac and Rebekah, Abraham is alive for many more years. But you have to realize that the Bible is written in such a way by God that in telling the story when He’s finished with that part of the story He moves on. Forget Abraham, he’s going to live out his life and eventually die. Well, Isaac is going to live out his life and eventually die. But God says, Isaac’s done his part. Abraham’s done his part. They’re blessed! They’re going to be in My Kingdom! Now we’ve got to focus on the new part.

We’re focusing on Jacob, we’re focusing on Joseph in Egypt, but Isaac is still very much alive. His eyes were dim, was Jacob taking care of him? *Probably!* My guess, I don’t know. But as far as God is concerned, it’s not important that you know what happened with Isaac. It’s important for you to know what’s happening with Jacob and Joseph. Just a little tidbit that the Bible is not always written chronologically. You think this happens and this happens and then it’s going like this and this. It’s not! It’s going this, and it’s going back, going forward and going back. You just have realize that.

Anyway, tragedy is again going to strike! Joseph is the favorite son of Jacob. We know that! Genesis 37:3: “And Israel loved Joseph more than all his sons because he was the son of his old age. And he made him a tunic *reaching to the soles of his feet*. And when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him” (vs 3-4). And here come the dreams about the sun, the moon and the sheaves, but you’ll notice what happens and what his father says:

Verse 10: “And he told *it* to his father and to

his brothers. And his father rebuked him and said to him, ‘What *is* this dream that you have dreamed? Shall I, and your mother, and your brothers indeed come to bow ourselves to the earth before you?’ And his brothers were jealous of him. But his father was mindful of the saying” (vs 10-11). Jacob *knew* about dreams. God appeared to him many times in dreams. Jacob is thinking: something’s up! I don’t know what, but something is up! He *knew*!

About this tunic, this is the famous coat of many colors. I remember trying to visualize, orange, red, green, blue—what is it? ‘*It’s not!* It was a tunic of pointed sleeves. And *if* scholars are correct—I can’t prove it—when you want to designate your heir apparent, the ruler of your clan, you gave him a tunic of pointed sleeves. That is enough to make his brother’s jealous with rage. Is that absolutely true, I don’t know. But nevertheless, scholars have pointed out that it was common in those days, in that part of the world, for a father who was old and looking for an heir apparent, was going to give a tunic of pointed sleeves.

We know the story: they kidnapped Joseph, sold him to Egypt, v 31: “And they took Joseph’s tunic and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the tunic in the blood. And they took the tunic *reaching to* the soles of the feet, and they brought it to their father. And they said, ‘We have found this. Do you know whether it *is your son’s* coat or not?’” (vs 31-32). Why didn’t they ask: ‘Is this our brother’s coat?’ They’re not even affiliating him as their brother. “...your son...” not *our brother*. Interesting the way they phrase it.

And Israel (Jacob) knew it, v 33: “And he knew it, and said, ‘*It is* my son’s tunic. An evil beast has eaten him. Joseph is without a doubt torn in pieces.’ And Jacob tore his clothes and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days. And all his sons and all his daughters, rose up to comfort him. But he refused to be comforted. And he said, ‘For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning.’ And his father wept for him” (vs 33-35).

Joseph isn’t dead; we know that. But after all, didn’t Jacob trick Esau with clothes and skins? He certainly did! Karma, what goes around comes around. When I say to you, brethren, that God is at work, I mean it! I’m serious; *God’s at work!* What Jacob did to others is coming back on him. Now, God is going to raise up Jacob, absolutely, but Jacob is learning. He doesn’t fully understand yet, but he will.

Jacob thinks he’s lost his son. Remember, Joseph was the closest thing he had to Rachel. He’s lost him! Not really, but he thinks he has. Bit-by-bit God is stripping Jacob of everything that Jacob holds dear. Remember the words of a Teacher who once said, ‘He who is not willing to give up father, mother,

sister, brother and even his own life is not worthy of Me.’ Jacob is going to have to be brought to that point, and he will.

Genesis 38—Judah and Tamar

Genesis 39—Joseph and Potipher

There’s famine in the land and Jacob realizes that there’s famine (Gen. 42:1). There’s food in Egypt; go down; buy us some food. By this time Joseph is ruler of Egypt.

Genesis 42:7: “And Joseph saw his brothers, and he knew them, but remained a stranger to them...” He’s going to put them to the test.

Joseph says, v 9: “...‘You *are* spies! You have come to see the nakedness of the land.’... [Not so, but Joseph knows this, but he’s toying with them.] ...And they said to him, ‘No, my lord, but your servants have come to buy food. We *are* all one man’s sons. We are honest men; your servants are not spies” (vs 9-11).

Verse 16: “Send one of you, and let him bring your brother, and you shall be kept in prison so that your words may be proved, whether *any* truth is in you. Or else, *as* Pharaoh lives, surely you *are* spies.” Joseph asked about their father and his other son Benjamin.

He keeps Simeon and sends back the rest of them. But he puts the money that they gave him back in their sacks. They’re opening their sacks and one says to the other, “...‘My silver has been put back—here, in my sack.’ And their hearts sank, and they each were afraid, saying to one another, ‘What *is* this God has done to us?’ And they came to Jacob their father, to the land of Canaan, and told him all that happened to them...” (vs 28-29).

Notice what Jacob says in v 36—and I call this the anguish of Jacob: “And Jacob their father said to them, ‘You have bereaved me. Joseph *is* no more, and Simeon *is* no more, and you will take Benjamin? All these things are against me.” Woe is me! Why me? Why are these things happening to me? This is the force of the Hebrew; Jacob is being brought down! Does this sound like the cocky young Jacob who said to Esau, ‘Sell me your birthright.’ No! No! This is a beaten down man. Still a servant of God, still persevering, but no longer the cocky individual proud and confident that he once was. God is working with him, believe me!

And the *rash* Reuben, v 37: “And Reuben spoke to his father, saying, ‘Kill my two sons if I do not bring him to you. Deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him to you again.’ And he (Jacob) said... [Ah! Shut up!] ...‘My son shall not go down with you, for his brother is dead, and he is left alone. And *if* mischief should happen to him by the way you go, then you shall bring down my gray hairs

with sorrow to the grave.” (vs 37-38).

He’s hanging on to Benjamin, but God is going to force him to be willing to even give up Benjamin. The last item, the last person of real importance to him, he’s going to have to be willing to give up—just as *we* have to give up everything for Christ, God and the Kingdom.

Genesis 43:1: “And the famine *was* severe in the land. And it came to pass, when they had eaten up the grain which they had brought out of Egypt, their father said to them, ‘Go again, buy us a little food.’ And Judah spoke to him, saying, ‘The man solemnly protested to us, saying, “You shall not see my face unless your brother *is* with you.” If you will send our brother with us, we will go down and buy you food. But if you will not send *him*, we will not go down, for the man said to us, “You shall not see my face unless your brother *is* with you.”’ And Israel said, ‘Why have you dealt ill with me to tell the man whether you *had* yet a brother?’” (vs 1-6). Do you see Jacob’s anguish?

Verse 7: “And they said, ‘The man asked us strictly of our state and of our kindred, saying, “*Is* your father still alive? Have you yet *another* brother?’.... [Of course, Joseph knew.] ...And we told him according to the tenor of these words. Could we in any way know that he would say, “Bring your brother down?”’ And Judah said to Israel his father... [Here is Judah coming to the fore: calm, stayed.] ...‘Send the boy with me, and we will arise and go, so that we may live and not die, both we and you, also our little ones. I will be surety for him. You shall require him of my hand. If I do not bring him to you and set him before you, I shall be a sinner against you all the days, for if we had not delayed, surely by now we would have returned the second time.’ And their father Israel said to them, ‘If *it be* so now, do this....’” (vs 7-11).

Verse 13: “Take also your brother and arise; go again to the man. And God Almighty give you mercy before the man, so that he may send away your other brother and Benjamin. **If I am bereaved, then I am bereaved**” (vs 13-14). Put another way: *If I am to lose everything, I will lose everything! If I have to give up everything I have, I give up everything I have!* That is the point that God wanted Jacob to come to. Finally, he’s there!

So, they go down, they meet Joseph again—the end of Gen. 43-44—and they make this big feast and Benjamin has five times the portion of everybody else. But then Joseph told the steward to ‘put my special cup in Benjamin’s sack.’ Joseph has something in mind. The Israelites leave; they’re traveling up, but Joseph’s servants overtake them and they’re going to search the sacks to see where this cup is. They found it Benjamin’s sack (Gen.

44:12).

Genesis 44:10: “And he... [the servant says to Jacob’s sons] ...said, ‘Now also *let it be* according to your word. He with whom it is found shall be my servant, and you shall be blameless.’” When they found it, they tore their clothes and each one loaded his donkey and returned to the city and Judah and his brothers came to Joseph’s house. Joseph says, ‘Okay, I’ll let you all go, but the young one stays with me.’ Judah cannot have that. He can’t! He gave his word; promised his father, saying, ‘I will be a surety for him.’ What does Judah say? You want to talk about diplomacy; talk about a moving plea! This is it!

Verse 18: “And Judah came near him and said, ‘O my lord, pray let your servant speak a word in my lord’s ears, and do not let your anger burn against your servant, for you *are* even as Pharaoh. My lord asked his servants, saying, “Do you have a father or a brother?”’ And we said to my lord, “We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one. And his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loves him.” And you said to your servants, “Bring him down to me, and let me see him.” And we said to my lord, “The boy cannot leave his father, for *if* he should leave *his* father, he would die.” And you said to your servants, “Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you shall see my face no more.” And it came to pass when we came up to your servant, my father, we told him the words of my lord. And our father said, “Go again. Buy us a little food.” And we said, “We cannot go down. If our youngest brother is with us, we will go down, for we may not see the man’s face unless our youngest brother *is* with us”” (vs 18-26).

Verse 30: “And now when I come to your servant my father, and the boy *is* not with us, since his life is bound up in the lad’s life, it shall be, when he sees that the boy *is* not *with us*, he will die. And your servants shall bring down the gray hairs of your servant our father with sorrow to the grave, for your servant became surety... [Judah] ...for the boy to my father, saying, “If I do not bring him to you, then I shall bear the blame to my father forever.” And now, please let your servant remain instead of the boy as a slave to my lord....” (vs 30-33). Remember, it was Judah who suggested that they sell Joseph. Again, what goes around can come around. The way these things happen is surreal.

Now, it doesn’t happen that way, but it comes to the point that Judah is *willing* to be a slave. Believe me, that took a lot for Judah to say.

“...And let the boy go up with his brothers, for how shall I go up to my father, and the boy *is* not with me lest perhaps I see the evil that will befall my

father?” (vs 33-34).

At that point Joseph loses it! He can't take it anymore. He said, 'Get out of here!'—to all the Egyptians. He reveals himself to his family, to his brothers. They are stunned! Stupefied!

Joseph says, Genesis 45:7: “And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant...” You meant it for evil, but God sent it for good. He rejoices with them. He says, ‘You go and bring my father down.’

Verse 24: “And he sent his brothers away, and they departed. And he said to them, ‘Do not quarrel along the way.’ And they went up out of Egypt, and came to the land of Canaan, to Jacob their father. And they told him, saying, ‘Joseph is still alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt.’ And Jacob’s heart fainted, for he did not believe them. And 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 Israel said, ‘It is enough. Joseph my son is still alive. I will go and see him before I die.’” (vs 24-28).

But Jacob has one last thing he has to do before he goes down to Egypt. Remember in the days of Isaac, there was famine and Isaac didn't know whether he should go into Egypt or not. What did God tell Isaac? *Don't go to Egypt! Stay in this land!* Jacob was fearful: Should he go to Egypt? God had said before *don't*. What does he need to do? *He needs to ask God!* He just doesn't rush down.

Genesis 46:1: “And Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. And God spoke to Israel in the visions of the night, and said, ‘Jacob, Jacob!’ And he said, ‘Here I am.’ And He said, ‘I am God, the God of your fathers. Do not fear to go down into Egypt... [Don't worry about what I said to Isaac many years ago.] ...for I will make of you a great nation. I will go down with you into Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again. And Joseph himself shall put his hand to close your eyes.’ And Jacob rose up...” (vs 1-5). Jacob went down, met with Joseph. What a reunion they had. Finally, Joseph brings Jacob to Pharaoh. Notice what Jacob says to Pharaoh:

First of all, Genesis 47:1: “Then Joseph came and told Pharaoh, and said, ‘My father and my brothers and their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have, have come out of the land of Canaan. And behold, they are in the land of Goshen.’ And he took some of his brothers, five men, and presented them to Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said to his brothers, ‘What is your occupation?’ And they said to Pharaoh, ‘Your servants are shepherds, both we and our fathers’” (vs 1-3).

Verse 5: “And Pharaoh spoke to Joseph, saying, ‘Your father and your brothers have come to you.... [‘If this Joseph can make me this much wealth, WOW! what can the rest of his family do for me?’ Pharaoh’s no fool. He knows this is a unique family. He’s all for it.] ...The land of Egypt is before you. Make your father and brothers to live in the best of the land; in the land of Goshen let them live. And if you know men of ability among them, then make them overseers of livestock, over what is mine” (vs 5-6)—‘yes, make me many more cattle, sheep and goats.’ Pharaoh’s no dummy!

Verse 7: “...And Jacob blessed Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said to Jacob, ‘How many are the years of your life?’ And Jacob said to Pharaoh, ‘The years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty years. **Few and evil have been the years of my life, and I have not attained to the number of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage.**’ And Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from before Pharaoh” (vs 7-10).

When Jacob says *few and evil*, first he means that his life is not as long as his father’s was. When he says *evil*, he doesn't mean fiendish, foolish, like experiencing the deeds of a Hitler, Stalin or Attila the Hun. The word evil means ‘ra’—calamity, hardship, pain, anguish, grief, all of that. What he’s saying is, ‘My life has been full of anguish and pain and grief.’ Oh, there have been good times, but he is humbled. He is brought to the point where he doesn't see himself as some great success. He sees himself, in a way, as somewhat as a failure. He’s alive; he’s seen Joseph now; he’s got this reunion, but he’s not just that fresh cocky, top of the world Jacob that we read about two or three decades before.

But Jacob is not going to die yet. He’s got 17 more years to live. Why? *God has something else in mind for Jacob to say and do!*

Notice what Jacob says to Joseph, v 28: “And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years. And the days of Jacob, the years of his life, were a hundred forty-seven years. And the time drew near for Israel to die. And he called his son Joseph, and said to him, ‘If now I have found grace in your sight, please put your hand under my thigh and deal kindly and truly with me. Please **do not bury me in Egypt**. So that I may sleep with my fathers, you shall carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burial site.’ And he said, ‘I will do according to your words.’ And he said, ‘**Swear to me.**’ And he swore to him. And Israel bowed himself at the head of the bed” (vs 28-31).

Genesis 48:3: “And Jacob said to Joseph, ‘God Almighty appeared to me...’” This is the

famous El Shaddai. I don't know if any of you have heard Amy Grant sing this song *El Shaddai*, moving song! Jacob talks about El Shaddai as though He's right there. El Shaddai is close to Jacob and Jacob is close to El Shaddai. At any rate, Jacob says to Joseph, "... 'God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me. And He said to me, "Behold, I will make you fruitful and multiply you. And I will make of you a multitude of people, and will give this land to your seed after you for an everlasting possession." And now your two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, who are born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are mine. Like Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine'" (vs 3-5).

What he's saying is, 'Joseph, you're their father, I know that, but in blessing them and in possession *they belong to me*—they are the direct grandchildren of Rachel. In part he's honoring Rachel this way and 'my blessings, which I am blessed with by God, I pass on to them.' And they, *indeed*, became the two greatest nations/empires in the history of the world. But this is done through Jacob.

God had purpose for Jacob! That's how God is transmitting it. Jacob was a fascinating man, and we know more about his life than any other figure in the Old Testament. It's all laid out for us. Here is where he mentions Rachel for the last time, and as far as we know—it's not recorded—that he mentioned her name any place else.

He said here, v 7: "And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died beside me in the land of Canaan in the way, when *there was* still but a little way to come to Ephrath. And I buried her there in the way of Ephrath, that *is* Bethlehem." When he said "...Rachel died beside me..." the Hebrew implies *unto me, near me, with me, to my sorrow*. Jacob, in a way, is emotionally involved here. This was his beloved Rachel. It's a poignant reminder. I don't think Jacob ever forgot Rachel, ever.

Verse 8: "And Israel beheld Joseph's sons, and said, 'Who *are* these?' And Joseph said to his father, 'They *are* my sons, whom God has given me in this *place*.'.... [v 10] ...And the eyes of Israel were dim for age... [he could not see. so he didn't quite recognize them.] (v 11): ...And Israel said to Joseph, 'I had not thought I would see your face, and, lo, God showed me also your offspring.'" (vs 8-11). Then comes the blessing itself.

Verse 13: "And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left, and Manasseh in his left toward Israel's right hand. And he brought *them* near to him." But Jacob was having none of it and crossed his hands and Joseph sees it and says, 'no, no, no':

Verse 17: "And Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, and it displeased him. And he held up his father's hand to remove it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. And Joseph said to his father, 'Not so, my father, for this *is* the firstborn. Put your right hand upon his head.' And his father refused and said, 'I know *it*, my son, I know *it*. He also shall become a people, and he also shall be great, but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations.'" (vs 17-19). And Joseph—though he was practically Pharaoh in Egypt—backs off. This is his father, and Joseph respects his father. Joseph knows his father has a relationship with God, so he backs off, bowing himself, and Jacob gives the blessing. And the blessing is sure.

Now we come to practically the last chapter in Jacob's life, Genesis 49:1: "And Jacob called to his sons and said, 'Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you what shall happen to you in the last days.'" You can read the rest of it all the way down and finally he finishes:

Verse 29: "And he [Jacob] charged them and said to them, 'I am to be gathered to my people. Bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, in the cave that *is* in the field of Machpelah, which *is* before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, the field which Abraham bought from Ephron the Hittite for a burial site. They buried Abraham and his wife Sarah there, and they buried Isaac and his wife Rebekah.... [So, you see, Rebekah is there buried with Isaac, although when Jacob came back from Laban, nothing is said of Rebekah. She had died in the meantime.] ...And I buried Leah there—'" (vs 29-31).

So, before he came down to Egypt, he buries Leah. Think! In his life he lost father, mother, both wives and now he thought he almost lost Joseph.

Verse 32: "'The field *was* purchased, and the cave in it, from the sons of Heth.' When Jacob finished commanding his sons, he drew his feet up into the bed. And he expired, and was gathered to his people" (vs 32-33). All I can say is, what a way to go, when you're going out. 'My job is finished and through! Gathered up his feet, laid down and that was it. In a way like Moses on top of the mountain. His job was finished, God blessed him and let him see the land and that was it.

Genesis 50:1: "And Joseph fell upon his father's face, and wept upon him, and kissed him."

Joseph goes to Pharaoh and says, v 5: "'My father made me swear, saying, "Lo, I die. You shall bury me in my grave which I have prepared for me in the land of Canaan." Now therefore, I pray you, let me go up and bury my father, and I will come

again.’ And Pharaoh said, ‘Go up and bury your father, according as he made you swear’” (vs 5-6). So, they do.

Verse 12: “And his sons did to him according as he commanded them, for his sons carried him to the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, which Abraham bought with the field for a burying place from Ephron the Hittite, before Mamre” (vs 12-13).

That ends our saga of Jacob. There’s a lot more to Jacob, there really is. You could spend days and days. What I like so much about the book of Genesis is that there is so much interplay between human beings in this book. The prophets, ‘Thus says the Lord’ and God commanded this and He gave His Law. You have the teachings of Jesus and the disciples and the congregations—and all of that is true. But you have so much interplay, so much emotion, so much dealing with different people from Abraham clear on down. It is fascinating.

I hope you have found this of some interest. It has been my pleasure to present this story by what I call *a man named Jacob*.

Scriptural References from the book of Genesis:

- 1) 27:42, 46
- 2) 26:34-35
- 3) 28:1-3, 5, 7
- 4) 29:1-2, 4-6, 9, 11, 10, 13, 15-16, 18-20
- 5) 27:44
- 6) 29:22, 25-30
- 7) 30:25-29, 35
- 8) 31:11-12
- 9) 30:43
- 10) 31:1, 3, 19, 25, 52
- 11) 32:9-13, 24-30
- 12) 33:1
- 13) 34:1-2
- 14) 35:1-2, 4, 18-20, 29
- 15) 37:3-4, 10-11, 31-35
- 16) 42:7, 9-11, 16, 28-29, 36-38
- 17) 43:1-11, 13-14,
- 18) 44:10, 18-26, 30-34
- 19) 45:7, 24-28
- 20) 46:1-5
- 21) 47:1-3, 5-10, 28-31
- 22) 48:3-5, 7-11, 13, 17-19
- 23) 49:1, 29-33
- 24) 50:1, 5-6, 12-13

Scriptures referenced, not quoted from the book of Genesis:

- 28:4, 11
- 29:31-33
- 31:44-55

- 35:28
- 38; 39
- 42:1
- 44:12

MH:bo

Transcribed: 3-21-12

Copyright 2012—All rights reserved. Except for brief excerpts for review purposes, no part of this publication may be reproduced or used in any form or by any means without the written permission of the copyright owner. This includes electronic and mechanical photocopying or recording, as well as the use of information storage and retrieval systems.