



Jacob

“In the Beginning”

“And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.”

Genesis 32:28

Jacob was the son of Isaac and Rebekah, a twin. But these twins were nothing alike. Jacob was a quiet man and liked to dwell in tents. His brother, Esau, we'll discuss him another time.. The parents took sides with them. Isaac loved Esau, and Rebekah loved Jacob. The Bible says that from the time they were in the womb of Rebekah they were fighting.

As they grew, Esau was to receive the birthright and blessing, but Jacob tricked his father and received both of them. When Esau realized what had happened, he set out to punish Jacob, but Rebekah interfered and sent Jacob away to live with her brother's family. On the way, Jacob had a dream about a ladder to Heaven. Throughout his life, God spoke to him many times; the ladder is probably the best known. Jacob knew that God was with him and promised to worship God. He did some back sliding, just like us. Jacob always came back to God, and God forgave him and continued to bless him. He told his uncle that he wanted to marry Rachel, and the uncle made him work for seven years for her. Then the uncle sent Leah, his other daughter instead of Rachel, and made him work another seven years for Rachel.

Through his years in that area, he prospered, and had twelve children. His name was changed to Israel, and his children became the twelve tribes of Israel. Only two of the sons are well known; they are Joseph and Benjamin, both the children of Rachel.

One day God appeared to Jacob and told him to go back to his home land and take his family with him. He was afraid. During that trip he wrestled with God, and he was blessed by God. He feared many things and places, but especially Esau. When he approached Esau, Esau ran to meet him and threw his arms around him in love. And Jacob said "Please. If you can find it in your heart to welcome me, accept these gifts. When I saw your face, it was as the face of God smiling on me. Accept the gifts I have brought for you. God has been good to me and I have more than enough."

There is a beautiful camp song called “Have You Seen Jesus, My Lord” written by John Fisher. I think the words of it somehow tell the feeling that Jacob must have had when Esau welcomed him.

“Have you ever looked at the sunset, with the sky mellowing red?
And the clouds suspended like feathers.
Then I say, you've seen Jesus, my Lord.

Have you ever stood at the ocean, with the white foam at your feet?
Felt the endless thundering motion.
Then I say, you've seen Jesus, my Lord.

Have you ever looked at the Cross, with a man hanging in pain?
And the look of love in His eyes.
Then I say, you've seen Jesus, my Lord.

Chorus:

Have you seen Jesus, My Lord?
He's here in plain view.
Take a look; open your eyes.
He'll show it to you.”

Jacob and his mother had not dealt kindly with Isaac or Esau, but Esau forgave him. So many times we are forgiven by not only God, but by friends that we judged wrongly, or treated poorly. We also often misjudge our family and then look back and see that we were wrong. We have a loving God, and a loving family.

Jacob is mentioned many times in the Bible in both the Old and New Testament. Most of the time it is in reference to the fathering of the nations of Israel, and he is mentioned with his father Isaac, and his grandfather, Abraham.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, we know we are human and often time we do things that are not satisfactory in Your eyes, but You love us and forgive us. Help us to lead our families in the way of love so that Your love may shine through us. Amen.

1. Is there ever a problem with parents favoring one child over another?
2. What caused Jacob to trick Esau and gain the birthright and blessing?
3. Did Jacob trick Esau or did Esau exercise his free will and want the food for the birthright rather go out and hunt? Remember he was the sportsman.
4. Can we see the look of love from God in our brother's/sister's eyes? What a blessing we receive if we can.

Jacob: We first hear about Jacob and Esau in Genesis 25:26. His life and influence are given in the book of Genesis through chapter 50, but the main emphasis of his life and how it influenced him and his family are included in the 10 chapters on Genesis from 25-36. Although Jacob is mentioned many times in the other books of the Bible, it is in reference mostly to his lineage.

© Gail Kennedy Keffer